

*In the Name of Allah,
the Merciful, the Compassionate*

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**THE CHILDREN'S BOOK
ON ISLAM**

BOOK THREE

**By
Ayatullah Ibrahim Amini**

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به زبان انگلیسی
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The Children's Book on Islam
Book Three
Ayatullah Ibrahim Amini
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Foreword

Children are invaluable assets of future generations. Islam has given particular attention for their education and training as well as for their respect, love and affection. Islam provides detailed instructions for preservation of children's rights and emphasizes for their guidance so that they could endeavour for perfection as a human being with an aim of worshipping Allah and serving the humanity.

A large number of Muslim children receive their education whose medium of instructions is English language. Therefore, there is a great need for preparing suitable Islamic books in English for the benefit of such children and others who feel interested in these books. Earlier, an attempt was made in this regard; however, it was not very successful. The I.P. Co. takes pleasure in announcing the publication of four books in series in English which have been exclusively written for children in Persian by an eminent theologian and learned senior professor of *Al-Hawzah al-'Ilmiyah* (Theological Centre), Qum, Iran, Hujjat ul-Islam Ibrahim Amini, who is an author of several important books on Islam.

These books have been written in a lucid language in a form of different lessons on Islam. At the end of each lesson, questions and exercises have been given

which would be helpful for children in their learning and practice of each lesson. Illustrative photographs have also been included to make the book interesting and entertaining for children. An attempt has been made that this complete set of four books may impart necessary Islamic education to children.

The I.P. Co. hopes that these books would be well received by all concerned, particularly by children, parents and teachers, whose constructive suggestions would be most welcomed for incorporations in modifications of subsequent editions of these books.

International Publishing Co.

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Lesson One

God, the Source of Creation

As my father finished the last mouthful of his lunch, he said. *“Al-Hamdulillahi Rabbil-‘Alamin”*.

“Father”, I said, “what does this mean? Why do you say this sentence every time you finish your meal?”

“My son”, said my father, “with this sentence we praise God and thank Him for His blessings; God who created and cares for all things. God bestowed on us all these blessings and whenever we use them we must thank Him.

“You know, Ahmad, the blessings of God are so many that we cannot even count them. Think about this meal, see what blessings God has bestowed on us:

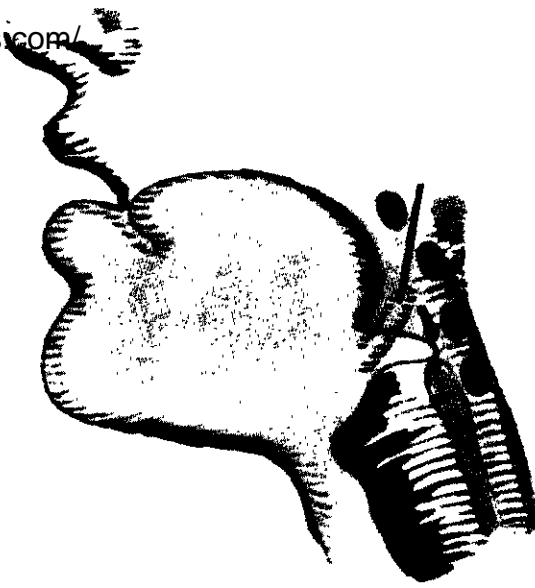
“We see the food with our eyes.

“With our hands we take it and put it into our mouths.

“We close our mouths with our lips, and move it in our mouths with our tongues.

“We chew it with our teeth and then we swallow it.

“All this looks simple, yet it is very exact and wondrous. For example, take a look at your hands and fingers and see how beautiful and shapely they are. You can open and close your fingers just as you wish, and you can form them in any shape you want. You can turn your hand in any direction at will. Your hands and fingers serve you as needed. Have you ever considered what we would do if our hands were not at our disposal in this way?. The creation of our teeth is also very



interesting and very exact. Look at your teeth in the mirror. Some of them are pointed and sharp and are used for cutting the food, while others are good for tearing the food, but most of them are used for crushing the food and making it soft. How could we eat if we had no teeth? How could we eat the different kinds of food if all our teeth were alike?

“My son, more wonderful than all of this is saliva. Saliva is necessary for digesting food, and that is why the more a mouthful is chewed, the better and sooner it is digested. Furthermore, saliva makes the food wet so that it is easily swallowed.

“Saliva is made by three pairs of small glands called ‘salivary glands’. What would we do if our mouths were dry?

“Could we eat?

“Could we speak?

“Just look at saliva, what a blessing it is! What useful and important work it does.

“Now my son, tell me:

“Who was thinking of us and knew that our mouths had to be wet? Or that saliva is necessary for digesting food and for speaking?

“Who was thinking of us and knew that we needed lips



and a mouth?

“Who was thinking of us and knew that we needed hands and fingers just like this?”

I had been listening to my father very carefully and the answer was clear. I said, “Evidently God has been thinking of us. He knew of our necessities and He created everything that we require.”

“Well done son.” said my father. “You are absolutely right.”

“Salivary glands didn’t come into existence just by themselves.”

“Our lips, mouth, teeth and fingers didn’t come into being at random, just by themselves.

“This symmetry, order and harmony is the best proof that the creation of all this stems from an all-knowing being of infinite power.

“That all-knowing being and that source of creation is “God”. My son, when a human-being perceives His gifts, he automatically utters His beautiful name, and praises Him and thanks Him for His blessings.

“Ahmad, *‘Al-Hamdulillahi Rabbil-‘Alamin’* means, ‘Praise be Allah’s, Lord and Exalter of the beings of the world.’”

Think and Answer:

1. What did Ahmad ask his father?
2. What did Ahmad's father say after eating his meal? Whom did he thank?
3. Can you count God's blessings?..... Why not?
4. Which blessings did Ahmad's father speak about to his son?
5. What is the point and purpose of the creation of "salivary glands"?
6. What did Ahmad's father ask when he said, "Speak, tell me?" What did Ahmed say in reply?
7. What does the symmetry, order and harmony, which is in the creation of our bodies, signify?
8. What does "*Al-Hamdulillahi Rabbil-'Alamin*" mean?
9. How do you thank God after eating your meal? What do you say?
10. What do you say when you want to start your meal? Why?

Exercises:

Read this lesson once out loud.

Talk about the lesson to your friends.

Think up some other questions and have your friends answer them.

Experiment and Think: 1

Close your fingers into a fist. Now, using only the closed fingers of one hand, pick up a pencil and write... Pick up a spoon and eat with it... Can you?

If we had no fingers, how could we write?

How could we eat?

If our fingers didn't open and close when we wanted them to, what would we do?

Now, open your fingers and keep them still. With those same fingers, pick up a pencil... write the name of God.....

Pick up a spoon and eat Can you?

So, God is very Wise and very Kind to have given us the use of fingers which open and close at our will.

Who, other than the “All-knowing and Almighty God”, can make such good fingers for us?

Experiment and Think: 2

Keep your lips still. Now speak... Can you? Can you say every word?

When you keep your lips open, can you chew your food? Doesn't the food fall out of our mouth?

What do you do with your tongue?

— You speak.

— You taste food.

— What else?

Can you keep your tongue still while chewing your food? Experiment, when we eat, how does our tongue help us?

If we had no tongue, how would we eat? How would we speak?

Who, other than the “All-knowing and Almighty God”, can create lips and a tongue for us?

Experiment and Think: 3

Move the tip of your tongue around your mouth. What do you feel?

— Teeth

— The roof of your mouth

— Gums

— What else?

Now swallow your saliva. Now suck. Does your mouth become totally dry? Where did the new saliva come from?

Do you know what would happen without it?

You couldn't speak anymore, you couldn't eat anymore, your mouth would become totally dry.

Do you know the names of all these blessings? How

many are they?

Who thought of you and created them for you?

Who, other than the “All-knowing and Almighty God”, can make them for us? If our Creator wasn’t All-Knowing and Almighty, how could He have thought up all the things we need? How could He have created them?

Lesson Two

Water: the Life- Bestowing Blessing of God

When we become thirsty, what do we do?

Yes, we drink water. All of us need water.

When the animals become thirsty, what do they do?

Yes, they drink water. The animals also need water.

Do plants also become thirsty?

Yes, plants also become thirsty, they also need water, but they do not drink water like us. No, they take water from the earth with their roots.

If plants don't receive water, they will become dry.

If animals don't drink, they will die of thirst.

If there is no water, we, too, will die of thirst.

If there is no water, wheat and barley will not grow, then we will have no bread to eat.

If there is no water, fruit trees will dry up, then we will have no fruit to eat.

If there is no water, all the animals will die, then we will have no meat, milk, cheese or yoghurt to eat.

However, God is very Kind. He created sweet, fresh water and made it available to us to drink, to wash ourselves in, to farm with, and for animals to drink and provide us with milk and meat.

God loves us so He has created nice, fresh water and hundreds of other blessings for us.

We, too, love our kind God. We thank Him for His

blessings and we use them in the way he has ordered us to, so that we can live happily in both worlds.

Experiment and Think:

Pour a little salt in a glass of water. The water becomes salty. Can you drink this salty water to quench your thirst?

No... Salty water adds to your thirst.

Salty water is no good for farming either.

Really! If all water was salty or bitter, what would we do? We would have no bread, no meat, no milk, no cheese;... then what would we eat?

Really! If water was absorbed by the earth and disappeared, what would we do? How would we live? Could we stay alive?

So, God is very kind to have created drinkable water and to have made it available for us.

If plants don't receive water, they dry up.

If animals don't drink water, they die of thirst.

If there isn't any water, we too die of thirst.

So we must work and strive and benefit from water and the other gifts God has created for us, and we must help others, especially the deprived.



Lesson Three

A Theology Lesson from the Apple Tree

The apple is a useful and delicious fruit. Perhaps you have eaten this pretty fruit. Our body needs the substances in the apple and God created the apple tree to meet this need of ours.

An apple tree, in order to produce an apple, needs the following things:

1. Water
2. Minerals, which exist in the soil.
3. Carbon-dioxide gas, which exists in the air.
4. The light and energy of the sun.

The root of an apple tree takes water and minerals from the soil.

The tree trunk and branches, by means of various pipes, take the water and the minerals up to the leaves, and carbon-dioxide enters the leaves through their tiny pores, and the sun shines on the leaves.

With the help of sunlight, the leaves make a delicious syrup from the water, minerals and carbon-dioxide and they send this syrup through very narrow pipes to the whole body of the tree.

The apple tree consumes some of this syrup itself in order to grow, and changes the rest into those beautiful fruits, apples, for us to benefit from them.

We enjoy eating this delicious fruit, but what is more,

these beautiful fruits give strength and energy to our bodies.



God, the All-knowing and Almighty, has put this order and harmony in the creation of the apple tree, so that it produces apples for us, and that we can benefit from its delicious fruits. We, in turn, thank Him, and plant the saplings of the apple tree and nurture them, and benefit from their tasty fruits. And we give some to family, friends and neighbors. God has created the apple tree and hundreds of other blessings for us and has given us strength, reason and intelligence for us to benefit from them.

So we thank God and obey His commands so as to live in freedom and felicity forever.

We know that many people of the world are too poor to receive enough fruit and other foods. It is our duty to strive to aid the deprived and defend their rights. We combat poverty, unemployment and exploitation so that one day, soon, everyone will live in comfort and ease.

Think and answer:

1. What things does the apple tree need in order to produce apples?

2. How do the leaves receive water and minerals?

3. Where does carbon-dioxide exist and how does it enter the leaves?

4. With the help of what energy do the leaves produce apples?

5. Who put this symmetry, order and harmony into the apple tree so that it can produce apples for us?

6. Whose orders must we follow in order to live in freedom and happiness?

7. How, and in what path, must we use the blessings of God?

8. How can we properly thank God for all His blessings?

9. Does everyone have enough access to fruit and other foods?

10. What is our duty towards the poor and deprived?

God, the Good, the Kind, has created fruit trees and has put order and harmony in their creation, so that they can produce for us these beautiful and delicious fruits. It is our duty to cultivate the earth, plant fruit trees, water them and care for them and, finally, benefit from their beautiful and delicious fruits, and be the means of others benefiting from them too.

Can you plant a sapling of a fruit tree?

LESSON FOUR

God, the All-Knowing and Almighty God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Plants are very beneficent and helpful. They produce more food than they use themselves and the surplus food they save for us. The surplus food of fruit trees, like apple, cherry and orange trees, takes the form of beautiful fruits.

Carrot, potato and onion plants, save their surplus food in their roots.

Wheat, pea, bean and lentil plants reserve their surplus food in their grains.

Really, if plants didn't have leaves, how could they produce food?

If the leaves didn't have pores, where would the carbon-dioxide of the air enter?

Our kind God has created leaves for plants and provided pores for their leaves so that the green leaves are able to make food.

If the plants made just enough food for themselves, what would we eat? What would animals eat?

But our Merciful God has created plants in such a way that they produce more food than they use themselves.

If plants didn't receive sunlight, with what energy would they produce food? But our All-Knowing and Almighty God has created the sun in such a way that the plants receive enough of its light for the leaves of the plants to be able, with the help of the light and energy of the sun, to produce food.

So, God knows everything and is able to do all things:
He knew that we need food and that we cannot make it
ourselves; and therefore He has created the green leaves of
plants and has provided pores for them in order for them to



be our food-producing factories.

He knew that these tiny factories need the sun's light and
energy, and He has created the sun in such a way that the
leaves of plants—these little factories—receive the right
amount of its light and energy.

If God was not All-Knowing, He would not know what
things we need.

If God was not Almighty, He could not make the things
we require.

And if God was not Generous and Merciful, and Kind
and Compassionate, He would not have bestowed on us all
these blessings.

So, now we know that:

God is "Alim"

(All-Knowing)

God is "Qadir"

(All-Powerful)

God is "Rahman"

(Generous and

Merciful)

God is "Rahim"

(Kind and

Compassionate)

So now we have realised that the Creator of this great

universe is God the All-Knowing, the All-Powerful, the Merciful and Compassionate. He created us and has put the world at our disposal, and has commanded us to work hard in cultivating the earth, and to obey only Him so as to live in dignity and freedom forever. The sun, the moon, trees plants and animals are all at our disposal and all work constantly to provide our sustenance. We too must work hard for God and His servants, and must strive to meet their needs.

Questions:

1. How do plants provide food for themselves?
2. Do plants produce just enough food for themselves?
3. Can people produce food for themselves without the help of plants?
4. What do plants need in order to produce food?
5. Who was aware of the needs of plants and met those needs?
6. Knowing that plants produce more food than they need themselves, what do we realise?
7. How do we trace the Knowledge and Power of our Creator?
8. How do we realise that He is Merciful and Compassionate?
9. In order to live in dignity, freedom and comfort, what must we do?
10. Now that we benefit from all God's blessings, what are our primal duties?

Exercises:

- a. Recite the lesson in a loud voice without any pauses or slips.
- b. Write a summary of the lesson.
- c. Think up three more questions and ask your friend to answer them.
- d. Tell the members of your family about this lesson.

LESSON FIVE

The Race

That afternoon, it was agreed that we would all walk from our school to a nearby village famous for its flowers. The plan was that we would race each other. The whole class was ready. We were supposed to reach the mosque of the village before sunset. The mosque of that village was built near a tall tree and the mosque's minaret was also very tall; we could see it from our own village.

We were all waiting for our sports teacher to announce the start of the race. When he did so, we quickly set off. Some of the boys ran, others said that at the beginning it was better to walk. We were happy and, merrily, we chatted amongst ourselves. On the way, we came to a stream that flowed from the same village we were going to. We became very happy and sat down at the side of the stream to wash ourselves and drink some of its fresh, cool water.

"Children", our teacher called out loudly, "if you feel thirsty and want to drink, don't drink too much. Otherwise you might get a stomach-ache and lag behind."

Upon hearing this, those of us who are bright and alert left the side of the stream and continued our walk. But some of us said that they were very thirsty, and that if they didn't quench their thirsts they wouldn't be able to go on. So they decided to drink a few more thanfuls



Our teacher was running harder than all of us. Slowly, slowly the sun began to set. Our teacher was the first to reach the mosque of that village. I and some of my friends also reached the mosque before the sun had completely set.

The following morning the teacher announced the winners.

“Dear children”, he said, “yesterday these pupils tried very hard and are the winners of the race. Today I am going to give them their prizes and you should congratulate them.

“This world is also a competition ground. We all struggle and race each other. Our race is in good deeds and in helping and working for others.

“Those who succeed in this race are those who give more benefit to God’s servants and worship God the best. God gives these people a prize and reward in the Hereafter, and puts them in Heaven.

“However, those who do not strive in doing good deeds and turn to ugly, unworthy deeds will be ashamed of their ugly deeds in the Hereafter and will regret them bitterly. They will not go to Heaven but will go to Hell and receive the recompense of their ugly deeds.

“Those who do good and those who do bad are not the same before God. God recompenses each person according to the goodness or badness of that person’s deeds.

“If God didn’t give to those who do good a beautiful,



eternal reward, what would induce us to do good deeds?

“And if God didn’t punish those who do bad deeds, what would be the difference between them and those who do good?”

Questions:

1. What kind of people normally win races and competitions?
2. When the children sat down at the edge of the stream, what did the teacher say to them?
3. Our race in this world is in doing what?
4. What kind of people are the winners in the competition ground that is the world?
5. What kind of people live in shame in this world and in

the Hereafter?

6. Are those who do good deeds and those who do bad deeds the same before God?

7. What reward does God give those who do good works?

8. What is the punishment of those who do bad?

Exercises:

a. Write the answers to the above questions carefully in your best handwriting.

b. Read the lesson to the members of your family.

c. With the help of your friends and teachers, arrange a race or competition.

d. Write a report of a race or competition and state the reason for the victory of the winners.

e. If you have carried our exercise "c", write a report about it and read it to your school-friends.

Life Eternal

The light of Spring falls on the park,
With the passing of winter-the season of dark.
Branches in bud, once more glowing,
Violets by the stream, once more growing.
Sitting there, so beautifully arrayed,
Under the willow tree, in its shade.
God, the Creator, with his power,
gives existence, once again, to the flower.
To the dead earth, where nothing grows,
a fresh, new life, He bestows.

Our death is for our bodies but autumnal,
The Resurrection is our spring and life eternal.

The just reward of each sinner and liar,
Is the darkness of Hell, the pain of its fire.

While the rewards of those who do good and right,
are the joys of Heaven, and Celestial Light.

LESSON SIX

The Hereafter

First the “World of Ordeal”, then the “Resurrection”

We are not destroyed at death, we just go from this world to another world called the “Hereafter”

In the Hereafter, we go first to the “World of Ordeal” and then to the “Resurrection”.

In the Holy Qur’an, God tells us, “Those who die have an ordeal until Resurrection.”

He also commands, “Do not think that who are killed in the cause of God are dead; they are alive and receive their sustenance from their Lord.”

God has informed us through Mohammad (S), His Holy Prophet, that when a human being dies and leaves this world, he goes to the World of Ordeal with the same appearance, and there he is subject to short questions.

They ask him:

Do you believe in God?

Whose commandments have you obeyed?

Those of God? Or of somebody other than God?

Who is your Prophet?

What is your religion?

Who is your Imam?

A person who has worshipped God in this world and was religious and who lived with true faith, will answer easily and his faith will be obvious. After these short questions and

answers, he will live in the World of Ordeal peacefully and happily until the Day of Judgement, successfully enjoying samples of the blessings of Paradise.

Questions and Answers in the World of Ordeal

Questions and answers in the World of Ordeal are real. People going to the World of Ordeal are really asked questions and they really have to answer them, but the questions and answers of the World of Ordeal are not the same as the questions and answers of this world.

People in the World of Ordeal hear the questions and answer them, but not by the ears and tongue with which they used to hear and speak in this world, but by the ears and tongue of the World of Ordeal.

It is not necessary for questions and answers always to be with these lips, tongues, mouths and ears. For example, in your dreams you speak to your friends and you hear what they say and you have a conversation with them. Is it with your ears? Is it with your tongue? Definitely not!

Sometimes in our dreams we go places to which we have never been before, but later, when we are awake, we go there and realise that we have seen that place in our dream.

In our dreams, with which body do we go to this place and to that place?

In our dreams, with which eyes do we see? With which ears do we hear?

Is it with these eyes and ears?

Is it with our normal body?

Definitely not, for our normal body is lying in bed and our eyes are closed.

It is possible that you, or someone you know, has had this type of dream.

The World of Ordeal is a real and true world, and the questions and answers of that world are also real and true, and we explained about the dream because it is a good example.



The Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad (S), tells us: “Those who are bad-tempered at home are punished in the World of Ordeal.”

Amir al-Mominin Ali(A), tells us: “Those who tell tales and backbite are punished in the World of Ordeal.”

But those who did not accept God and His Prophets in this world, who were not obedient to the Holy Commands, and who were irreligious and cruel, cannot acknowledge God and His Prophets in the World of Ordeal either, and their disbelief makes itself manifest.

Such people will endure hardships and tortures in the World of Ordeal, and the sufferings of the World of Ordeal for them will be samples of the sufferings of Hell.

In the World of Ordeal, the truth about people will become clear, and so will their “*Iman*” and “*Kufr*”, their belief and disbelief.

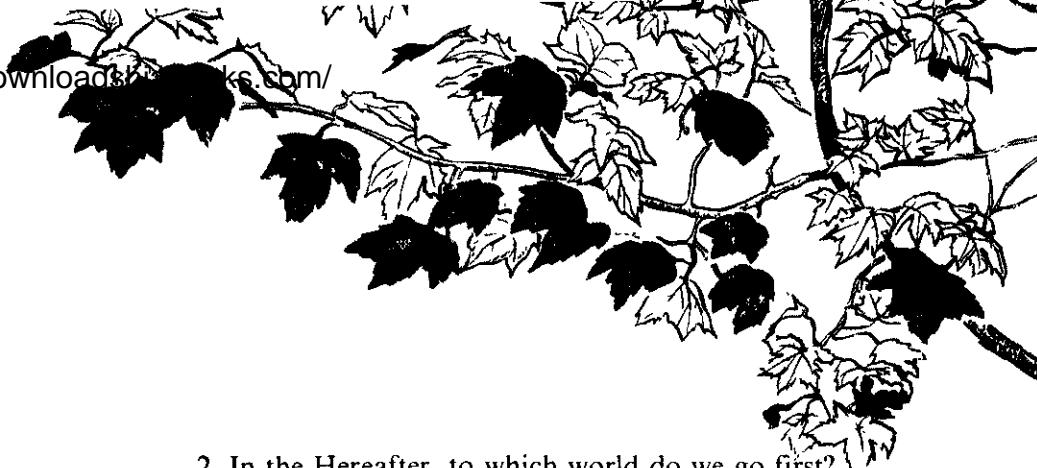
Those who, in this world, really believed in “God, the Day of Judgement and the Prophets”, and performed good deeds, they will answer the questions easily, for their faith will manifest itself too.

But those who didn’t have faith and had been bullies and oppressors and used to behave badly, these cannot give the right answers in the World of Ordeal, and their sins and disbelief become apparent.

A sinful person shall experience samples of the sufferings in the World of Ordeal that must be suffered in Hell, and the punishment for his deeds will begin from there.

Think and Answer:

1. Are our deeds and efforts futile? Where do we see the result of our efforts?



2. In the Hereafter, to which world do we go first?
3. What does God tell us in the Holy Quran about the World of Ordeal?
4. If in this world people really have faith in God, the Day of Judgement, and the Prophets-what type of life do they have in the World of Ordeal? How do they answer the questions of that world?
5. In the World of Ordeal, what are the people asked?
6. In the World of Ordeal, whose faith becomes apparent?
7. The disbelief and nastiness of which people become apparent?
8. In the World of Ordeal, can lies be told?... Why not?
9. Which people suffer in the World of Ordeal?
10. Are the questions and answers of the World of Ordeal by means of the same ears and tongues that we have in this world?
11. What must we do in order not to be punished in the Hereafter?

Exercises:

- a. Read the lesson to the members of your family and discuss with them its contents.
- b. Write a summary of the lesson and read it to your school-friends.
- c. Write the answers to the first three of the questions above.

LESSON SEVEN

Musa, the Holy Prophet of God

God selected Musa, alayhis-salam, for Prophethood and commanded him to go with his brother, Harun, to the tyrant Fir'awn (Pharaoh) and frighten him with the threat of Divine chastisement.

God commanded Musa to speak gently to Fir'awn at first and invite him to worship of the One God.

Musa and his brother, Harun, set off for Fir'awn's palace and, after waiting a while, they finally went in to see him. Just as God had commanded them, they began their conversation with him gently and softly. They told him:

“O Fir'awn, we have brought a message from the Lord and Exalter of the world and all its inhabitants, and we intend to deliver the people from injustice and oppression and lead them towards knowledge and light. “We want you to stop your injustice and arrogance and stop tyrannising the people. We are Prophets of the Supreme Lord and we have been commanded to make the people aware of their God and to call them to obey Him.”

When Fir'awn heard what Musa said, he became very agitated and, in order to silence Musa, he demanded of him:

“Who is this Lord who has given you this message?”

Musa quietly but firmly replied:

“My Lord is the One Almighty God Who has created

the world and its creatures in all its order and magnificence, Who has guided everything towards its special path of perfection.”

Fir’awn, who understood very well what Musa had said, pretended to be stupid and said:

“But is there any God besides me? Is not your life and death in my power? Don’t you see that the whole of Egypt obeys my command? And that all these streams, gardens and fields belong to me?”

“O Musa, if you follow a lord other than me, if you obey anyone other than me. I’ll have you thrown in prison.”

Musa was a Prophet of God and was calm and collected, without the slightest trace of fear in his voice, as he said:

“My Lord and Exalter is the Lord and Exalter of the whole universe, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He has made us His Prophets for us to deliver His message to the people and deliver them from tyranny and oppression.”

Fir’awn saw that he was being belittled and humiliated by Musa’s calmness and the strength of Musa’s faith. He said to Musa:

“If you are telling the truth, give me a sign of this Lord of yours.”

Fir’awn looked on.

Musa, the Holy Prophet of God, put his hand inside his jacket and immediately brought it out. His hand was now shining like a star. Then he threw his walking staff at the feet of Fir’awn. At the order of God, the staff became a huge, angry snake. Fir’awn took one look at the snake and fled from his throne, screaming.

Musa bent down, took hold of the snake, and once again it became a staff.

Fir’awn, who had turned completely white and was shaking violently, said to those around him:

“Did you see what a magician this man is? These two men with their magic want to turn you out of your homes.”



Reflect and Answer:

1. When God chose Musa to be a Prophet, what command did He give him?
2. At first, how did Musa and his brother speak to Fir'awn and what did they say?...Why?
3. Why did Fir'awn become agitated by what they said? What did he say to them?

4. What was the Holy Prophet Musa's reply?
5. Why did Fir'awn threaten Musa? How did it effect him? Was the Prophet Musa frightened by it?...Why not?
6. Why did Fir'awn feel himself to be belittled and humiliated in front of Musa?
7. What did he demand of Musa?...Why?
8. What did Musa do in reply to Fir'awn's demand?
9. After seeing God's signs, why did Fir'awn still refuse to believe?

Exercises:

- a. Draw a scene from this story.
- b. Write a summary of the discussion between Musa and Fir'awn.
- c. Read the lesson to the members of your family.

LESSON EIGHT

Fir'awn calls his Magicians

Fir'awn decided to combat Musa. He gave the command for the magicians of the city, all of whom were famous and very accomplished, to be gathered.

Fir'awn told the magicians that if they were successful he would give them great rewards and grant them position among the favoured at his court.

The appointed day came. All the people of the city had gathered to see who would win the contest. The magicians entered the arena with all their equipment, as Musa entered with his staff. The people formed an enormous crowd around the edges of the arena. Fir'awn, too, was sitting in a special place surrounded by his followers.

The magicians asked Musa if he would start the contest or should they.

'Begin', commanded Musa.

Everybody was looking on, Fir'awn among them...

The magicians threw their sticks and ropes on the ground and they began to move about. The people thought that the arena was full of crawling snakes.

Then Musa received the Divine command not to fear the magic of the magicians and to throw his staff to the ground, and that the magicians had deceived the people with their magic, and that the deceivers are never successful.

Musa threw his staff to the ground.



The people gave a great cry and began to flee. Some closed their eyes so as not to see what Musa's staff had become and where it was going and what it was doing.

Musa's staff had again become a great, ferocious snake that was speedily devouring the ropes and rods that the magicians had thrown on the ground. Finally, Musa put out his hand, clutched the snake and it became a staff once more. Musa leaned on it.

More than everyone else the magicians realised that what Musa had done was not magic, and that it was a sign of the Power of the Almighty God. They immediately believed in Musa and fell down in prostration, thanking God for having guided them. They were saying:

"We believe in the Lord and Exalter of the worlds and of their inhabitants,

"We believe in the God of Musa and Harun."

Fir'awn was livid. "How dare you believe in Musa's God!" he screamed at them in rage. "I didn't give you permission to do so. Now I will have you nailed to a door."

"We have found the truth", said the magicians, "and we have realised that Musa (A.S.) is the Prophets sent by God the Creator of the world, and we believe in them and we have been freed from servility to you. Now we are not afraid of being killed. Do whatever you want, for we are not afraid of death. You can only end our worldly lives, and you have no power over our lives in the Hereafter. After our deaths we will be in the world of the Hereafter where we will be blessed with the gifts of our Lord. And in the Hereafter God will give us the rewards."

Questions:

1. Who did Fir'awn summon? What did he promise them?
2. What did the magicians say to Musa? What did Musa tell them?
3. What did the magicians do? What did the people think?
4. What command did God give to the Prophet Musa?
5. Why did the magicians understand that what Musa

did was not magic?

6. When they believed in Musa, what did they do? What did they say?

7. What did Fir'awn say to the magicians? Why?

8. What was the magicians' reply?

9. Why is it that a believer is not afraid of death and martyrdom?

Exercises:

a. Draw a scene from the story.

b. Write the answer to question 9 in five lines.

c. Recite the lesson to the members of your family.

How Must a Guide Be?

This boy has lost his way home. To whom do you entrust him?

Who can guide him and take him home?

Can someone take him home who doesn't know the way?

Would you trust a dishonest and untrustworthy person? Would you entrust this child to such a person? ...Why not?

Would you choose someone to guide him who doesn't know the way to the child's home or who makes mistakes in showing the way?...Why not?

So, a guide must:

Know the way correctly,

Be honest and trustworthy,

and make no mistakes in guiding.

A prophet is a trustworthy and honest person whom God has chosen to guide the people, to whom God has taught the path of life in this world and in the Hereafter, and to whom God has entrusted the leadership of humanity.

How Must a Prophet Be?

When you want to send a “verbal message” to a friend, what do you do?

To whom do you relate the message so that it reaches your friend?

Would you choose a liar and dishonest person to carry your message?... Why not?

How about a person who forgets and makes mistakes? ...Why not?

So, who would you choose to deliver the message?

Yes, the deliverer of the message must be truthful and honest, must not forget the message, and, in hearing and delivering it, mustn't make any mistakes.

God, too, chooses a truthful and honest person to deliver His message, and relates His message to him. The Prophet correctly receives God's message and delivers it to the people perfectly and correctly.

Awareness and Vision: the Secret of Being Disgusted by Sins.

Dirty clothes have been washed in this tub.

Who is ready to drink some of the dirty water in this tub?

If an amount of it was given to a blind and uninformed person, is it possible that he would drink it?

But how about a person who sees and is informed?

If a person sees the dirt in the water and perceives its harmfulness, would he drink it?

Right, every seeing and aware person who sees the ugliness and foulness of a thing will not associate himself with it; rather, he will hate it and be disgusted by it.

Likewise, Prophets are disgusted by sins and never commit them because they see the ugliness and foulness of sin. This vision and awareness has been given to them by God.

Questions:

1. What kind of person must a guide be?
2. What kind of person does God choose for Prophethood?
3. When you want to send a message, who do you say it to? Do you choose a liar to be your messenger?
4. What qualities must a Prophet have?
5. Would a seeing and aware person drink the dirty water from a wash-tub? Why not?
6. Who has given vision and awareness to the Holy Prophets?

Exercises:

- a. Ask your friend to answer the above questions.
- b. Read the lesson to one of your friends and discuss it together.
- c. Write the answers to the questions.

LESSON NINE

Prophets — Aware and Infallible Guides

God chooses an honest and trustworthy person to deliver His message to Mankind, and makes him a perfect example of religion so that, with his words and deeds, he guides mankind towards God.

The Prophet is the best and most perfect of all human beings. In knowledge, manners, and behaviour, he is the foremost of all mankind, and God has cultured him and chosen him to be for people a leader and an example.

The Prophet knows very well the path to happiness in this world and in the Hereafter,... because God has taught it to him. The Prophet treads this path himself and he invites people to tread the same path and leads them on it.

The Prophet knows God well and loves Him very much. He is perfectly aware of the situation in the Hereafter, and in Heaven and Hell. Good and bad morals and actions he recognizes perfectly. He sees the ugliness and foulness of sins and knows that sin pollutes the human soul.

God, the All-Knowing and Almighty, has put this vision and awareness at the disposal of His Prophets. With this vision and awareness, the Prophet sees the ugliness and foulness of sin and knows that God doesn't like wrong-doers and is displeased with them. For this reason the Prophet never commits a sin; rather, he is disgusted by sin.

The Prophet delivers God's messages to mankind

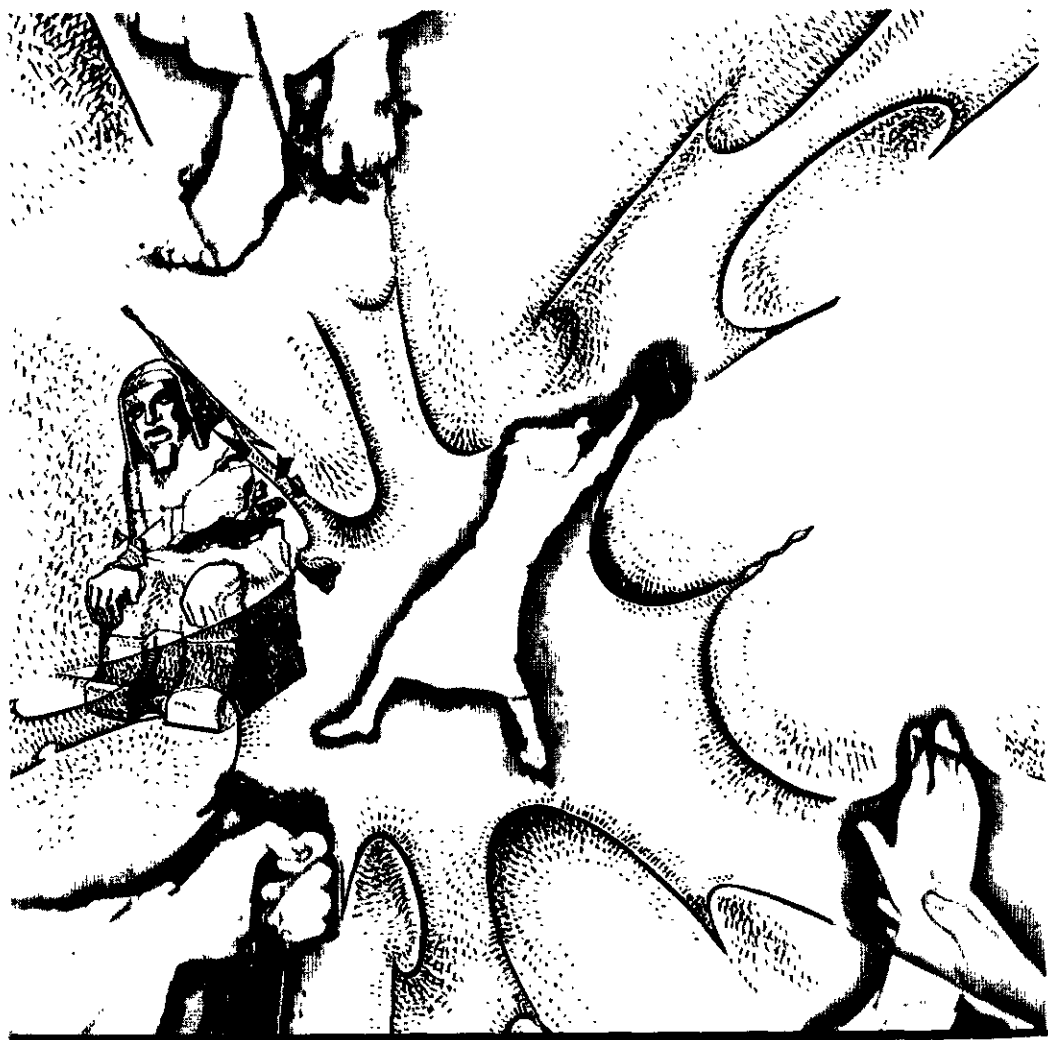
without additions or deletions and without mistakes or forgetfulness.

Because the Prophet is without sin and mistakes, people rely on him and can take example from his words and from his deeds, and can benefit from his supervision and leadership.

Such a person is called infallible (*ma'sum*) and God's Prophets are all infallible. That is:

They do no wrong, they neither make mistakes nor forget, they are perfectly honest and trustworthy.

Prophets are the aware and sinless guides of mankind.



They deliver God's message to their people, guide them, and lead them towards God and eternal happiness.

Think and Answer:

1. What qualities must a guide have?
2. What type of person does God choose to guide mankind?
3. What qualities must a Prophet have?
4. What type of person does God choose to deliver His message?
5. Why do the Prophets of God not become tainted by sins, but are inherently disgusted by them?
6. Who has given to the Prophets this special vision?
7. How does this special vision become the cause of the Prophet's purity?
8. "Perfect example of religion" means what?
9. Which person is the perfect example of religion?
10. Can a person who becomes tainted by sin be a perfect example of religion?
11. When can a Prophet, in his words and deeds, be a perfect example for mankind?
12. If the Prophet forgets and makes mistakes, can the people rely perfectly on what he says?
13. Which person do we call infallible (*ma'sum*)?

Exercises:

- a. Write a summary of the lesson.
- b. Discuss the answers to the questions of this lesson with your friend.
- c. Read the lesson to one of your friends.

LESSON TEN

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.) and the Caravan of the Quraysh*

Muhammad (S.A.) was a child of eight when his grandfather, 'Abdul-Muttalib, passed away. At the time of his death, 'Abdul-Muttalib instructed his son, 'Abu Talib, to take good care of Muhammad (S.A.) and to protect him, "Muhammad (S.A.) is an orphan who has been denied the blessings of a mother and a father", he said "I entrust him to you for you to protect him and guard him well. He has a brilliant future and will obtain a great position."

Abu Talib accepted his father's instructions and took charge of Muhammad (S.A.) as directed, and cared for him like a loving father.

Muhammad (S.A.) was about twelve years old when he accompanied his uncle, Abu Talib, on a journey to the city of Damascus with a trading caravan of the Quraysh. For a child of twelve like Muhammad (S.A.) this journey was tough and difficult, but looking at the wonders and beauties of nature, the mountains and plains, reduced for him the weariness and hardship. For Muhammad (S.A.) seeing the great wide deserts, the highlands and the lowlands, the towns and the villages, was very enjoyable.

The caravan arrived near the town of "Basra".

At that place there was a house of worship that had been built from ancient times, in which there was always one of the

wise men of the Christians engaged in worship, waiting to see the Last Prophet of God. The Prophet 'Isa and the previous prophets had told about the coming of "the Last Prophet of God" and about his special signs.

That house of worship was called "*Dayr*" and at that time "*Buhayra*" was living there engaged in worship

As the caravan came into view from a far, *Buhayra* came out of *Dayr* and witnessed things that amazed him. The caravan halted near *Dayr* for a rest and the men lit fires and became busy preparing their meal. *Buhayra* watched the people of the caravan very carefully, and, again, amazing things caught his attention. Despite the fact that he never paid attention to caravans, this time he invited the people of the caravan to be his guests.

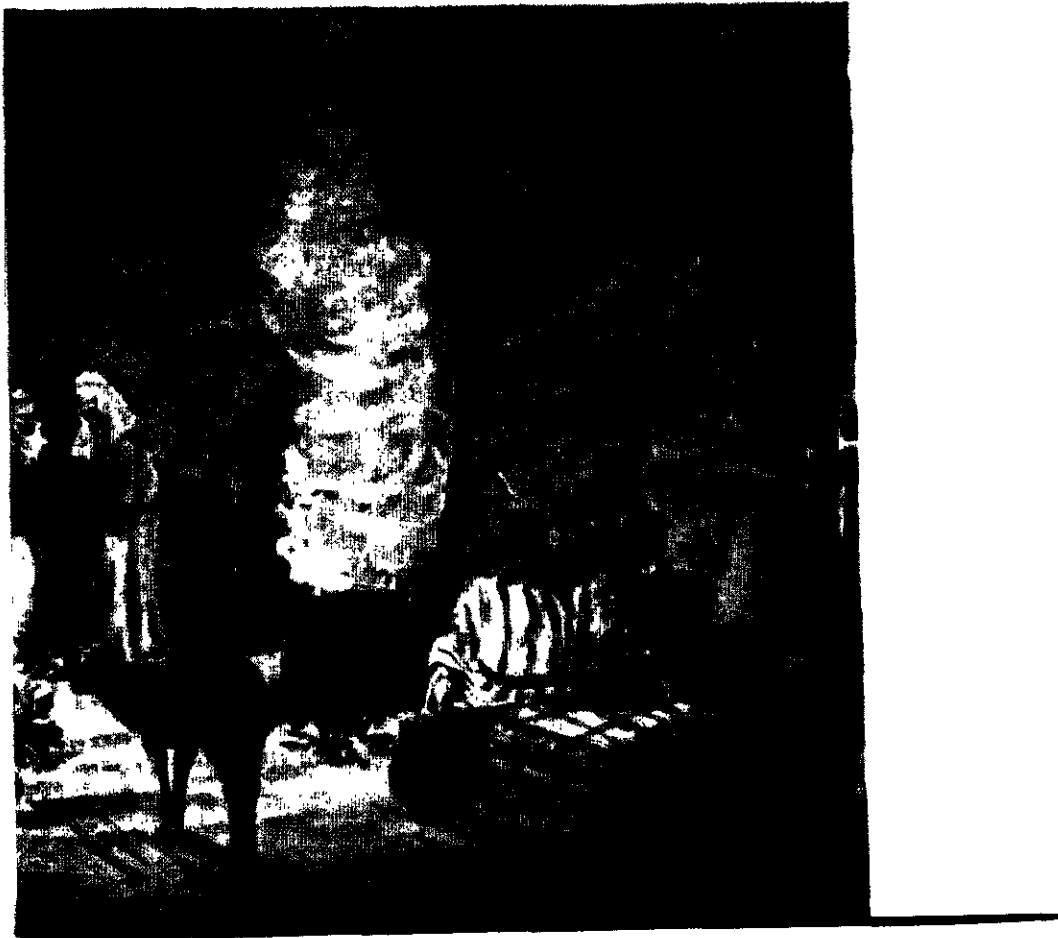


As they entered *Dayr*, he welcomed them and looked at the faces of his guests very carefully, as if looking for someone lost. Suddenly he cried, "Dear child! Come closer so I can see you... Hm,... It seems it is him... Come closer!"

The young lad had caught his attention. He held him, bent down, put his hands on his shoulders, and for a while looked at his face from closeup.

He asked what his name was. He was told "Muhammad".

For a while he stood silently gazing at Muhammad (S.A.) then he sat down in front of him with great respect. He held his hands and asked him questions. He was very inquisitive and thorough: he spoke to Abu Talib and he asked the others questions too.



He had found his “lost one”, and he looked very happy.

He looked at Abu Talib and said, “This child has a brilliant future and will attain a great position.

“This child is the very Prophet of whose coming the previous Prophets have given glad tidings.

“I have read his signs in the scriptures. He is the Last of God’s Prophets. Soon he will receive his Prophetic mission and his religion will spread throughout the world. Know the worth of this child and make every effort to guard and protect him.”

After resting, the caravan loaded up and departed. *Buhayra* had come out of *Dayr* and was watching Muhammad (S.A.) and shedding tears. After an hour, the caravan could no longer be seen, and *Buhayra* returned to his room, sat down alone, and buried himself in *thought*.

Think and Answer:

1. What was the relationship between Abu Talib and Muhammad (S.A.)? After Abdul-Muttalib, what responsibility did he have?
2. At the time of his death, what did 'Abdul-Muttalib say to his son, Abu Talib? What instructions did he give him?
3. Who was *Buhayra* waiting to see? How did he recognize him?
4. Why did *Buhayra* invite the people of the caravan to be his guests?
5. In your opinion, why did *Buhayra* want to see Muhammad (S.A.)? When he was left alone, what was he thinking?
6. In his religious books, what had *Buhayra* read?

Exercises:

Read the story once.

Describe it to a member of your family.

Write down a summary of the story in ten lines.

Draw a picture of one of the scenes of this story.

LESSON ELEVEN

The Holy Prophet of Islam Receives His Mission

“*Hira*” is a high and beautiful mountain that is situated near the city of Mecca, and the cave, *Hira*, is a small cave near the peak of this mountain.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.), before his prophethood, from time to time used to go to the cave of *Hira*, and in that quiet and secluded spot he would spend his time in worship and reflection. At night, he used to stand on a stone slab at the entrance of the cave and look out for a while over the clear sky of Mecca and its multitudes of beautiful stars.

He used to gaze at the splendour and grandeur of the creation, then he would go into the cave and pray to the Creator of this great world.

He would say, “O Lord, You did not create this great world and the beautiful sun, and stars in vain. You have an aim and a purpose for Your creation!”

It was a beautiful dawn and Mohammad (S.A.) was praying inside that cave when he experienced the prophetic glory with all his existence. *Jibrail*, the angel, had come and, in his heavenly tones, he said, “O Muhammad! Thou art now God’s Prophet. God has commanded you to save mankind from polytheism, idolatry and misery, and to call them to the freedom and grandeur of worship of the “One” and of Unity.

O Muhammad! Now thou art God's Prophet. Call people to Islam."

Muhammad (S.A.) saw Jibrail and heard the message which he had brought from God with all his being.



Then, with an illuminated heart, an aware conscience, and full of certainty, he came down from Mount *Hira* and went in the direction of home. *Khadija*, his affectionate wife, opened the door for him and, on seeing his shining face, became very pleased.

Muhammad (S.A.)- who had now become God's Prophet... said to his wife, "I was on Mount *Hira* when I beheld God's great angel, *Jibrail*, who said to me in his heavenly voice.

'O Muhammad, behold, you are God's Prophet!

'Thy God has commanded that you save mankind from polytheism, idolatry and misery and that you call them to the freedom and grandeur of worship of the "*One*" and of Unity,'

“An arduous task and difficult responsibility has been placed on my shoulders.” he said.

Khadija, that great lady, said to her trustworthy and truthful husband, “I already knew that you would become a Prophet of God, and I was waiting for such a glorious day. The Prophet 'Isa gave the tiding of your Prophethood.

“Yes, God has placed a weighty responsibility on your shoulders; I testify to the Oneness of God, and believe in your Prophethood, and become a Muslim, and in all circumstances I am your supporter and helper.”

Imam 'Ali, who was an aware and intelligent boy, believed in the Prophethood of Muhammad (S.A.) and was the first to become a Muslim.

For some time the number of Muslims was not more than these three Muslims, but with the high ambition and heavenly determination which they had, they decided to fight the world of idolatry and irreligion. At the start, only these three people used to stand for prayer and, in front of astonished eyes, they would beseech and speak to the One True God.

A man relates, “One day, I was sitting in the Holy Mosque of Mecca. I saw a handsome man enter the mosque, he threw a glance at the sky and stood still, a youth stood on his right side, and then a woman came and stood behind them.

“For a while they stood still, saying something, then they bent, stood up again, sat down and put their heads on the ground.

“I was astonished and said to the person sitting next to me, ‘*Abbas*, who are these three people? What are they doing?’

“The handsome man standing in front is Muhammad, my nephew’, said *Abbas*. “That woman is Khadija, his faithful wife. The youth is 'Ali, another nephew of mine. Muhammad says that God has selected him for Prophethood. The woman and the youth both believe in him and have accepted his religion. Other than these three people,

no one has accepted their religion.

“Muhammad says the religion of Islam is for all the people of the world and they will quickly accept this religion and great numbers will become Muslim.”

Our Holy Prophet was made Prophet on the 27th of the month of *Rajab*. This day is called the Day of *Mab'ath*. Our Holy Prophet was 40 years old at that time.

Think and Answer:

1. Where did our Holy Prophet, before his Prophethood, go to worship and reflect? At what did he gaze? What did he say to God?

2. Have you ever looked at the sky full of stars? What do you think to yourself when you do this?

3. What was the name of the angel who brought the message to Holy Muhammad (S.A.)? What was the message which was brought to him?

4. What was Muhammad's (S.A.) appearance like when he came down from Mount *Hira*? What did he say to his wife, Khadija?

5. After hearing him speak, what did his wife say to him?

6. When the Holy Prophet was appointed by God to Prophethood, how old was he?

7. What is the “Day of Mab'ath”? Have you ever celebrated this great day? Have you ever taken part in such celebrations? Do you remember the summary of what you have read?

Exercises:

Recite the lesson once out loud.

Write a summary of the lesson.

Rajab in one of the twelve months of Islam. Do you know the names of the other months. Do you know what is different about these months? Find out the answers to these questions, then ask your friends to answer them.

LESSON TWELVE

The Call to Faith and Freedom

A cry was raised. A man was standing by the hill and calling to the people: "Come, O people, come, I have brought a message for you."

The people ran towards him, children too, and gathered around him. In order for his voice to reach the people more clearly and so that they could all see him, the man climbed upon a large boulder and stood there. Then he looked at the people and said:

"O people! O fellow townsmen! O my kith and kin! You all know me well and trust me. Is it not so?"

The affirmation of the listeners was loud and unanimous. The man continued:

"O people! I have been sent by God the One and Unique with a message for you."

"What is that message, O Muhammad the Trustworthy?" said one of the listeners.

"Say, 'there is no God but Allah, you will prosper'", replied the prophet. "Don't worship idols anymore. Don't maintain partners with God. Don't obey the tyrants. Don't be unjust to others, and be an enemy to injustice and oppressors.

"Say, 'there is no God but Allah', and accept the leadership of mankind and save them from the disgrace of oppression.

“Say, ‘there is no God but Allah’ and be dignified and free in the world and live in Paradise in the Hereafter. “This is the message I have brought to you from God, ‘there is no God except Allah.’”

There was an uproar. They wouldn’t allow Muhammad (S.A.) the Trust worthy to continue his speech. Some were sunk in thought while some, who were the nobles and tyrants of Mecca, were angry and were making fun of the prophet.

One day a group of the nobles of Mecca went to the house of Abu Talib, the Prophet’s uncle. Abu Talib was the head of his tribe and a leader of the city. He was an old man and everyone respected him.

“Do you know what your nephew is saying?” the nobles asked Abu Talib. “Muhammad is telling everyone not to worship the idols and to believe in One God. What crazy words he is uttering!”

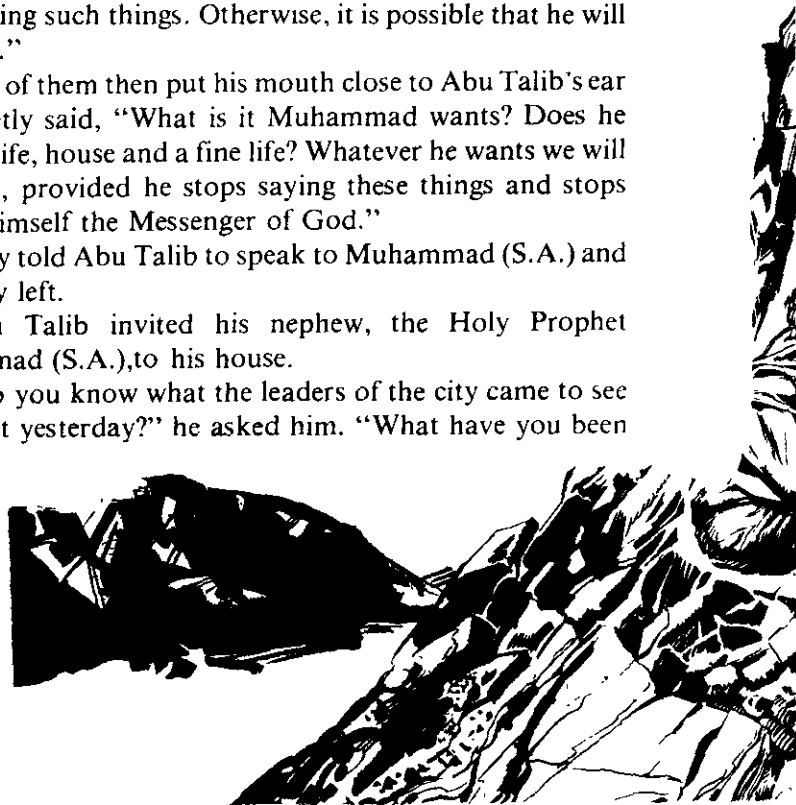
“O Abu Talib”, they continued, “You have to stop him from saying such things. Otherwise, it is possible that he will be killed.”

One of them then put his mouth close to Abu Talib’s ear and quietly said, “What is it Muhammad wants? Does he want a wife, house and a fine life? Whatever he wants we will give him, provided he stops saying these things and stops calling himself the Messenger of God.”

They told Abu Talib to speak to Muhammad (S.A.) and then they left.

Abu Talib invited his nephew, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.), to his house.

“Do you know what the leaders of the city came to see me about yesterday?” he asked him. “What have you been saying?”



“My dear uncle”, said Muhammad (S.A.) who loved his uncle very much. “God has selected me to be His Prophet. He has given me a message so as to lift the people from degradation. He has given me a message for me to call the people to worship of the One God. God has ordered me to prevent the people from idol-worship and oppression.”

Abu Talib had been listening to Muhammad (S.A.) well and, at heart, he believed in him. Quietly he said to his nephew, “Do you know what they wanted from me? They wanted me to stop you from speaking like this!”



“Never will I disobey God’s command”, Muhammad (S.A.) told him without hesitation. “I am going to carry it out and will continue to call the people to devotion to the One True God and to **Tawhid** (monotheism).

“My dear uncle”, he continued, “I swear by God that if they were to offer me the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, together with all the wealth and beauty in the world, still I would not turn back from the mission which God has entrusted me!”

Abu Talib thought for a moment. “In whatever way God has commanded you”, he finally said, “obey Him. I will always support you.”

Questions:

1. What was the first thing that the Holy Prophet asked the people? What did they reply?
2. What is the primal message of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.)? What does it mean?
3. Why did the tyrants of Mecca oppose the Prophet?
4. What did Abu Talib say to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.), his nephew?
5. What was the Holy Prophet’s reply?
6. What do we learn from this of the Prophet’s behaviour?

LESSON THIRTEEN

Holy Fatima, the Ideal Lady of Islam

Fatima was born in the fifth year of Mohammad's (S.A.) Prophethood. Her father was the Holy Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) and her mother was Khadija. (Khadija was the first woman to become Muslim, and she truly believed in God and His Prophet. She was loyal and rich, and spent all her wealth for the progress of Islam.)

The Holy Prophet Mohammad (S.A.) loved his daughter, Fatima, very much and used to say about her, "Fatima is part of my body. Whoever troubles her troubles me, and whoever makes her happy makes me happy."

At the beginning of her youth, Fatima married 'Ali. She was the ideal lady of Islam and excelled all ladies in worship, manners and morals. For her husband, she was the best wife and for her children, she was the best mother. She did the housework and took great pains and troubles upon herself to maintain and prepare the necessities of life. She never made undeserving demands on her husband, 'Ali, nor caused him any hardship.

'Ali used to say, "By God, I never did anything in all my life which made Fatima unhappy or angry, and Fatima, too, never did anything which made me unhappy or angry."

Fatima had two sons, Hasan and Husayn, and two daughters, Zaynab and Umme Kulthum.

The descendents of the Prophet are from the children of

Holy Fatima. Our eleven Holy Imams are descendents of the lady Fatima (A.S.).

Fatima loved her children very much. She cultured them with Islamic morals, manners and etiquette and brought up her children to be the best.

Fatima—peace be upon her soul—passed away on the 3rd of the month of Jamadi al-Thani, at the age of 18. Her body was entrusted to the earth in Medina, but the whereabouts of her grave are not known.

The Blessed Necklace

A pale and dusty old man came into the mosque. He was clad in rags. He went to the Prophet and in three short sentences explained his circumstances:

“Oh Prophet of God, I am hungry, give me food.

“I am clothless, give me clothes.

“I am without means, help me!”

The Prophet (S.A.) told him, “I have nothing in hand.



Go to my daughter's house. She will help you."

The house of Fatima was near and one of the Prophet's companions led the old man to it. The old man knocked at the door.

"Who is it?"

"I'm a hungry person, I'm clothless, I'm without means, be kind and generous to me, God will be kind and generous to you."

Fatima took from her neck the necklace given to her by her cousin and gave it to the old man saying, "Sell this necklace and spend the money. I hope that in the future you will be free of need."

The poor man returned happily. The Prophet was still in the mosque. The old man showed the necklace and said, "Oh Prophet, your daughter, Fatima, gave me her necklace to sell."

One of the Prophet's friends, Ammar ibn Yasir, heard what the old man said and asked him what price he wanted.

The old man said that he would sell it for enough food to



satisfy his hunger, enough cloth to clothe his body, and enough money to get home.

Ammar said, "I buy this necklace from you,
"for a meal of bread and meat,
"clothes of Yemenite cloth,
"a 'four-footer' to take you home,
"and, in addition, eight dinars of gold and 200 dirhams of silver."

Ammar then took the old man home and paid him the price of the necklace.

The old man ate the food, put on the clothes and went on his way satisfied and happy.

Then Ammar put perfume on the necklace, wrapped it up in a piece of cloth and ordered his slave, "Go to the Prophet of God. I have given you and this necklace to him."

The slave went to the Prophet and delivered Ammar's message.

The Holy Prophet looked at the necklace and said, "And I have given you and the necklace to my daughter."

The slave went to Holy Fatima and told her what the Prophet had said and presented the necklace. Fatima thanked him and said, "And in the path of God, I have freed you. You are not a slave anymore!"

That man, the slave, became very happy and with joy and surprise said, "What a blessed necklace!

"It satisfied hunger,
"clothed the body.
"bestowed means in place of helplessness,
"mounted the walker,
"freed the slave,
"and finally returned to its owner!"

The Holy Prophet of Islam and his followers strove hard to combat slavery and were continually freeing slaves, whatever the price. Thus, in Islam, the freeing of slaves is counted amongst the highest acts of worship, and, in some circumstances, is even considered obligatory.

Think and Answer:

1. Who was the lady Fatima, upon her be peace? What was the name of her holy mother?
2. What type of woman was Fatima's mother? When did she accept Islam? What type of a Muslim was she?
3. What did the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.) say about his daughter, Fatima?
4. What did Imam 'Ali say about Fatima? What sort of mother was Fatima?
5. How many children did Fatima have? What were their names?
6. How old was Fatima when she passed away? Where was she buried?
7. Who was Ammar? What did he say to the old man?
8. For what price did Ammar buy the necklace from the old man?
9. What did Fatima say when she gave the necklace to the old man?

LESSON FOURTEEN

Who can be the Prophet's Successor?

The passengers of this aeroplane have boarded, but the pilot hasn't come yet. It seems he has fallen sick and is unable to come.

Who will be put in his place to fly the passengers to their destination? One of the passengers?

...The stewardess?... A passer-by?... Who?

Will they select someone to take the place of the pilot who doesn't have the awareness and vision of this skill?

Would the passengers have confidence in him? Would they fly with him?

Who can become the pilot's replacement?

Definitely it must be someone who knows how to fly a plane and has the "insight and awareness" of this skill.

Now, with regard to this example, can you say:

Who can be the "Imam"?

Who can be the Prophet's replacement?

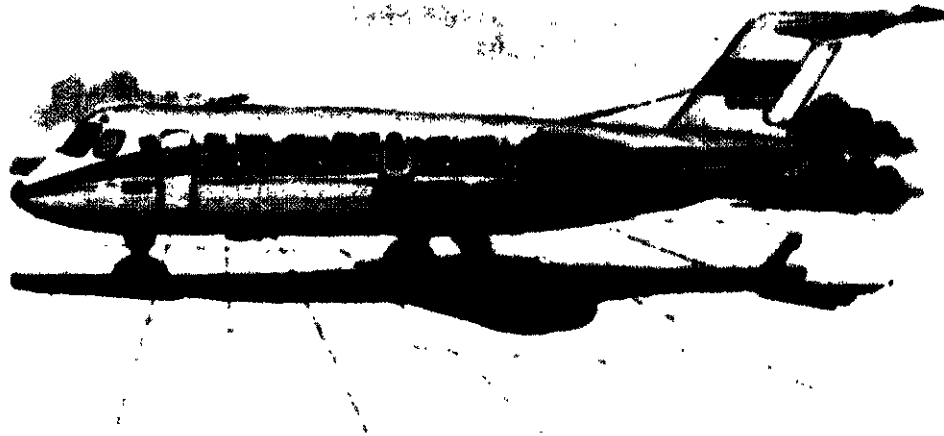
How must the Prophet's replacement be?

Can someone who doesn't have the vision and awareness to guide the people, be the prophet's replacement?

Is someone who doesn't know the rules of religion properly, who sins and makes mistakes, be worthy of successorship?

Would people have confidence in him?

Who knows better which person is capable of succeeding



the Prophet?... God, or the people?

Of course, God knows better and that is why He appoints the capable person to be the Prophet's replacement and orders the Prophet to place his divine vision and awareness at his successor's disposal. The Prophet acts according to God's command and picks the person out to be his successor and introduces him to the people as such.

The successor of a Prophet is called an "Imam"

Imam, the Prophet's Infallible Successor

The Prophet, according to God's command, selects an honest and trustworthy person to be his successor and to perform his tasks after him.

The Imam is a trustworthy and honest person selected by God for Imamate and Leadership of Mankind. The Prophet, according to God's command, introduces this person so that by words and deeds he guides mankind towards God, and the people take example from him and follow him in the way they

live their lives.

The Prophet, with the permission of God, places his vision, knowledge and awareness at the disposal of his successor for him to correctly lead and guide the people. The Imam knows the laws and instructions of religion (as God and the Prophet have taught him), and communicates this to the people. The Imam, like the Prophet, is a perfect example of religion and acts perfectly in accordance with religious instructions.

The Imam, like the Prophet, sees the ugliness and foulness of sin and because of this vision and awareness he never commits sins, rather he is disgusted by them.

Because the Imam, like the Prophet, commits no sins and makes no mistakes, people have confidence in him and are able to follow his words and actions.

The Imams (twelve Imams) are all infallible. This means that:

They commit no sin, they are perfectly honest and trustworthy, and they fully and correctly communicate the laws and instructions of religion to the people. (That is, they never make mistakes or forget anything.)

Think and Answer:

1. Who can be an Imam and replacement for the Prophet?
2. Can someone who is a sinner or forgetful become the Imam of Muslims?... Why not?
3. What does “perfect example of religion” mean?
4. Why is the Imam disgusted by sins?
5. Who provided the Imam with special vision and awareness?
6. ‘The Imam is infallible’; what does this mean? What is the Arabic word for infallible?
7. What is the Divine responsibility of the Imam?

LESSON FIFTEEN

The Great Day of "Ghadir"

The Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah (S.A.) went to Mecca in the last year of his life to perform the worship of "*Hajj*". He also invited all the Muslims to take part in the *Hajj* ceremonies, and, in response to his invitation, all those who were able to do so accepted the Prophet's dictate. In a short while, large numbers of Muslims were moving towards Mecca. There they performed the glorious worship of *Hajj* and learned from the Prophet all its customs and procedures.

When the ceremonies of the *Hajj* and the visits to the Holy Ka'aba were over, the caravans made ready their return and set off. The Prophet, too, accompanied a caravan and set off for Medina.

The sound of the camel bells had filled the desert. The weather was hot and the desert scalding. Mid-journey, God's angel of revelation descended and brought the Prophet this message from God:

"O Prophet! Deliver to mankind the message that has descended to you from your Lord. If you do it not, you have not fulfilled your Divine mission. God will guard you from the evil of mankind and will not make the unbelievers successful."

At that very spot, the Prophet dismounted to carry out the Divine command. He called to a group of Muslims and

told them to tell all the caravans that had advanced to come back, and to tell those that hadn't yet arrived to hurry up.

This group quickly mounted their camels and hastily reached the caravans which were advancing and they called out loudly, "Stop! Stop! Come back! Come back!"

The men of the caravans pulled at the bridles of their camels and the ringing of the bells stopped. One by one they asked, "Why must we stop? What has happened? Why must we stop in this heat? Why return?"

The riders told them that the Prophet had commanded them to return and come to him at the side of the pool-called *Ghadir*.



The caravans returned and arrived at the side of the pool, and those that hadn't yet come also arrived. In this way thousands of Muslims who were on their return from the *Hajj* all gathered at Ghadir on the 18th day of the month 'Zil *Hijjah* and offered the *Zohr* (noon) prayer with the Holy Prophet.

Then they built a platform of camel saddles and luggage and the Holy Prophet stood on the top in order to carry out the Divine command and deliver to the people that important message.

The people were all silent and still, waiting to hear the Prophet's speech, and to know what the "important



message” was.

After a very eloquent speech, the Prophet asked the people in a loud voice and heavenly tone, “O People! Who is your guide and guardian? Who is your leader and ruler? Am I not your leader and your guide? Am I not your guardian and ruler?”

They replied, “O Prophet of God, you are our leader and ruler. You are our guide.”

Then the Holy Prophet called for ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib and gave him a place next to himself. He took his hand and held it aloft, showing this to the people, and in his loudest voice and most glorious tones he commanded:

“Those whose guide and leader I am, after me, will be guided and led by ‘Ali. O People! O Muslims! After me, ‘Ali is your guide and master”.

Then he lifted his hands to the skies and said: “Lord! Be friendly with the friends of ‘Ali! Be an enemy to the enemies of ‘Ali! Lord! Help the helpers of ‘Ali, and humble those that wish evil of ‘Ali!”

Then he descended from the platform, wiped the sweat from his forehead, took a deep breath, stood still for a moment, and commanded the Muslims to, “Make Allegiance to my brother and successor; congratulate him on his Divine appointment. He is ‘Imam’ and ‘*Amir ul-Muminin*’.”

The Muslims came forward in groups and took the strong hand of ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib and squeezed it and congratulated him for his position as “leader of the true believers” and called him ‘*Amir ul-Muminin*’.

In this way, on the 18th day of the month of ZilHijjah, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib was selected for leadership and Imamate. The position of leadership and Imamate became a part of religion, and with the introduction of leadership, the religion of Islam became perfect and eternal. In this way, God entrusted the guardianship and leadership of the Muslims to the twelve Imams. And, in the age of the Imam’s absence, a virtuous, courageous and aware master of the Divine law (*Mujtahid*), who also has the capacity to manage, becomes

the representative and successor of the Imam, guiding the Islamic society their political, social and religious affairs while the people accept his guidances and ordinances with relief and gratitude.

Every year, we make this great day a festival and become happy due to the Imamate of Imam 'Ali. We recognise 'Ali as Imam and leader of the Muslims and we strive to follow him in words and deeds.

Questions:

1. When the Prophet of Islam was returning from *Hajj*, what command did God's angel of revelation bring him.
2. In order to carry out that command, what did the Holy Prophet do?
3. What did the men of the caravans do? Why were they surprised?
4. Before delivering God's message, what did the Holy Prophet ask the people? What was their reply?
5. When the Holy Prophet took the hand of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, what did he do? What did he say?
6. After the announcement, what did the Muslims do?
7. What day is the eighteenth of *Zil-Hijjah*? Why do we call this day the festival (eid) of *Ghadir*?
8. On the day of *Ghadir*, to whom did God entrust the responsibility of leadership and guidance?
9. Who bears the responsibility of leading and guiding society during the age of the Imam's absence?
10. In what matters does a virtuous, courageous and awake master of Divine law (Mujtahid), who must also be able to manage, lead and guide the Islamic nation?

Exercises:

- a. Read the lesson to the members of your family.
- b. Discuss the answers to the questions of this lesson with your friend.
- c. Write a summary of the lesson.
- d. Draw a picture of a scene from the story.

LESSON SIXTEEN

Shia and Sunni

Imam 'Ali, upon whom be peace, was the first Muslim and the best. He used to listen well to the words of the Prophet. He used to obey the Prophet's instructions and, in all his actions, was perfectly submissive to them. He always helped and assisted the Prophet and struggled in the way of righteousness.

During the time of the Prophet, a group amongst the Muslims were friends of 'Ali and, together with 'Ali, strove and struggled for the advancement of the "religion of Islam". These Muslims always used to take example from 'Ali's speech, behaviour, manners and morals, and, like 'Ali, they used to obey the instructions of the Prophet.

Our Holy Prophet used to speak to 'Ali and that distinguished group in this fashion;

"O 'Ali! You and your "*Shia*" are the best people on the earth."

Also, sometimes when he saw 'Ali with his friends, he would point to them and say,

"This youth and his "*Shia*" are the successful ones."

This distinguished group who really had conviction, was named by the Holy Prophet, "*Shia*".

So, from that very day, a Muslim who followed Imam 'Ali in behaviour, speech, ethics, morals, and righteousness, was called a *Shia* (*Shia* means "follower").

We *Shia* believe in what our Holy Prophet said, that, after the Prophet, twelve Imams, one after the other, have attained to leadership and Imamate. The first Imam is the Holy Imam 'Ali, *Amir ul-Muminin*— upon whom be peace— and the twelfth Imam is the Holy Imam Mehdi— upon whom be peace.

Another group of Muslims are called “*Sunni*” or “*ahl tasannun*” or “*ahl sunnah*”. These Muslims recognize Imam 'Ali as being the fourth of the rightly guided successors of the Prophet, and they love him. All Muslims, whether *Shia* or *Sunni*, worship the One God and recognize Muhammad (S.A.) as being the Holy Prophet and the Holy Quran as being their sacred and Divinely-revealed book. All Muslims, *Shia* and *Sunni*, worship the One God and seriously refrain from polytheism and idol-worship and consider it rejection of God. They all follow the laws of the Quran and Islam and consider themselves as the brothers and sisters of all other Muslims. They are kind and compassionate towards one another, living with one another in society in perfect purity, and striving together and fighting the declared enemies of Islam and Muslims.

The enemies of Islam strive as they have always striven to create differences and discord between these two groups of Muslim brothers. However, this has become clear for the Muslims now, and they are aware of their enemies' plans, Muslims are no more being tricked by their deceitful enemies' guile, and day by day they are improving and strengthening their relations with each other, and they both help each other in understanding the Quran and the Prophet's traditions.

The day when all the Muslims of the world unite under one banner and stand up against the disbelief and oppression and guile of the “powers” of the East and West, is very near. And our precious Islam, with the help of God and the unity of the Muslims, will finally be victorious over the age-old forces of disbelief and materialism. *Inshallah*.

Questions:

1. How must Muslims - *Shia* and *Sunni* - act towards each other?
2. Why do the enemies of Islam want to create differences between Muslims—*Shia* and *Sunni*?
3. How do Muslims — *Shia* and *Sunni*— help and cooperate with each other?
4. What must we do for our precious Islam to be victorious?
5. Who do we call *Shias*? Why?
6. Who called these Muslims *Shias*? Why?

Exercises:

- a. Write a summary of the lesson and read it to your school - friends.
- b. Write the answers to the questions of this lesson and discuss them with your friend.
- c. Recite the lesson to the members of your family.

Complete the Following Sentences:

1. All Muslims —*Shia* and *Sunni*— the One True God.
2. All Muslims—*Shia* and *Sunni*—are kind to
3. Muslims are now aware, and are daily their relations with each other.
4. Imam 'Ali (A.S.) was the first and Muslim.
5. The Holy Prophet used to point to 'Ali and his friends and say.....

LESSON SEVENTEEN

The Imams are Twelve

There are twelve Imams, who, one after the other, have attained to *Imamate* in order to safeguard the statutes of religion and to deliver them to the people.

In the second book of "Religious Education", you were introduced to four Holy Imams:

The first Imam - Imam 'Ali- *Amir ul-Muminin* '(A.S.)

The second Imam - Imam Hassan (A.S.)

The third Imam - Imam Hussayn (A.S.)

The fourth Imam - Imam Sajjad (A.S.)

In that same book you read instructive stories about these four Imams. Do you remember them? What are the titles of these stories? Write, in a few lines, a summary of each of them and say:

What result we get from them and how we must imitate the ways of the Imams.

In this book you will be introduced to four other Holy Imams:

The fifth Imam - Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (A.S.)

The sixth Imam - Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (A.S.)

The seventh Imam - Imam Musa al-Kazim (A.S.)

The eighth Imam - Imam 'Ali al-Rida (A.S.)

Are you able to recite the names of these Holy Imams in order? Do you know the names of the other four Imams? Now we are going to learn about our fifth holy Imam.

The Fifth Imam:

The Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (A.S.)

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir- (A.S.) was born in the 58th year of the *Hijrah*, on the third day of the month of *Safar*, in the city of Medina. His honoured father is Imam Sajjad and his revered mother, Fatima, daughter of Imam Hassan. Imam Sajjad, according to the command of God and the decree of the prophet, appointed his son, Imam Muhammad al Baqir, to *Imamate* and leadership of the people, and introduced him as such.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, like the other Imams, in knowledge and science had no equal. Great learned men benefited from his knowledge and science and used to ask him to solve their problems.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (A.S.) instructed people in the precepts of religion, taught them the ethics of life, and used to strive very hard to educate, culture and guide the people. During the course of his life, he taught the people thousands of theological and religious principles, as well as scientific subjects, and his teachings have been handed down to us. His wisdom and learning was so much that he was called *Baqir ul-'ulum*, which means "the Opener of Sciences".

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, '*alaihis salam*, lived in this world for a period of 57 years, and in the 114th year of the *Hijrah*, on the seventh day of the month of *Zul-Hijjah*, in Medina he left this world. His body was buried in *Baqi* cemetery alongside the graves of Imam Hassan and Imam Sajjad (A.S.) in Medina.

LESSON EIGHTEEN

In the Audience of a Tyrant

Hisham ibn 'Abd ul-Malik was an oppressive king. He considered himself the successor of the Prophet, but he was unjust to the people and oppressed them, and spent the public purse and wealth of the nation on his own desires and on strengthening his power. Many, many Muslims lived in poverty during his reign while he built for himself palaces and mansions. And, so that the people would not rise up against him, he kept them uninformed and ignorant.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (A.S.) lived at this time in Medina. There he used to broaden the awareness of the people and teach them the true concepts of religion. He used to speak badly of injustice and oppression and encourage the people in their natural desire for justice. He used to teach the people the value of rising up against oppressors to acquire one's rights and to establish the true Islam in society, and to give the oppressors their just what they deserve

News of Imam Baqir's teachings reached Hisham, and he saw his government to be in danger. He was angry and ordered that Imam Baqir (A.S.) be brought from Medina to his capital at Damascus....

The government ministers and leading men of Damascus were present when Imam Baqir (A.S.) was brought in. Imam Baqir entered and sat down without paying any attention to Hisham. Hisham became even more angry at

this behaviour of the Imam and with shouts and a display of irritation tried to make the Imam feel threatened.

“O Muḥammad ibn ‘Ali”, he said, “I have heard reports of your encouraging the people to rise up against my government.

“If this is true”, he continued, “you had better stop it at once. Otherwise your life will be in danger.”

Following this, the vile ministers and courtiers who surrounded Hisham added their own words in order to threaten and frighten the Imam.



Imam Baqir (A.S.) stood up. He began his speech in the Name of God and by thanking and praising Him. Then he addressed the people in the hall, saying:

“O ignorant, deceived people, around what type of person have you gathered? Whose pleasure have you acquired? You have made God angry with you and purchased degradation in the world and punishment in the Hereafter. Do you know who has been threatened in your presence? Do you know who I am? I am the son of your Prophet. I am the

Imam and leader of the Muslims. God has entrusted me with this responsibility. I understand Islam. I know the contents of the Quran. I know the path to your prosperity and success. Why do you support this tyrant? Don't you see his injustice and oppression? Are you unaware of the poverty and need of the people? Are you not Muslims, that you sit silently in the face of injustice and oppression and quietly endorse it? Fear God and rise up for Him and destroy this oppressive government. In this way you will acquire for yourselves felicity and honour in this world and in the Hereafter."

Hearing these words of Imam Baqir (A.S.), Hisham became enraged and ordered the Imam to be imprisoned.

Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (A.S.) did not remain silent, even in prison. He used to speak to the prisoners and call them to rise up for God. The prisoners listened to him and liked him and began to revolt against the government of the tyrant Hisham within the prison walls.

Hisham then felt the pressure of danger from all sides, and he finally considered it better to have Imam Baqir (A.S.) sent back to Medina, which he did.

Questions:

1. What is the name of the fifth Imam? What is the name of his father?
2. What does "*Baqir ul-'ulum*" mean?
3. Why did Hisham have Imam Baqir brought from Medina to Syria?
4. Why was Hisham so afraid of Imam Baqir's teachings?
5. What did Imam do when he entered the company of Hisham? Why?
6. What did Imam say in the presence of Hisham?
7. Do Muslims sit quietly in the face of injustice and oppression? What do they do?
8. Was Imam frightened by Hisham's threats? Why not?
9. What was Hisham's goal in throwing the Imam in prison? Did he reach that goal?

Exercises

- a. Write a summary of this lesson's story.
- b. Read the story to some guests who come to your house, and discuss it with them.
- c. Perform the story with your friends in the form of a play.

LESSON NINETEEN

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (A.S.)

Holy Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (A.S.) was born in 83 *Hijrah*, on the seventeenth of the month of *Rabi' al Awwal*. His Holy father was Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (A.S.) and his distinguished mother's name was Fatima.

Imam Mohammad Baqir (A.S.), according to God's command and the decree of the Prophet, appointed his son, Imam Ja'far Sadiq, to *Imamate* and leadership and introduced him to the people as such.

Holy Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (A.S.), had more or less extra freedom to spread and propagate the commandments of religion and the edicts as, due to the numerous occupations and battles, the rulers of his time were less able to create troubles for him.

Imam Sadiq, blessed be he, benefited from this opportunity and made great efforts in teaching the knowledge of religion and in spreading Islamic culture. He introduced to the people the sublime ideals and ethics of Islam, and cultured his students in wisdom. The students of Imam Sadiq, taking lessons from him in the various sciences, numbered to four thousand, some of them writing valuable books for posterity.

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, (A.S.), illuminated the truths of the Quran and Islam just as they are, and taught to the people the true ethics and behaviour of the Holy Prophet

of Islam and of Imam Ali, and explained the signs of a true Muslim and *Shia*. It is for this reason that the Shia school of Islam is also called the *Ja'fari* school.

Holy Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, '*alayhis-salam*, lived in this world for a period of 65 years. He was martyred in 148 A.H. on the twenty-fifth of the month of *Shawwal* in Medina, where his body was buried in *Baqi* Graveyard alongside the tomb of Imam Baqir. The Peace of God be ever upon them!

How to Behave with People

Zakariyya was a young Christian who lived in the city of Kufa, in Iraq. His mother and father and all his family and relatives were Christians. Through his acquaintance and contacts with Muslims, Zakariyya had become attracted to Islam. He had seen the Muslims' good behaviour and ethics, their cleanliness, honesty, prayer and other forms of worship. He learnt a little about the Quran, and began to reflect on some of its verses. Thus, after inquiry and research, Zakariyya accepted Islam and became a Muslim.

Some time after this he travelled to Mecca to perform *Haji*. On his return, he stopped over at Medina and there he visited Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (A.S.).

"I used to be a Christian", he said to the Imam. "And I have only recently accepted Islam."

Then, in reply to the Imam's question as to what had made him become a Muslim, he continued:

"I reflected a lot on the contents of the Quran. I wondered how it was that an uneducated man, unable to read and write, could produce such a beautiful and profound book. Thus I became sure that the Quran is a book revealed by God, and that Muhammad (S.A.) is God's prophet. So after research and investigation I accepted Islam."

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) prayed for him, saying: "O God, fill his heart with light."

"O son of the Prophet", Zakariyya then said, "My father and mother and all my family and relatives are Christian, how should I behave towards them? My mother is

very old and blind and needs to be nursed, what should I do? Should I break my relationship with her?"

"Islam", said Imam Sadiq (A.S.), "is a religion of compassion and kindness."

"It has many stipulations about relatives, especially parents. O young man, take care of your mother and help her as much as you can. Be kinder and more helpful to her than before. God forbid that you should be disrespectful to her or shout back at her when she calls you."

Zakariyya listened to these words of the Imam, took his leave and returned to Kufa.

He went straight home to stay with his mother. There, more than ever before, he helped her and was kind to her and ever ready to cheer her up. He gave her food and drink with his own hands. He washed her and her clothes and kept the house tidy. He led her by the hand whenever she wanted to go anywhere. And, when he was free, he would sit and chat with her and cheer her up.

The mother was surprised at the kind behaviour of her son. "You were not like this when you followed our religion", she said to him. "You did not take such care of me. What has made you become so kind towards me?"

"Mother", Zakariyya replied, "our Imam and leader who lives in Medina told me to help my mother and father as much as I can."

"He must be a Prophet", said the mother, "because it is the Prophets who give such instructions about one's parents."

"No, mother", said Zakariyya, "he is not a Prophet, he is an Imam and the heir of the Prophet. Our Prophet is the last of the Prophets and no new Prophet will come after him."

Zakariyya looked at his mother. Tears were flowing down her face.

"Dear son", she said, "your religion is the best religion of the religions. What good teachings you have accepted! What a religion to be thinking of a blind old mother!"

"Son", she continued, "tell me about the beliefs and

practices of this holy religion.”

Thus Zakariyya sat down with his mother and discussed God, the Hereafter and the Prophet of Islam. As soon as the mother understood Islam, she accepted it, learnt how to take *wudu* and perform the prayer, and performed the noon, afternoon, sunset, and evening prayers. Then, that very same night, her condition changed for the worse and she became weak and *feeble*.

She called her son and asked him to repeat for her the beliefs of Islam.

Her compassionate son took the hand of his weak, old mother in his own and, with tears in his eyes, told her, “Say: I testify that God is One. Unique, the Creator of the world and all its inhabitants; I testify that Muhammad is the servant of God and His Messenger; I believe in the Hereafter and life after death, and I know that God bestows a beautiful reward on those who do good and punishes those who do bad.”

The mother repeated all he said, smiled, and then left this world for the Hereafter. The Muslims performed the burial ceremonies for the body of that new-Muslim. With tears in his eyes, Zakariyya placed her body in the grave and prayed for her forgiveness.

Think and Answer:

1. How did Zakariyya become attracted to Islam?
2. What did he say when he visited Imam Sadiq (A.S.)?
3. What did Imam Sadiq (A.S.) ask him? What was his reply?
4. What did Zakariyya ask the Imam about visiting and nursing his mother?
5. What did Imam Sadiq tell him in reply?
6. Do you know what Islam says about one’s parents? How do you behave with them?
7. How did Zakariyya behave towards his mother on his return from his journey?

8. Why was his mother surprised? What did she say to her *son*?

9. Why did the mother think that Imam Sadiq (A.S.) must be a Prophet?

10. What did Zakariyya tell his mother when she told her son what she thought about the Imam?

11. What did Zakariyya tell his mother about the beliefs of a Muslim?

12. Do you know why the *Shi'a* branch of Islam is also called *Ja'fari* school?

Exercises:

a. Read the lesson to some of your friends and explain it to them.

b. Recite the lesson to the members of your family.

c. Ask several people to answer question six above, and compare their views.

d. Write a summary of the lesson.

LESSON TWENTY

In the Dead of Night

It was a dark, cold night. Imam Sadiq (A.S.) was walking along carrying a heavy sack. "Where is Imam Sadiq going with this heavy sack?" I said to myself. "In this dark night perhaps he will find himself in danger. It is best for me to walk along with him and guard him."

I walked quietly along behind Imam Sadiq (A.S.), but I couldn't think where he was going or what he was carrying. We walked through a few lanes, and then I heard a noise. It sounded as if Imam's sack had fallen to the ground. I heard Imam's voice as he prayed, "O Lord, help me this dark night to find what I have lost."

I went closer to the Imam and could just see that the sack which he had been carrying on his back was lying on the ground. Imam was trying with his hands to gather all its contents. I came up to the Imam and greeted him. The Imam returned my greeting and, recognizing my voice, asked me, "Is it you, Mu'alla?"

"Yes, O son of the Prophet" I replied. "Will you let me help you?"

The Imam had been carrying loaves of bread and packets of food, and I helped him gather them and put them back in the sack. When the sack was full I asked him if he would allow me to carry it for him.

"No", he said, "it is more fitting for me to carry it. My

grandfather the Prophet used to say that whoever doesn't think about the needs of the Muslims is not a Muslim, and that whoever sleeps at night with a full stomach while his neighbours are hungry is not a Muslim."

Together we walked along until we came to the lodge of "Bani Sa'idah" where many poor people were living. Imam put his load on the ground and, quietly, without awakening anyone, began to distribute the food he had brought. He put the share of each person by the side of his head, and, without any one knowing who it was from, we quietly left.

God tells us in the Quran:

"Give to the poor and distribute from what We have provided you and render them needless, before the Day of Resurrection when you will be sorry for your hoarding of wealth, and you will be faced with a severe chastisement."

Questions:

1. Where was Imam Sadiq (A.S.) going that dark night and what was he carrying?
2. Why did Mu'alla ask to carry the sack?
3. Did Imam accept Mu'alla's request? Why not?
4. What has the Prophet told us about those who sleep with a full stomach while their neighbours are hungry?
5. What has God told us about helping the poor?

Exercises:

- a. Read the lesson to one of the members of your family.
- b. With the help and guidance of one of the members of your family, make an arrangement to help your neighbours and the poor.
- c. Perform the story as a play with your school-friends.

LESSON TWENTY-ONE

The Seventh Imam: Imam Musa al- Kazim (A.S.)

Imam Musa al- Kazim was born in 128 A.H.on the seventh day of the month of *Safar*. His holy father was Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq and the name of his distinguished mother was *Hamidah*.

Holy Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, according to the command God and the dictates of the Prophet, appointed his son to *Imamate* and leadership, and introduced him to the people as such.

Holy Imam Musa al-Kazim was a very wise and chaste man. His knowledge and wisdom was divine and heavenly, and his worship and piety were so much that he was named *Al'Abd Us-Salih* which means God's righteous creature, or servant.

He was extremely patient and forbearing, and endured many hardships in order to guide the people, and forgave their wrongs and errors. If a person, due to his ignorance, annoyed Imam by his unpleasant behaviour, he would suppress his anger and, with love and kindness, would guide that person. For this reason he was called *Kazim*, for "*Kazim*" means a person who suppresses his anger and doesn't quarrel or speak harshly.

Holy Imam Musa al-Kazim lived in this world for a period of 55 years, and during the period of his *Imamate*, with great patience, he occupied himself in guiding and helping the

people.

In 183 A.H., on the twenty-fifth of the month of *Rajab*, he was martyred in Baghdad, and was buried nearby in what is today called "*Kazimayn*".... God's peace and blessings be eternally upon him!

How Did Imam Teach that Man a Lesson?

He was a poor and uneducated farmer, and whenever he saw Imam Musa al Kazim, *'alayhis-salam*, he was impolite and abusive. Every day he used to annoy the Imam and his friends and make them unhappy.

Imam Musa al Kazim continually suppressed his anger and didn't reply to the man's rudeness and abuses, but the Imam's friends used to become very agitated and angry.

One day, when the impolite man was, like always, speaking badly, the Imam's friends decided to punish him; they were going to deal him so many blows that he would die and be silenced forever. They said, "This man must receive what he deserves for all this rudeness."

Imam Musa al-Kazim became aware of their decision, and he prohibited them, saying, "My friends, be patient. I myself will teach him a lesson."

Days passed and that man continued his undesirable behaviour, making the Imam's friends nervous and uncomfortable, and every time they decided to silence him, Imam told them, "My friends! Be patient, I myself will teach him a lesson."

One day Imam Musa al-Kazim asked, "Where is he?"

He was told, "Outside the town, he is working on his land."

Imam Musa al-Kazim rode out to the man's farm.

When the man saw the Imam, he sank his spade in the earth and put his hands on his hips, ready to be abusive again. Imam dismounted, went towards him, affectionately greeted him and with an open and smiling face, began to make conversation,

"Don't overwork yourself!

What green, lush land you have!
How much have you spent on it?"

The farmer, who was amazed at the Imam's politeness and sincerity, said to him, "About a hundred gold pieces."

Imam asked, "With all the work you have done and the trouble you have taken to cultivate this crop, how much are you expecting to receive for it?"

The farmer waited a little, then said, "Around two hundred gold pieces."

Imam, (A.S.), brought out a purse and gave it to that farmer, saying, "In this bag are three hundred gold pieces, more than the value of your crop. Take it, the crop is also yours, I hope you receive more for it."

The farmer, who in the face of all his bad-manners and abuse had experienced such wonderful behaviour and lovely ethics, became very ashamed. In a trembling voice he said,

"I was wrong to abuse you.

But you, you are a great man,
and the son of a great man,
and you have been good to me,
and have helped me.

Please,... forgive me."

Then, after a few short words, the Imam bade him farewell and returned to Medina.

After that, whenever the farmer saw the Imam, he politely greeted him, and was respectful towards the Imam and the Imam's friends, and used to say, "God knows best who to appoint as Imam and Guide of the people."

The Imam's friends were amazed to see that the annoying and abusive man had become so polite and affectionate. Perhaps they didn't know how the Imam had taught him a lesson.

Think and Answer:

1. What does "*Kazim*" mean? Why was Imam Musa ibn 'Ali called "*Kazim*"?

2. In what year, on what day of which month, was Imam Musa al-Kazim born?
3. What was the name of his father? What was the name of his mother?
4. What was his other title? Why was he given this title?
5. How did his friends intend to civilise that man? What did the Imam say to them?
6. How did Imam teach that farmer a lesson?
7. After that, what was that man used to saying about Imam?
8. How do you behave with a person who speaks badly to you?
9. If, through ignorance, he behaves badly, how do you teach him a lesson.
10. At the time you become angry can you suppress your anger?

LESSON TWENTY—TWO

The Eighth Imam Holy Imam al-Rida (A.S.)

Imam al-Rida (A.S.) was born in 148 A.H. on the 11th day of the month of zul-Qa'dah in Medina. His father, the Holy Imam Musa al-Kazim, named him "Ali", and he was also known as "Rida". The name of his honourable mother was "*Najmah*".

Holy Imam Musa al-Kazim, in accordance with the divine command and the decree of the Prophet, appointed his son Ali ibn Musa ar-Rida", to *Imamate* and introduced him to the people as such.

The knowledge and wisdom of Imam Rida, like that of the other Imams, was from God, and for this reason he had superiority in learning over all the people. Students and the learned alike used to come to him to improve their knowledge and their religious outlooks.

Learned men of Christianity, Judaism and other religions used to come to him and Imam, '*alayhis-salam*, would debate and converse with them, giving answers to their most difficult questions and guiding them. Never was he unaware of the answer to a question or gave a wrong answer.

Due to his Divinely granted knowledge and wisdom, he was called '*Alime Ali Muhammad*, which means "the learned one of Muhammad's household".

Many of his discourses have survived the ages and are with us today.

In the era of the *Imamate* of Imam Rida, *alayhis-salam*, *Ma'mun* was the ruler and *Khalifah*. So that the people would desert Imam Rida, he invited the Imam, who was living in Medina, to the town of Tus, and proposed to the Imam for accepting the rulership and "*Khilafat*"

Imam al-Rida, however, who was aware of Ma'mun's dishonesty and deceit did not accept his offer.

"Then you must agree to be my 'heir apparent", said Ma'mun.

Imam Rida also wanted to refuse this, but, due to the great pressure of the *Khalifah*, he was forced to outwardly accept. He made the condition, however, that he would have

no participation at all in the affairs of state.

The conclusion of the schemings of the ruler Ma'mun, who was afraid of the Imam's charisma and felt the danger of his enlightening the people, was that he martyred the Imam by poisoning him.

Imam Rida, upon whom be eternal blessings and peace, passed away on the last day of the month of *Safar* in the year 203 A.H. in the town of Tus. His body was buried near the same town, which is now called "Mashhad". Today, his tomb is a centre of Muslim Pilgrimage.

Learn from the Behaviour of the Imam

Ibrahim was one of the closest companions of Imam Rida (A.S.). He carefully watched the Imam's behaviour and tells us:

"Never did I see Imam Rida make a believer unhappy by speaking harshly to him. Never did he speak when someone else was speaking. About this he used to say that when a person begins to speak while someone else is speaking it is as if he has scratched and bloodied his face. He would not reject a Muslim's request and would help people as much as he could. When it wasn't possible for him to do something for another, he would gently and kindly apologise. He was polite with everyone, young and old, and never showed disrespect to anyone. He never even stretched his legs in front of anyone. Amongst his companions he sat humbly without leaning on anything. He never spoke badly about anyone, never uttered any abuse. He did not spit, and his laughter was a smile."

"He slept little at nights and spent most of the night awake reciting the Quran, praying and supplicating. He would often fast during the day and give his food to the poor. The charity he gave would mostly be secretly and at night."

"His heart was full of light and he had his own special relationship with God. He was aware of many future events and answered perfectly whatever question he was asked."

"He used to give great importance to the Quran, and told us to not only read and recite it, but also to reflect on the

meaning of its contents.”

Have you ever seen or heard such beautiful manners and behaviour?

The behaviour of all our Imams was just like this, and true Muslims strive for their behaviour to be the same way. If they don't succeed at first, they make gradual efforts and take this beautiful behaviour as the example and aim of their lives.

Now read the lesson again; which one of these beautiful qualities can you adopt the soonest? Did you know that the Holy Prophet was given his mission so as to perfect, establish and circulate these same beautiful qualities among the people?

Complete the Following Sentences:

1. Never did I see Imam Rida make a believer unhappy by.....
2. Never did he speak when.....
3. When a person begins to speak while someone else is still speaking, it is as if.....
4. He was with everyone, young and old.
5. His laughter was a
6. He slept little at night, and spent most of the night awake reciting.....
7. He would give charity mostly in and at

Questions:

1. Who was the *Khalifah* during the time of Imam Rida (A.S.)?
2. Why did he call Imam Rida (A.S.) to Tus?
3. Why did he poison the Imam, and thus martyr him?
4. What does “*Alim Al Muhammad*” mean? Why was this name given to Imam Rida?

LESSON TWENTY - THREE

The Letter and Congratulations of a Father

My dear son, Muhsin,

My dear daughter, Akram,

I am very glad that you have both left behind your childhood and have entered the age of youth and capability. When you were children, I used to watch over you and keep good control of your affairs and your behaviour. At the time of prayer, I used to remind you of the prayer, and when you were studying, I used to encourage you to toil and to work hard.

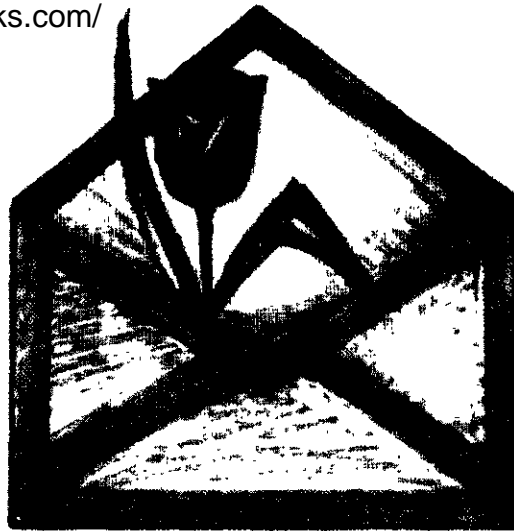
Now, however, you yourselves are responsible.

Dear son, you have matured and your fifteen years are over.

Dear daughter, you are nine years old and are now an adult too.

Now that you have “come of age”, God, the world’s Creator, counts you as mature and capable, and He pays particular attention to you and considers you duty-bound and responsible, and assigns you duties and responsibilities.

From now on your life has passed the age of childhood and you have arrived at the age of youth and capability. Capability is always coupled with duty and responsibility, and the laws and commands of Islam define these duties and responsibilities for you. You must conform all your deeds to these laws and act perfectly in accordance with them.



It is obligatory for you to offer your prayers correctly and in their time. Be careful never to miss even one *rak'at* of the prayer, or else you will be a sinner.

It is obligatory for you to keep fast during the days of the month of *Ramadan* (if it is not harmful for you), and if, with no excuse, you don't keep fast, you will have been disobedient and will have sinned.

From now on, by performing deserving actions and the devotions of religion, you can attain the highest position of a human, and enjoy with God an intimacy and affinity.

Because I am on a journey I can't congratulate you in person on beginning the age of responsibility. For this reason, I have written this letter, and, together with my congratulations, I am sending two books as presents for you.

Congratulations once again, Your Loving Father

Exercises:

- a. Recite this lesson in a loud voice to your friends.
- b. Discuss the lesson and your responsibilities and duties with the members of your family.
- c. Copy the letter of this lesson.
- d. Think up five questions from this lesson and ask your friends to answer them.

LESSON TWENTY - FOUR

VALUE OF PRAYER

Prayer is a pillar of religion and the best of all acts of worship. One who offers prayer loves God very much and in prayer will talk to God, the Generous, and confide in Him his needs, and thank Him for His infinite blessings.

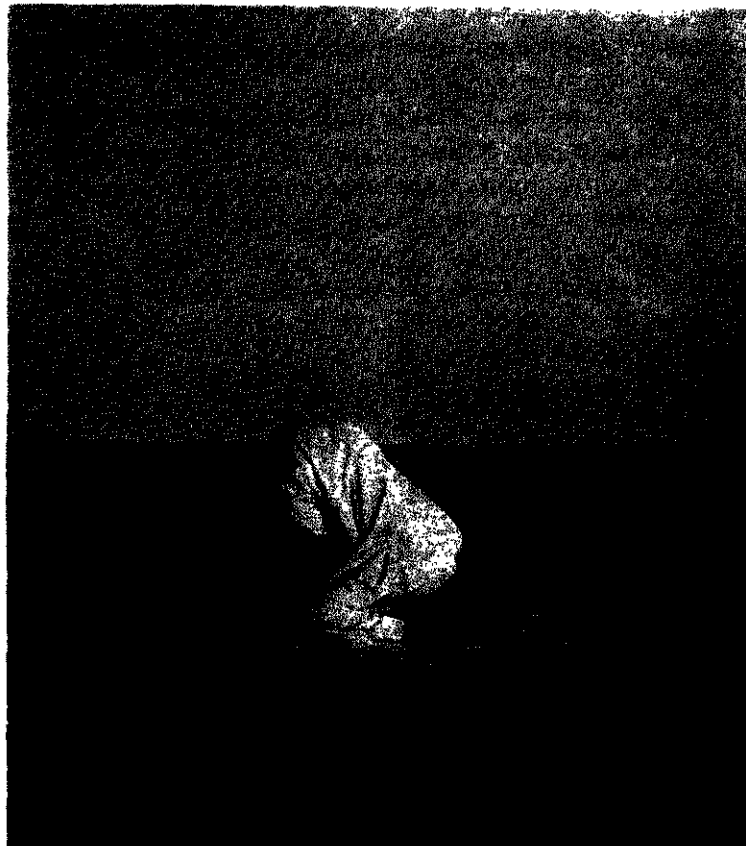
Those who pray, especially children, are likewise loved very much by God, and he gives them a very beautiful reward.

Every Muslim is devoted to prayer, and likes to pray and to talk to God, and values it highly. He awaits the time of prayer so as to beseech God in the prayer and to open his heart to Him.

As soon as the time of prayer arrives, he stops whatever he is doing, cleans himself of whatever dirt is on him, takes "wudu", puts on clean clothes and scent and, at the start of his time, becomes engaged in prayer. He empties his mind of all things, letting his heart and soul become intimate only with the Creator, and culturing love of Him within himself.

He stands with respect before the Lord of the World, says "Allaho Akbar", and remembers that God has such greatness. He recites *Surah Hamd* and another *surah*, and performs perfectly the *ruku'* (bowing), and the *sujud* (prostrations). He performs all the acts of the prayer calmly, and, throughout the whole of the prayer, doesn't hurry at all.

One day, our Holy Prophet, Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah, *salla-llahu' alayhi wa alih*, entered the mosque and saw a man



praying very hastily; not performing his *ruku'* and *sujud* completely, and not standing still throughout the whole prayer.

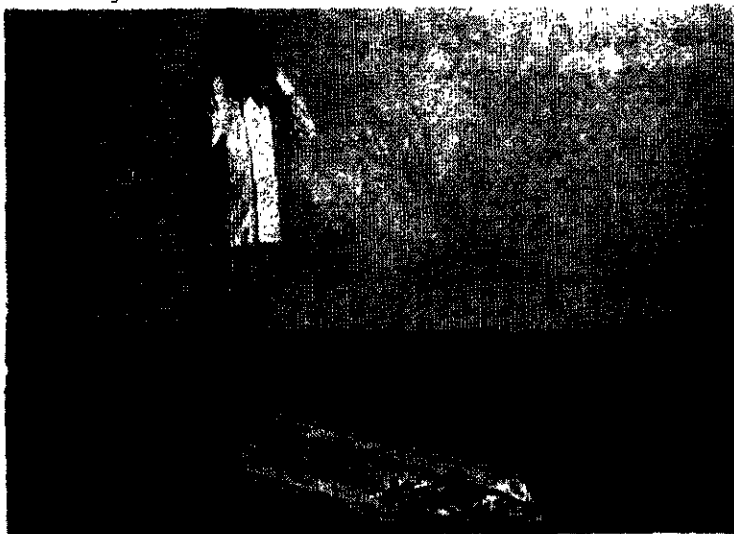
The Prophet was amazed and said, "This man is not offering prayer, rather, he bends down and straightens up like a crow sharpening its beak on the ground! By God! If he dies still praying like this, a Muslim has not left this world, and in the Hereafter, he will suffer."

To offer the prayer, it is much better for us to go to the mosque and offer our prayer in "*Jama'at*" (congregation).
Some points about prayer:

1. For men it is necessary in the morning prayer and in

the *maghreb* (sunset) and *'isha* (evening) prayers to read *Surah Hamd* and the other *surah* audibly.

2. One's clothes and body must be clean for the prayer.
3. To offer prayers in a place if the owner doesn't give permission or in clothes if the owner doesn't give permission is *Haram* (forbidden), and makes the prayer void.
4. When travelling, two-unit prayers (just like the morning prayer) must be offered in place of the four-unit prayers. Do you know in what journeys? How many miles must they be?



We find the answers to questions like these in the book "*Tawdih al-Masail*".

Questions:

1. What did the Prophet (S.A.) say about a person who hurries his prayer?
2. How does a young Muslim perform his prayer?
3. What does "prayer is a pillar of religion" mean?
4. How do we pray when we are travelling?
5. In which prayers must men recite *Surat Al-Hamd* and the other *surah* audibly?

Exercises:

- a. Read the lesson to your family when they are all gathered and remind them of their responsibility towards prayer and the congregational prayer.
- b. Do you know what these words mean: *wajib*, *haram wudu*, *ruku*, *sajdah*, *surah*, *jama'at*, *maghrib*, *'isha*? Write them in Arabic with the help of your friends or family.
- c. Read the lesson with your friends and review it with them.
- d. Recite the lesson in a mosque.

LESSON TWENTY – FIVE

Two Surahs of the Quran

The Quran is divided into certain sections, each section begins with the words “*Bismillahir- Rahmanir- Rahim*”, and each of these sections is called a “*surah*”.

Each surah is divided into shorter parts and each of these parts is called an “ayah”.

Learn *Surah Hamd* and *Surah Tawheed* and, during prayer, pay attention to the meaning of their contents.

Farihat al- Kitab

Surat Al-Hamd

Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Al hamdu lillahi Rabbil' alamin

Praise be Allah's — Lord and Exalter of the Worlds

Ar- Rahman-nir-Rahim

The Merciful, the Compassionate

Maliki yowmid-din

Owner of the Day of Judgement

Iyyaka n' abudu wa Iyyaka nasta'in

Thee alone we worship and from Thee alone we seek help.

Ihdinas- siratal-mustaqim

Guide us the right path.

Siratal-ladhina an'amta 'alayhim

The path of those you have blessed,

Ghayril-maghdubi 'alayhim

Not the path of those your wrath is upon,

Wa lad- dallin.

Nor the path of those who are astray.

Surat Al-Tawhid

Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim

In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Qul Huwal-lahu Ahad

Say, Allah is One!

Allahus-Samad

Allah is without needs and the refuge of those in need.

Lam Yalid, wa Lam Yulad

He has not given birth, and has not been given birth to,

Wa Lam Yakul-lahu kufuwan ahad

And no one is similar to Him.

These *surahs* must be recited in Arabic.

It is better to memorize the short *surahs* of the Quran and, in your prayer, recite one of them after *Surat Al-Hamd*.

Questions and Exercises:

1. What are the sections of the Quran called?
2. What is each section of a *surah* called?
 - a. Recite *surat ALHamd* to your friends and then read its translation for them.
 - b. Recite *Surat ALTawhid* to the members of your family, then read its translation to them.

LESSON TWENTY - SIX

THE FAST

Fasting is one of the great acts of worship in Islam. God loves His Muslims who fast and gives them a beautiful reward. Fasting is also healthy for the body. By fasting, Muslims add to their virtue, patience and steadfastness and become braver and more able in the face of difficulties. They appreciate the feelings of hunger and thirst. They are reminded of the Hereafter and the Day of Judgement and they strive to help the poor. Performing this great act of worship, their hearts become enlightened and purified, and they become even more loved by the Merciful God.

When the month of *Ramadan* arrives, Muslims become very happy. They rise during the nights before the morning adhan, they praise and supplicate their Exalter, they eat their morning meal which is called "*sahar*", and they form the intention to fast that day.

The fast starts from the first light of dawn and continues until sunset, but it is better to fast a few minutes in addition each way. During this time we don't eat, don't drink, and don't do any of the other things that break the fast. Then, when sunset arrives, the Muslim partakes of the meal called "*iftar*" while bearing in mind his God.

The fast of the month of *Ramadan* is obligatory on every Muslim who has reached the age of responsibility and who is able to fast. Youngsters who have not yet reached maturity

rise at **sahar** and recite supplications with their family. They eat the *sahar meal and then they* fast until noon or for as long as they can, thus partaking in the worship and rewards of fasting with the adults.

Questions:

1. What are the results of fasting for God?
2. From what time does the fast start and what time does it end?
3. From what things do fasting Muslims refrain?
4. How do youngsters take part in this great act of worship?
5. For whom is fasting in Islam obligatory? When?

Exercises:

- a. Read the lesson to the members of your family.
- b. Think up three more questions and ask your friends to answer them.
- c. Draw a picture of a scene at *iftar* or *sahar*.
- d. Read the lesson in a mosque when the month of Ramadan arrives.

LESSON TWENTY - SEVEN

A Commentary on an Instructive Story from the Quran: Two Brothers, One Kind and Righteous, the other Proud and Selfish

A rich man died, and his large fortune passed to his two sons. One of the sons was a religious and wise young man. He was clever and far-sighted and thought of this world as the “farm of the Hereafter”, and he made use of his wealth for his benefit in the Hereafter:

He paid the obligatory dues on his wealth, he helped the poor and destitute and gave them work and capital. With his wealth he used to assist his kinsmen and dependents. He was a pioneer of acts of charity, he used to build mosques, infirmaries and schools, he used to pay the educational expenses of students and patronise the learned.

He used to say, “I perform these works for the satisfaction of God and to be closer to Him. These works are my store for the Hereafter.”

The other son was a greedy and ignorant man, whatever he had he wanted only for himself. He developed an orchard and a farm, and he built a mansion, but he never invited his poor relatives and dependents, and he never associated with them.

He didn't pay the obligatory dues on his money, and didn't reply when he was greeted by the poor. He didn't take part in acts of charity and he used to say, “I can't. I have work to do. I haven't time.” He wasn't ready to spend his money in



the way of God.

That haughty man had two huge orchards full of date trees, grape vines, and trees full of other fruits. Bubbling water-courses always flowed alongside the trees of his garden. Between these two gardens was a plantation where he grew all kinds of vegetables. Whenever that rich man went with his brother to the garden, he used to take pleasure from the sight of the tall trees full of lush fruits, and used to become very happy. He would laugh loudly and make fun of his righteous brother and used to say:

“You are making a big mistake by giving away your wealth in this way and that way! But me, I give none of my wealth to anyone, and as a result I am the owner of this garden and all this property. Really, what a big garden, and what lush property!... My, my!...

I will always live happily. This wealth is without end. I don't imagine that there is a Resurrection ahead of us... What Resurrection? What Hereafter? If there is a Resurrection, God will give me more, better than all this.”

The righteous brother used to say to him:

“Brother! The blessings of the Hereafter are not given without reason. Your actions must be righteous and deserving for you to be saved and prosper in the Hereafter. Your large wealth has made you heedless of God. O Brother! Do not be proud. Reply to the “*salams*” of the poor, extend a helping hand to the needy. Use all this wealth for your benefit in the Hereafter. Take part in acts of charity, don't say, ‘I haven't time. I can't. I've work to do.’ Don't sin, don't be obstinate. Fear the just anger of God. Perhaps God will send a punishment and take these blessings from you. Then you will be sorry, but sorrow will not benefit you.”

The haughty brother, however, never listened to his righteous brother's conversation, and carried on his undesirable ways...

One day, the proud man went to his garden. On his arrival, he stood stock still for a moment, staring wide-eyed, then he gave a cry and fell to the ground...

Yes! The punishment of God had descended. It had destroyed the gardens. The walls of the gardens had fallen down, the tall trees were broken, their branches and fruits were all ruined, and...

When he came to his senses, he moaned and groaned. He wept, he was full of regret and he said:

“How I wish I had listened to the words of my brother.



How I wish I had spent my wealth in the way of God
How I wish I had taken part in acts of charity, and that I
used to pay the obligatory dues on my wealth! My riches
have gone, now I have nothing in this world and
nothing in the Hereafter.”

This is what happens to a fortune which is not used in the
way of God and for the welfare of His servants. This is the end
which pride and ignorance led to.

Exercises:

- a. Write a summary of this story and read it to your school-friends.
- b. Perform the story in the form of a play with your friends.
- c. Think up five questions and ask your friend to answer them.
- d. Answer the questions that your friend has thought up.

LESSON TWENTY - EIGHT

Zakat: the Budget to Meet Public Requirements

The religion of Islam, in order for the common needs to be met, has foreseen a budget that is called *zakat*. *Zakat* is one of the financial obligations, and acts of worship in Islam.

The Holy Prophet of Islam told us, “God, in reality, has placed the amount of the needs of the poor in the wealth of the rich, and if they paid it, the needs of the common people would be removed. If amongst the people you find someone starving or without clothes, it is because the wealthy have not paid their obligatory dues.”

On the Day of Judgement, every person who doesn’t give *zakat* from his wealth will have his account settled at the time of questioning and reckoning, and will be delivered to a painful punishment.

Imam Baqir (A.S.) tells us, “A wealthy person who doesn’t give *zakat* from his wealth is neither a *mu’min* nor a Muslim.”

Which people Must Pay Zakat?

1. Those who farm and keep orchards and cultivate crops such as wheat, barley, dates and currants, whose harvest reaches a “specific amount”, must pay a quantity of their crop as *zakat*.

2. Those who invest their wealth in animals, like shepherds, camel, sheep and cattle breeders, etc.; whose animals reach a “specified number”, must pay a portion of

their herd as *zakat*.

3. Those who have a store of money (gold or silver) and don't use it, provided that the reserve within one year is more than a "specified amount", must pay some of it as *zakat*.

How much must be paid as *zakat*?

Zakat of wheat and barley, what kind is it and how much?

Zakat of sheep and cattle, what kind is it and how much?

You will read the answers to these questions in later years, or you can find out from the book called "*Tawdih al-Masail*".

In What Way is Zakat Used?

Zakat is for works and services that are beneficial to Muslim society. For example, with the money that is obtained from *zakat*, hospitals can be built, and they can be managed and maintained; and poor people who are sick can be helped and their living expenses paid until they recover and can work again.

Education centres can be set up to fight illiteracy and religious ignorance, which with the best methods, would acquaint the people with general knowledge and religion.

With *zakat*, beautiful public gardens can be built so that children and youngsters can play in them, and in the well-equipped libraries which will be built in these parks, they can study.

With the budget which *zakat* provides, towns and villages can be provided with running water, and their cleanliness can be safeguarded.

With the budget of *zakat*, extremely well-equipped schools should be built for children and youngsters, and fully-experienced teachers should be trained to teach them.

With *zakat*, housing and a means of sustenance

should be provided for the poor and those with insufficient incomes, and arrangements can be made for the disabled and the elderly who are poor.

With the budget of *zakat*, large mosques should be built so that all the people can go to the mosque and offer the congregational prayers and study the Quran and Islam.

With the budget of *zakat*, all the young men and women of insufficient incomes would marry and form a household and a family. With the budget of *zakat*, all the needs of the Muslim society would be cared for, then, there would no longer be the poor, or the hungry, or people in debt. Everybody would be healthy, able, with faith and righteousness and would lead peaceful lives. For their futures in the Hereafter they would send righteous deeds ahead of them, so that in that world they will enjoy better blessings and more affections of their Lord,... And the beautiful ends are for the righteous.

Think and Answer:

1. What are the common needs of the society? With what budget must these needs be met?
2. What has our Holy Prophet told us about meeting the needs of the poor?
3. What has Imam Muhammad al-Baqir told us about wealthy people who don't give *zakat* from their wealth?
4. Which people must pay *zakat*? Who do you know who pays *zakat*? How is *zakat* spent?
5. In which ways must *zakat* be spent? When all the wealthy perform their duty and pay the obligatory dues on their wealth, how will mankind live?
6. Is it possible for a Muslim to be a hoarder of wealth?

Exercises:

- a. Read a page of the lesson to your friend, then listen to your friend read the following page to you. Do you recite better or does your friend?

b. Write the answer to question six in five lines, and state reasons.

c. Say what you know of the connection between the story of the two brothers and the lesson about *zakat*.

d. In a sketch , show one of the ways of spending *zakat*.

LESSON TWENTY - NINE

Khums—the Budget for Strengthening the Religion and Management of Muslims

Almighty God has made it obligatory on every Muslim to toil for the growth of religion and to acquaint other people with the commands of God and life in the Hereafter, and to take help in this path from one's life and one's wealth, which means to work hard for the spread of Islam and also to pay *khums* from one's income.

What is *Khums*? How must it be paid?

Every Muslim who makes a profit from trade, farming, or from having an interest in mining or industry, or who is an employee and receives wages, must first set aside the living expenses for himself and his household, and, if there is anything more, he must pay *khums* (one-fifth) of it.

To Whom Must Khums be paid?

Khums is paid to the "*Hakim Shar'i*" (religious authority) of Islam, who is the "just and aware *mujtahid*". The *Hakim Shar'i* of Islam spends this budget on acquainting the people with God and in defence of the Islamic state. He schools virtuous men to reply to the difficulties of the people and sends them to villages, towns, and countries so as to acquaint the people with the truths of Islam.

With the budget of *Khums*, the *Hakim Shar'i* provides useful religious books, and, at no cost, or at a

low price, he makes them available to the people. He produces religious, studious newspapers and magazines and arranges their distribution.

To educate and train children and youths, he cultivates aware young men of learning, and establishes classes free of charge.

With the budget of *Khums*, the *Hakim Shar'i* of Islam, makes secure the lives of poor "*sadat*" (descendants of the Prophet) who do not have the capability to work, and he helps the *sadat* who, due to limited income, cannot properly manage their lives, and who are forbidden to be given *zakat*.

Questions:

1. How is the budget for the propagation of religion secured?
2. What does the word "*khums*" mean?
3. Who must pay *khums*?
4. Whom must *khums* be paid to?
5. How is the *khums* then spent?
6. Is the budget of the Islamic state limited to *khums* and *zakat*?

Exercises:

- a. Read the lessons of *zakat* and *khums* for the people in your local mosque.
- b. Discuss the two lessons with your friends and family.
- c. Ask your father to explain how he pays *khums*, *zakat* and other Islamic obligatory payments.

LESSON THIRTY

Those Who Ridicule Will Be Severely Punished

If someone makes fun of you, what mood do you feel yourself in?

Do you feel happy?

If, when you are reciting a lesson, you make a mistake and one of the other pupils ridicules you and mimics your mistake, do you feel sad? Do you consider him impolite?

Others, like you, also become unhappy from being ridiculed, and don't like people who ridicule. God also dislikes those who ridicule and punishes them severely.

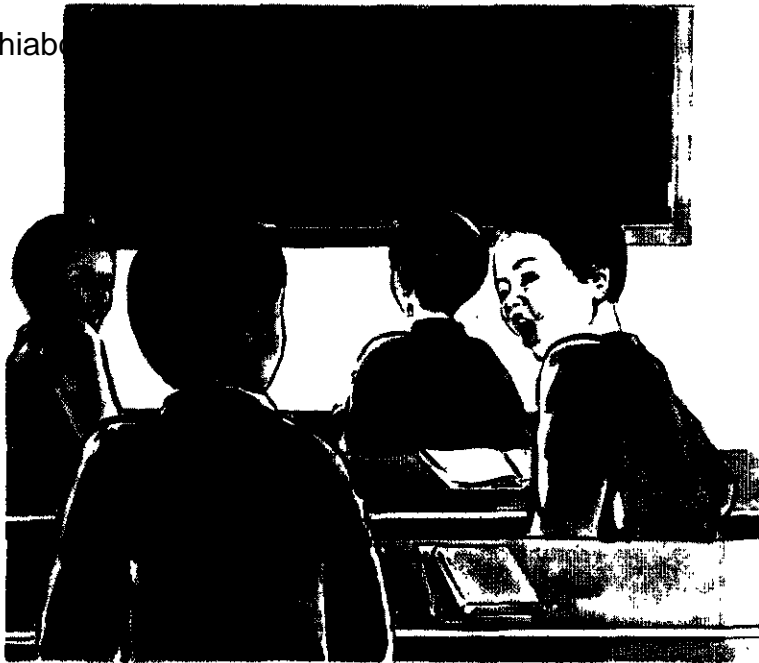
God, in the Holy Quran, orders mankind not to ridicule and not to think lightly of others, and tells us;

“O you people who believe in God and in the Day of Judgement, be warned, some of you are ridiculing others. Never ridicule another, for it is possible you ridicule one who is better than you. Do not speak badly of one another, do not call one another names. For a Muslim it is ugly to insult a person or call him names.”

The Holy Prophet of Islam tells us, “Whoever ridicules a Muslim and insults him or calls him names, is as one who has risen to fight me.”

Think and Answer:

I. What does God tell us in the Holy Quran about ridiculing. What does He forbid Muslims?



2. What does the Holy Prophet tell us about ridiculing a Muslim?

3. Who, of all your friends, never ridicules others?

4. Have you ever laughed at a person? ...Ridiculed someone? Didn't you know that ridiculing people is sinful?

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