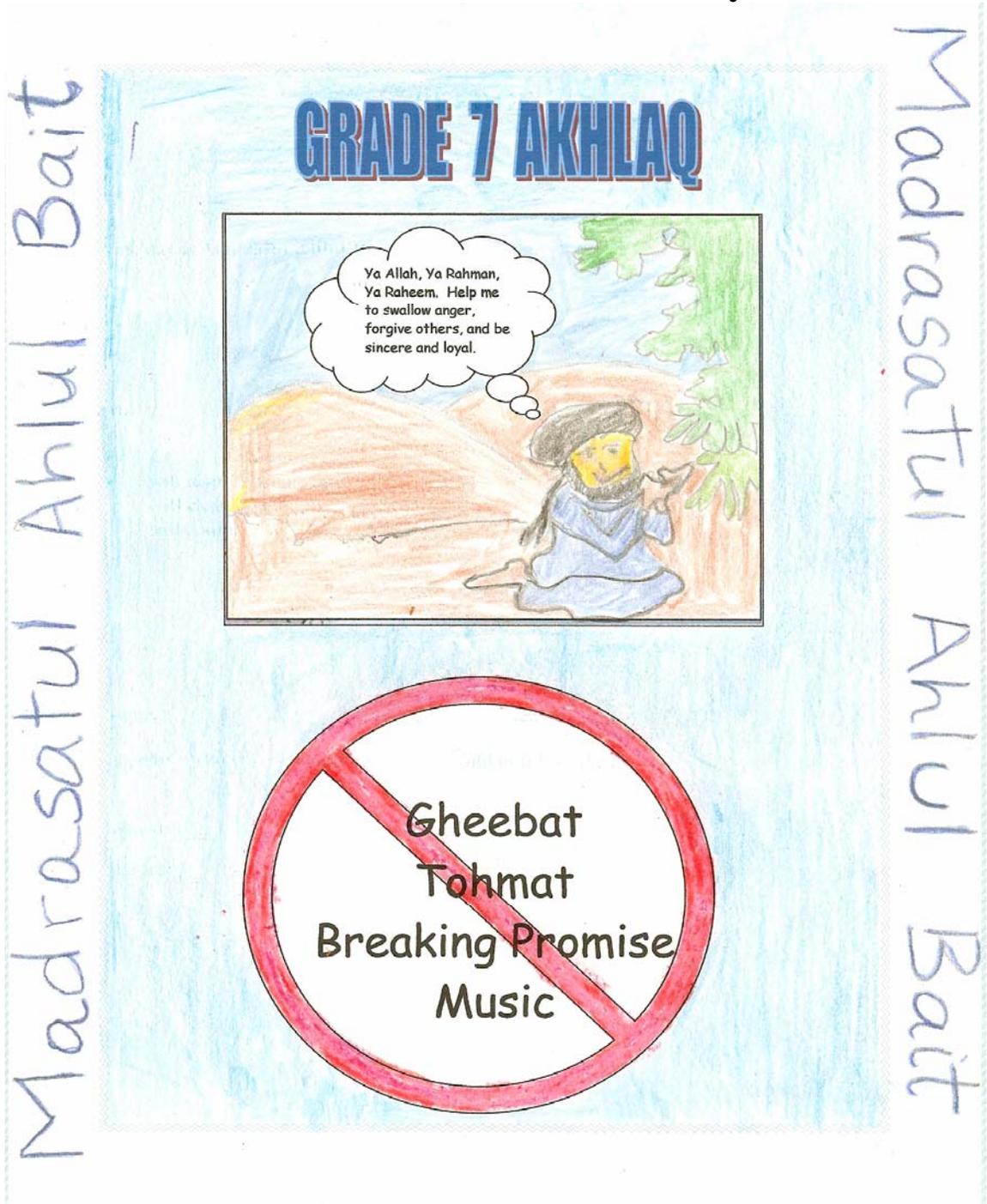


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Madrasat Ahlul'Bait Islamic School

# Grade 7 Akhlaq



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## Foreword

The material presented in this document is a result of an effort made by the personnel of the school of Ahlul'Bait of the Shia-Muslim Association of Bay Area Islamic Center at San Jose, California in cooperation with several schools of Ahlul'Bait at London-Stanmore, London-Hujjat, Vancouver, Minnesota and Toronto.

We, at San Jose, looked at material from London-Stanmore, London-Hujjat, Vancouver, Minnesota, Toronto and Irvine's Islamic institutions, as well as that available at various web-sites to compile age appropriate textbooks for use by our students. We thank the institutions that were kind enough to provide us with the electronic files of their curriculum. We used some of what they had and added to it what we felt was appropriate. We included more worksheets and pictures where deemed necessary. We also added some new topics that, we felt are important to the students.

We had two important goals in mind while working on this document. First, introduce the students to the important Islamic concepts and beliefs that are crucial for him/her to know. Second, expose the students to as many Quranic verses and sayings from Prophet Muhammad (p) and his Ahlul'Bait (a) as possible.

We thank Hujjatul Islam Maulana Nabi Raza Abidi for his spiritual guidance. We hope future efforts will continue taking place until reaching our goal of having a strong, rich and unified curriculum for the schools of Ahlul'Bait for all ages.

**Syllabus Committee  
Madrasat Ahlul'Bait**

## Preface

In this book, students are introduced to the concept of will power and its role in adopting behaviour, mannerisms, and general conduct prescribed by Islam. The student should realize that the etiquettes taught to us by Islam set guidelines for moral and ethical conduct towards the rest of the world. The teachings of Islam apply to our everyday life and can raise our character to a very high caliber.

## **Section I: Akhlaq (for History Class)**

# Chapter 1: Development of Will Power

What is will power?

Put simply into words, it means the ability (POWER) to control your desires (WILL).

Will power is very important because, as we know, the highest stage of this life, is to attain the pleasure of God, to be content; and that **cannot be attained except by controlling and developing the will.**

In the world around us, we are always exposed to dangerous objects, such as drugs, alcohol, pornography. If we were to yield (give in) to these temptations, we would ruin our lives.

To have will power means to be able to keep yourself from all these bad habits, from simple points such as sleeping in late to behavior that is much worse, such as not offering our prayers on time, or even not offering them at all!!

The whole month of Ramadhan is an exercise of will power. Actually, not to eat food is the **easiest** act of Ramadhan. Controlling our appetite for food and water is very easy, compared to what else we must accomplish. We must control ourselves from looking and listening to things that are Haraam. We must control our temper, and our language. At the end of the month, we should have conquered that voice inside us which invites us towards evil: the voice of our nafs.

Once, the Prophet (S) was asked, don't you have a voice inside you (a Shaytan) which tells you to do evil? And he replied, Yes I do, but I keep it locked up!

It was not with chains of metal that the nafs was tied up, but with the fetters of will power. This shows that the most powerful weapon against evil is what Islam teaches us to use and develop, the will power.

When Islam teaches us to offer our prayers on time it teaches us discipline, which strengthens our will power and this constant practice of discipline **enables us to control our** ~~NAFS~~.

## 1.1 Worksheet: Development of Will Power

Choose the correct answer:

1. Will Power can be defined as:
  - a. The ability to control your nafs
  - b. The ability to control your desires
  - c. Self-control
  - d. All of the above
  
2. If Zahras' neighbors David and Mary were hosting a block party that Zahra went to what would be the best way of exercising self-control or will-power for her?
  - a. She could be very friendly and mingle with everyone by doing whatever everyone else was doing and eating all the cold cut sandwiches as long as they were not pork.
  - b. She could be very friendly and mingle with everyone but avoid all the food that was Haraam. She didn't have to explain her reason for not eating the Haraam food unless specifically asked.
  - c. She could show everyone that Muslims don't eat Haraam food by openly scowling and frowning at the food and telling people that it is ridiculous to eat everything that comes in front of you.
  
3. Zoha, a 14-year-old 8<sup>th</sup> grader goes to her Muslim friend's birthday party and realizes that her friend is not really a practicing Muslim. There are many non-Muslims invited and pizza with beef meatballs has been ordered from a non-halaal pizza place. Everyone takes a slice of pizza and the boys and girls start "the dating game". Zoha knows her mom won't pick her for the next 2 hours and everyone seems to be having so much fun. What should Zoha do?
  - a. She should join in the group, eat a slice of pizza and enjoy herself. After all you are young only once and it doesn't hurt to have fun.
  - b. As a 14 year old Zoha know she's now Baligh and responsible for her own actions. If she gives in to her desires she may get into the habit of doing so all the time so she should watch, eat whatever halaal is available, and not take part in anything she feels is haraam.
  - c. Zoha's parents would never find out what she had played or eaten at this party. Besides even if they did she would promise never to do it again. She should go ahead and join everyone else for now, as long as she vows never to do it again.

4. Haider is a 10<sup>th</sup> grader. His school friends once meet up at lunch and talk about trying out cigarettes. Haider doesn't want to look like a wimp so he doesn't say anything. When the boys finally meet up for a smoke Haider should:
  - a. Tell them no matter what they think of him he is not going to try smoking because that is his decision.
  - b. Just smoke once then tell everyone he doesn't like it that way nobody will think he is wimpy.
  - c. Go ahead and smoke since that is what is expected of him. It may look " uncool " if he refuses. Besides, many Muslims smoke.
  
5. Ammar is surfing the net when he comes upon a site that has inappropriate pictures. Ammar is alone in the room and his mom thinks he is doing his homework. Which would be the best example of will power and self-control?
  - a. Ammar is curious to look but closes the windows then tells his mother about the website so that it is not accessed by his younger brother or sister.
  - b. Ammar browses through the pictures but makes sure nobody finds out especially his parents.
  - c. Ammar makes sure his siblings don't go to that site but looks through the site himself.
  - d. Ammar looks through the site for a while then promises he won't look through it again

Write T for True and F for False:

6. Will power can be developed through exercising discipline from a very young age.
7. Will power should only be present in adults.
8. Talking about people behind their back is an example of poor will power.
9. Controlling your laughter when something really funny happens to your classmate that could embarrass him/her is a show of great will power and self-control.
10. Teasing people that are weaker than you or younger to you is an example of poor will power or self-control.

## Chapter 2: Jihad

The word Jihad means "to struggle or to strive" in the way of Allah. This requires a great deal of will power. People often make the mistake of translating Jihad to meaning ONLY fighting or ONLY war. This could not be further from the truth.

If you put effort into any action that gains Allah's pleasure, then that effort is counted as a struggle in the way of Allah, a JIHAD.

Jihad does also mean Holy War, but that is just one of its facets. Once the Holy Prophet (S), after returning to Medina from a battle, told his army that the Jihad-e-Saghira (the lesser struggle) had been completed, and now Jihad-e-Akbar (greater struggle) was awaiting them. The people having been tired by the battle looked around anxiously to find this new and even mightier enemy, but the Prophet (S) explained to them

*"The restraining the soul (or self) from its appetite, is the greatest holy war."*

This means that controlling the nafs from its desires takes greater effort than any other holy war. It is the greatest Jihad, and we know from our furoo-e-deen that Jihad is wajib.

Every action which we do in a day, avoiding Haraam food, saying our Namaaz on time, keeping a beard, wearing Hijab, when others around us do not do so and every action which requires some effort on our part is Jihad.

Qur'an explains us that man was created for a test, and like any test, he must work hard to achieve the results.

***Al-Balad` The City'***

***Revealed at Mecca, 20 verses.***

***In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.***

***90:1 » I do call to witness this City--***

***90:2 » And you are a freeman of this City--***

**90:3 » *And (the mystic ties of) Parent and Child--***

**90:4 » *Verily We have created Man into TOIL AND STRUGGLE.***

**90:5 » *Does he think that none has power over him?***

**90:6 » *He may say (boastfully): "Wealth have I squandered in abundance!"***

**90:7 » *Does he think that none sees him?***

**90:8 » *Have We not made for him a pair of eyes?--***

**90:9 » *And a tongue, and a pair of lips?--***

**90:10 » *And shown him the two highways?***

**90:11 » *But he has made no haste on the path that is steep.***

**90:12 » *And what will explain to you the path that is steep?-***

**90:13 » *(It is:) freeing the bondsman;***

**90:14 » *Or the giving of food in a day of privation***

**90:15 » *To the orphan with claims of relationship,***

**90:16 » *Or to the indigent (down) in the dust.***

**90:17 » *Then will he be of those who believe, and enjoin patience, (constancy, and self-restraint), and enjoin deeds of kindness and compassion.***

**90:18 » *Such are the Companions of the Right Hand.***

**90:19 » *But those who reject Our Signs, they are the (unhappy) companions of the Left Hand.***

**90:20 » *On them will be Fire Vaulted over (all round).***

By this Allah explains us that a person has two choices, whether to live his life the easy way, taking the down hill slope, and lose out in the next life, or to take the steep slope in this life, and benefit on Qiyamat. It also shows us how to perform Jihad, how to climb the steep slope.

**9:41: Go forth, (whether equipped) lightly or heavily, and STRIVE AND STRUGGLE, with your goods and your persons, in the cause of God. That is best for you, if you (but) knew.**

This ayat tells us that whether we are rich or poor, able bodied or disabled, strong or weak, we should each strive towards Allah the best way that we can, to earn His pleasure. It also explains to us that we are making ourselves better people, and benefiting ourselves by struggling in the way of Allah.

**2:148: To each is a goal to which God turns him; then STRIVE together (as in a race) toward all that is good. Wherever you are, God will bring you together. For God hath power over all things.**

#### **DOES THIS MEAN THAT WE SHOULD PRAY AND READ QUR'AN NON-STOP?**

Not at all! We should of course pray and recite Qur'an, but we should help those in need, we should fight for the rights of others, and for ourselves.

#### **WHAT ABOUT THOSE WHO BELIEVE, BUT DO NOT STRUGGLE ?**

**4:95: Not equal are those believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause of God with their goods and their persons. God has granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than to those who sit (at home): unto all (in faith) has God promised good: but those who strive and fight has He distinguished above those who sit (at home) by a special reward.**

This shows that for a person who struggles in the way of Allah, there is a reward waiting which is greater than that for ordinary people. A person who dies in the state of Jihad (struggle) is a martyr, and the status of a martyr is distinguished.

**"Over every act of virtue, there is another one till a man is martyred in the way of Allah, then there is no other virtue over it".**

A woman is given one of the biggest challenges in Islam to perform Jihad of the nafs. Hijab is one of the ways in which a woman or young balig girl can practice Jihad. When a woman struggles to maintain a marriage and bear the wishes the husband, she is doing Jihad in itself.

Every moment of a woman's effort to preserve her marriage and make it blossom is Jihad. Bringing up children and teaching them is Jihad, to maintain Hijab so that the children will learn modesty is Jihad, and Allah rewards her accordingly. It is not easy to keep Hijab. Allah holds every woman who does Hijab in high esteem.

**"The first person to enter Paradise is a martyr".**

Islam recognises the difficulty and hardship that a mother takes in bringing up her children. Since these actions are all a struggle to make the child into a good Muslim, someone who will guide and help others, then that struggle is one towards Allah, which is why there is a hadith that explains,

*Heaven is under the mother's feet.*

In the upcoming chapters you will learn of specific examples of will power and jihad and how you can practise both.

## 2.1 Worksheet : Jihad

Answer the following :

1. What is Jihad ?

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2. What are the two facets of JIHAD or the two types of Jihad in Islam ? Which one is the the greater Jihad according to Prophet Muhammad (S) ?

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3. It is wajib upon every Muslim to practice Jihad of the nafs in their daily lives? Find a saying of the holy Prophet Muhammad (S) from your notes that talks about Jihad of the nafs?

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4. To do good deeds, to obey your parents, to practice Hijab and to eat Halaal food are some of the ways in which we can do Jihad of our nafs in our daily lives?

TRUE

FALSE

5. Read the Ayat below and explain the meaning of the Ayat. Furthermore, mention the Chapter and Verse of the Quran has this Ayat been taken from.

***“ Go forth, (whether equipped) lightly or heavily, and STRIVE AND STRUGGLE, with your goods and your persons, in the cause of God. That is best for you, if you (but) knew”.***

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6. The Quran tells us that each person is given a “goal” towards which Allah directs us and we should always strive to do “good” in the way of Allah. Find the Ayat in the Quran that mentions this and write it down below with the Surah number and Ayat number.

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7. What does the Quran say about those believers who only have faith but do nothing but stay at home and do not STRUGGLE in the way of Allah? Select an Ayat from your notes and explain it below

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8. A person who dies in the way of Allah and for the sake of Islam is considered a martyr.

TRUE

FALSE

9. Explain ways in which a woman can strive in the way of Allah as a girl, a woman, and as a mother? You can use an Ayat from the Qur'an to support your explanation

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10. A mother has a very high status in Islam. It is said in the Qur'an that "heaven is under the mother's feet." What does this Ayat mean to you? Why do you think a mother has such a high status in Islam?

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## Chapter 3: Loyalty and Breach of Promise

Since loyalty is a word that we very often use, we tend not to dwell upon it much. Loyalty means to be faithful to ones duties, promises, and to others. It means to always stick by your family and friends. It means to be able to give even if you have nothing to gain. A loyal person is also a trustworthy person. The importance of this in Islam can be shown by the following hadith from Prophet Muhammad (S):

*"He who is untrustworthy has no faith"*

We know that the opposite of loyalty is betrayal. This is to break your promise, or let someone down. The Holy Prophet has also said:

*"There is no higher kind of betrayal than to relate an incidence to your fellow brother whilst he believes you whereas you have lied to him."*

This shows that to control you tongue (speech) is an important part of loyalty, however, loyalty covers the performance of actions as well.

When you make a promise, then you are bound by it. Others are then relying on you, and you cannot let them down. If you are not sure that you can do what ever you said, then you should not promise it, you should just say that you will try to do it.

Loyalty is an important branch of akhlaq in Islam. It encompasses exercising respect, honesty, trust, and patience with others. A loyal person is held higher (more dignified) in the eyes of Allah and needs to have what we learnt in the first chapter, will power. We should be loyal to our parents, family, and friends. We should especially remember to be loyal to Allah by being faithful to him and following his commands. Loyalty to Allah, is the proof that we have **Yaqeen** in him.

### Yaqeen

So what is yaqeen? It is the same as faith or eiman? Close, but not the same. Yaqeen is to have certainty, to be sure. It is definitely a higher stage than eiman.

We are told that there is a God, have we seen Him? When we read and learn, and when we are explained we get faith, and we believe that God then exists. Then we use our logic, we see that God must exist, we see His signs all around us, and we know through our intelligence that, yes there can only be one God, and He must exist. This is faith.

When we have faith, we then try harder to obtain Allah's pleasure, we talk to Him from our prayers, we talk to Him when we are in need, and if we are sincere enough, if we mean what we say, we will feel His answer. Allah will talk to us. He will not talk to our ears, but will talk directly to our hearts.

That is why when Imam Ali (A) was asked, "Do you worship a God that you cannot see?"

Imam (A) replied, "No, I would never worship something that I can not see. I see Allah with my heart, not with my mind."

Imam Ali (A) is so certain of the existence of Allah he knows it's a fact that Allah can be seen, just not with the eyes. This shows that when we reach the state of yaqeen, (Inshallah), we will know for a fact that Allah is there. We will have felt his presence everywhere, and we will be sure without doubt. Then Shaitan will not be able to put doubts in our head.

That is why Yaqeen is such a high stage, because there is no room for even a slight doubt and one can only reach this stage with patience, and understanding.



3. Sara's best friend, Nala came up to her and asked her to help her cheat in an exam and promised her that he would get her free tickets to Cirque Soleil as she has a cousin who has a friend that works there. Nala also told Sara that she would be upset with Sara if she did not help her. Sara is in a bind. She knows that if she helps her friend she will be going against her own beliefs but if she does not help her friend, she may lose the friendship? What should Sara do in such a situation to ensure that she is honest not only to herself but to Allah as well? What role does she have to play as a Muslim friend?
  
4. How is faith related to trust? Find a hadith of the holy Prophet Muhammad (S) from your notes that mentions and talks about the faith of a person who is untrustworthy?
  
5. When we lie we end up betraying others or hurting others feelings. For instance, Habib and Ali both go to Sunday school and are in the same class. Ali however, is very well liked by his peers and by his teachers because he is a kind and hardworking student. Habib gets jealous and starts spreading bad rumours about Ali to his friends that are lies and Ali finds out. Ali is hurt and cannot understand why Habib did what he did. Ali feels betrayed by Habib. Find a hadith from the holy prophet that talks about lies as "betrayal" from your notes and write it down.

6. Islam has no place for people who pretend to be loyal to their friends but end up backstabbing them, by either lying about them, or doing something to hurt them. As Muslims we should not believe others without evidence and we should not participate in gossip about others. Why do you think this is important?

7. What is “Yaqeen”? How is it related to eiman?

8. As Muslims we have “Yaqeen” in Allah and our Imams. We cannot see Allah but we have faith in him and we know that he is all knowing, all seeing, beneficent and merciful. We know that Allah listens to us and we can feel his presence. We cannot see Imam Mahdi (a) but we have Yaqeen that he is present and he is the Imam of our time. What did Imam Ali once tell a person who came up to him and asked him why he believed in a God that he could not see(refer to your notes above)?

9. How can we strengthen our “Yaqeen?”

10. Give examples from your personal experiences, or observations that constantly remind you of Allah’s presence and affirm your believe in him even though you can not see him?

## Chapter 4: Tohmat and Gheebat

Tohmat means to accuse someone of doing something without proper justification. It is a form of backbiting.

There are two words for backbiting, one is GHEEBAT, and the other is TOHMAT. When you speak about someone, and what you say is TRUE, then this is GHEEBAT.

When you speak about someone, and what you say is FALSE, then this is TOHMAT.

**TOHMAT AND GHEEBAT ARE BOTH HARAAM.**

The Holy Prophet (S) once said,

*"O Abu Zar, keep yourself away from **backbiting** because it is worse than adultery..... After committing adultery, if one repents, Allah forgives him, but the **backbiter** can not be pardoned unless he has been pardoned by the one about whom he has been **backbiting**."*

Imagine you saw someone you know go into a pub (a place where people go to drink alcohol). If you were to tell the world that this man has been drinking, then that is Tohmat. How do you know he was drinking? He could have broken down, and gone in the pub to use the phone, or ask directions.

In Islam, you should always give the benefit of the doubt to others. Even if someone does do something bad, you should hide it, and not tell the whole world. How would you like it if Allah told the whole world the evil that you or I perform ? We all commit sins at one time or another. If Allah can hide our faults, then you should hide the faults of others.

In the Holy Qur'an Surah 49 ayat 12, Allah tells us:

*"...And do not spy nor let some of you **backbite** others. Does one of you like to eat the dead flesh of his brother ?"*

This shows us that backbiting is as bad as eating the flesh of your dead brother. This means that once someone you know, i.e. your brother/sister in Islam has done something bad, they have killed their own reputation. By telling others what they have done, you are enjoying and gaining at their loss. It is as if you are eating and feasting on the reputation they have already destroyed.

In the early days of the first few Imams, there were two men. Let us call the first one Haroon and the second one Khalid. One day Khalid started telling everybody bad things about Haroon. He was spreading lies all around.

After a few days Haroon heard about this. The first thing he did was to go home and put all his money and gold and silver in a big bag and then took the bag to Khalid's house.

When Khalid saw Haroon coming he became scared because he thought that Haroon had come to beat him up. Khalid came out of his house and fell on his knees and begged to Haroon, "O Haroon, I am really sorry, I did not mean to tell tales about you, O please do not beat me!!"

Haroon said, "I have not come to beat you, I have come to give you this money, and this wealth."

Khalid had the shock of his life.

Haroon continued, "Khalid, I have come to thank you, here have this wealth of mine."

Khalid stood up and asked, "Why are you giving me wealth when I have insulted you and spoilt your name among the people?"

Haroon replied. "The Holy Prophet (S) has said that if one person **TALKS BEHIND THE BACK** of another, the thawaab of the first person gets transferred to the second." he continued, "So now that you have spoken bad of me behind my back, I am thanking you for giving me all your thawaab. This money is too little for the amount of thawaab that you have given me."

This shows how bad **Gheebat** and **Tohmat** are.

Once there was a man who did **tohmat** of our Sixth Imam.

Imam (A) did not know about it until a few days later when one of his 'friends' came to him and said, "Oh Imam, I have heard terrible news. This person has been going around and saying this about you."

Imam (A) became angry with his 'friend'. He said, "Think of the person who did **tohmat** towards me as if he shot an arrow at my body. I did not hear him so it is as if the arrow missed me; but by telling me this news, you have picked up the arrow from the ground and have hit me with it."

It is the duty of a good Muslim to stop others from speaking ill of a person, and if that is not possible he should go away from the people who are talking ill.

### Why are gheebat and tohmat Haraam ?

They are Haraam because they spoil people's names and characters. When you speak badly of someone, you make others think badly of him or her.

Another reason why it is bad is because the people are not there to defend themselves. If you hear wicked things about others, you should give the others a chance to defend themselves by explaining, before you believe what you hear.

Gheebat and Tohmat are a result of Jealousy. If a person is respected, has done good, has helped others, there will always be people who are angry and bitter that such a person is respected by all. The result is to try and slander and destroy this reputation by sowing seed of venom in their character, by telling the world lies so that the respect turns to outrage and shame. Such people are cursed by Allah, and are referred to as the whispers of menu. Those people that go out of their way to avoid doing gheebat or tohmat have actually developed a strong will power. They exercise a great deal of self-control and get special blessings from Allah.

## 4.1 Worksheet: Tohmat and Gheebat

1. What are the two forms of “backbiting”?

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2. What is the difference between **Gheebat** and **Tohmat**?

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3. Both Tohmat and Gheebat are Haram in Islam. Once the holy prophet (S) told his companion “Abu Dhar” that Gheebat was worse than committing adultery. Why is Gheebat considered to be the bigger sin according to the Prophet (S)?

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4. Which Surah and Ayat in the Quran refer to Gheebat as being equivalent to “eating the flesh of one’s dead brother.” Refer to your notes.

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5. In this lesson you read about two gentlemen who lived in the time of our Imams. Khalid and Haroon. Khalid was saying bad things about Haroon behind his back and this made Haroon very upset.

TRUE

FALSE

6. Haroon ran to Khalid's house with an Axe so that he could beat him for spreading all these rumours about him.

TRUE

FALSE

7. What did Haroon do with all the gold, silver and money that he put in a big bag?

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8. What was Khalid's reaction to the entire incident?

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9. What happens to our thawaab when we backbite about another person?

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10. It is the duty of a good Muslim to stop others from speaking ill of a person, and if that is not possible one should go away from, or avoid, people who are talking ill about others. What did Imam Jaffer Sadiq's (a)(6<sup>th</sup> Imam) say to the person that came up to him to inform him that someone was talking behind his back (Tohmat)?

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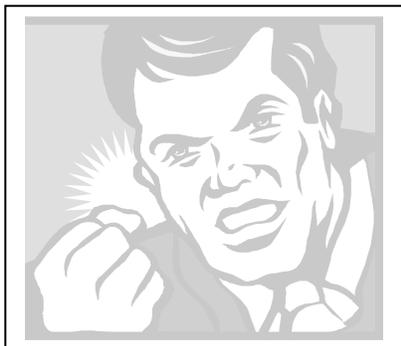
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## Chapter 5: To Sallow Anger and Forgive Others



To swallow ones anger refers specifically to when you have been wronged, and is one of the most commendable acts in Islam. A good Muslim always controls his/her anger when he or she has been wronged.

There is a saying in English to "bury the hatchet", this means that instead of trying to get revenge just bury it and put it out of your mind. There is also another saying to "forgive and forget" which has a similar meaning. This does not mean that you let people bully you around! But it applies to those whom you have power over, or those who repent or have done the deed without intention. Anger is a bitter pill to swallow, and can be controlled only with a strong will power. This can be seen by the following sayings of the Prophet (S),

*"The strongest of you is he who overpowers himself when enraged and the most forbearing of you is the one who forgives when having overpowered his enemy."*

*"Do you consider the intense strength as being in the lifting of (a heavy) stone whereas in fact it is in overpowering oneself when filled with anger".*

The way to swallow your anger is to "cool off".

*"Verily anger is from Shaitan and the Shaitan is created from fire. And the fire is but extinguished with water. Therefore whenever one is overtaken with anger, he should make wudhu."*

Wudhu has a calming effect on the body, and cools it down. It also makes us remember Allah, so we gain control over our self again.

Imam Ali (A) has said that:

*"Should any of you be faced with anger, he should sit down if standing, should lie down if sitting."*

All of us have done sins at some time in our lives, something that might have been worthy of punishment.

But if Allah can forgive us with his infinite mercy, then what right have we to be angry with others when they are sorry.

*"Almighty Allah had said, "Oh the son of Adam! Remember Me when in anger so that I remember you when you deserve my wrath and do not destroy you."*

Also we are told in Qur'an,

**3:133: Be quick in the race for forgiveness from your Lord, and for a garden whose width is that (of the whole) of the heavens and of the earth, prepared for the righteous. Those who spend (freely), whether in prosperity, or in adversity; WHO RESTRAIN ANGER, AND PARDON (ALL) MEN; for God loves those who do good.**

Imam Musa al Kadhim (A) was given the title AL-KADHIM for this reason. He is the ideal example of one who swallowed his anger. He was treated despicably and imprisoned by the oppressors right up to his martyrdom in prison, but he restrained his anger and bore it with patience.

Surah 42 Ayat 36 onwards explains

***"Whatever you are given (here) is (but) a convenience of this Life: but that which is with God is better and more lasting: (it is) for those who believe and put their trust in their Lord; those who avoid the greater crimes and shameful deeds, and, WHEN THEY ARE ANGRY EVEN THEN FORGIVE;***

***Those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular prayer; who (conduct) their affairs by mutual Consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance;***

***And those who, when an oppressive wrong is inflicted on them, (are not cowed but) help and defend themselves.***

The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (in degree): but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, His reward is due from God: for (God) does not love those who do wrong.

***But indeed if any do help and defend themselves after a wrong (done) to them, against such there is no cause of blame.***

## 5.1 Worksheet: To Swallow Anger, To Forgive Others

1. Islam teaches us to control our anger when someone provokes us?

TRUE

FALSE

2. Zeinab and Jahara are 7<sup>th</sup> grade students in Sunday school? Zeinab bullies Jahara one day and makes fun of her. Should Jahara control her anger? What would be the best way to deal with such a situation as a Muslim?

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3. Write down a hadith from the holy Prophet Muhammad (S) that emphasizes the importance of controlling ones anger and being forgiving (Refer to your notes above)

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4. Prophet Muhammad (S) said that controlling ones anger is an “intense strength” in one of his hadith’s

TRUE

FALSE

5. Anger comes from Shaitan

TRUE

FALSE

6. It is recommended that whenever one is in anger he/she should do wudhu. Why do you think this is important? What is the significance of Wudhu here?

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7. Imam Ali (a) has said that if one is standing in a state of anger he should “sit down” and if one is sitting, he/she should lie down.

TRUE

FALSE

8. As Muslims we are supposed to forgive those that ask us for forgiveness or forgive those that are sorry for what they did. Look for an ayat from the Quran in your notes that talks about forgiveness and quote it.

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9. Why was our seventh Imam, Imam Musa (a) given the title of AL-KADHIM?

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10. ***“The recompense for an injury is an injury equal thereto (in degree): but if a person forgives and makes reconciliation, His reward is due from God: for (God) does not love those who do wrong”.***

Explain the above Quranic Ayat and the name of the Surah it comes from.

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## Chapter 6: Abusive Language, Insults, Sarcasm and Impertinence

To use abusive language means to swear or insult someone. Everyone knows this is wrong yet children at school still do it. So why do people use bad language?

Most people swear when something bad happens to them, or when someone does something that they don't like. These people say that the actual swearing helps them control their anger, and stops them from doing other things that might be even worse. This may seem acceptable to many people but Islam says that a person who cannot restrain his anger, without using foul language must have a very weak will power. The noblest person according to Islamic etiquette (akhlaq) is that person who can control his anger, and manage to look unflustered, that is somebody who would *not* lose his cool and act uncivilized. Shouldn't that be the definition of 'cool' behavior? Or is it really cool to lose your control and lash out at someone with bad language?

It is worse to use swearing as a means of insulting someone and unjustified under any circumstances. Islam teaches us NEVER TO INSULT. If someone has angered us, we should either take action, or tell him or her that we do not like what he or she says; but to insult is to stoop to a very low stage, and Islam does not accept that a person should become so undignified or uncivilized.

To be sarcastic to others, and tease them also shows that part of a person's character is faulty. It may only feel like a joke, but if you turn the tables and put yourself in their place it wouldn't feel that funny. For example, would YOU like it if people teased you and called you names? Would YOU like it if your friends or classmates laughed when you fell down? Would YOU like people making fun of your family, or the color of your skin, or at the way you dress? Most of us know of some classmate who is always teasing and being sarcastic. Do you like that behavior? Would you like that behavior to be directed at you? Probably not, so it would be unfair and of poor character to be like that yourself.

Below are a few saying of Imam Ali (A) about the danger of the tongue. Imam Ali (A) is dearly respected by all of us. So let us look at what he has told us, and think about the meaning of his words. Let us try to understand and follow his advice.

*"Nothing else need to be restrained and kept under control but the tongue".*

*"Whosoever desires to remain safe should guard against what comes out of his tongue".*

*"Take care of your tongue".*

*"Woe be upon you! Will people be with their noses prostrated in hell fire except for reasons of what they had reaped out of (misuse) of their tongues".*

*"The one from whose tongue people are afraid of is from the inmates of hell fire".*  
*"Salvation of the believer lies in guarding his tongue.*

If we were to pay heed to Imam Ali's (A) words we would refrain from verbally abusing anyone. Additionally, one other point that his sayings refer to and needs mentioning is impertinence. This means to give *cheek*, or disrespectful answers back to people who are talking to you.

If someone is talking to you, even angrily, you should never be rude in your reply. If you are innocent then explain yourself, but to answer back especially to a parent or a teacher in such a manner is an inexcusable example of bad akhlaq.

The respect that parents and teachers command over you is very great, and you are responsible to speak to them in a polite manner. Besides, impertinence just proves that you have a poor character. It may make you feel big in class but you will have lost all your respect in front of your elders.

Food for thought:

It is important to note that when even anger does not excuse you the use of bad language then how do you think it would be allowed just for fun or just because everyone else does it? Would it then be all right to swear just to fit in among the 'cool' crowd of kids?

## **6.1 Worksheet: Abusive Language, Insults, Sarcasm, and Impertinence:**

### **6.1.1 Choose the correct answer:**

1. When you are angry with someone, it is hard to control yourself. Islam tells you to:
  - a. Go ahead and let out your anger, you have to get rid of your negative feelings.
  - b. Use bad language or insults only at this time since anger has to be expressed, and you are at least not physically harming anyone.
  - c. Use your will power and control your anger such that you tell the wrongdoer off but refrain from using bad language or insults.
  
2. Teasing other people only proves:
  - a. Your own character is at fault.
  - b. You have no will power.
  - c. You have no standards of decency.
  - d. All of the above.
  
3. If Mariam's friend Noor has upset, her Mariam should:
  - a. Let Noor know in polite but serious words.
  - b. Tell all of Noor's friends what Noor did.
  - c. Embarrass Noor in front of everyone so she never upsets anyone again.
  
4. Sibling rivalry is a very natural part of every family's life. If your sibling aggravates you, Islam tells you to:
  - a. Spank him/her if they are younger than you are.
  - b. Tell your sibling firmly to stop then tell an adult if he/she does not listen.
  - c. Tell your sibling firmly to stop then yell insults at them or swear so that they know that you are angry.

5. Sarcasm and cheeky, disrespectful answers back to adults:
  - a. Make you look smart and therefore cool.
  - b. May make you look smart but also extremely disrespectful.
  - c. Might make your friends think you are cool but sadden your Imams.
  - d. B and C

### **6.1.2 Write T for True and F for False**

6. Impertinence and cheeky answers are signs of a poor character.
7. Swearing is a sign of poor self-control and lack of will power.
8. It is a sign of high morals and respect to be able to remain cool and refrain from abusive language or insults.
9. Parents and teachers command respect. One should talk to them politely. Even disagreements can be handled in polite and firm language.
10. Imam Ali (a) has said that a salvation of a believer lies in guarding his tongue.

## Chapter 7: Earning a Halaal Livelihood

As we saw in the previous chapter will power and self –control is required to deal with the complicated emotion of anger and to refrain from bad language. Well it is also required in something as simple as earning a living. We are always used to understanding Halaal & Haraam in terms of objects, i.e. to eat this is Haraam, this meat is Halaal and so on... However, we never think about our actions.

Actions, like objects, can also be classified as to whether they are Haraam or Halaal.

If I see \$20 bill on the ground, on my way to school, I can EITHER pick it up and put it into my pocket, OR hand to the lost and found in school.

If I can fool someone into paying me more money than I charge for the service rendered then will I do it?

These are all things that can happen to us anytime, and we should find a way to choose the right action.

Our LIVELIHOOD is the way in which we live and earn in our day-to-day lives.

For adults, it is the way they earn their money, the way in which they help their friends, how they act to other people, how they pay taxes, how they run the business, whether they pay Khums, etc..

For youngsters, still at school, it is the way they treat their friends, the way they do their homework, what excuses they make if they do not do something, etc.

Islam emphasises the importance of making sure that these actions are not against Shari'a i.e. making sure all these actions are HALAAL.

The attitude of very many people is that it doesn't matter how you do something, for example, it doesn't matter if I usurp someone else's property, as long as I give some of it to charity. It doesn't matter whether I pay Khums or not, as long as I pray.

This attitude is not an Islamic one and it is something that the youth of the community should realize and teach others by example.

## Why should we earn a halaal livelihood? What is wrong in cheating others?

If we were to cheat someone, we would be gaining at his or her loss.

Suppose we were working on a job together and were paid \$10. If instead of splitting it half/half, I was to keep \$6 and give you \$4, and you didn't notice, I would be gaining \$1 at your expense. \$1 itself may not be a big deal but it is the principle that counts.

Allah has given us a short term on this world. He has put us in a position where we have the choice of cheating or being fair. If we can stay on the path of Islam, the path of justice, we will benefit **BOTH in this life and the next**. However if we cheat and follow Shaitan, we may become rich, but we will never be happy in this world, and definitely not in the next life.

The Holy Prophet (S) has said

*"Whoever lives on halaal earnings for 40 days, Allah shall enlighten his heart, and cause springs of wisdom to come from his heart, following to his tongue."*

This does not mean that we should earn a halaal life for 40 days, and then forget it and start cheating!! It shows us the reward that Allah gives us for obeying Him, and resisting temptation.

Imam Ali (A) said to his people:

*"Who is a believer?"*

Then he gave a detailed answer, part of which said:

*"The believer is one with whom people's life, wealth, and dignity are safe."*

*"His livelihood is earned in an honourable way."*

We must always remember that Allah is giving us the chance to prove ourselves to Him. We can gain his pleasure by fighting our nafs and being just in this world, or we can displease Him by following our nafs. Remember the example of Hur, when he saw before him two paths, one was death in an honourable way with Imam Hussein (A), and one was riches and wealth without principles. He made the right choice and set us the example. Do we have the courage to follow this?

**The choice is ours.....**

## 7.1 Worksheet: Earning a Halaal Livelihood

Choose whether true or false

1. Earning a halaal livelihood refers to eating food that is not haraam.

True

False

2. Your money is halaal if you have earned it in a fair manner and paid khums on the savings.

True

False

3. Winning money through gambling would be considered halaal only if you used more than 50% to donate to the poor.

True

False

4. If I found a \$100 bill and gave at least 20% to the needy or my masjid the rest would be halaal for me to keep.

True

False

5. If you have earned all your money fairly and given to the poor and needy too whenever you remembered your money is halaal even if you forgot to pay khums on it.

True

False

6. If your friend lent you some lunch money and forgot to take it back you need not worry about paying him back such a small amount.

True

False

7. If you get a big chunk of business by selling alcohol at your convenience store only to non-Muslims your money earned will be halaal.

True

False

Short Answer Questions:

8. What did Imam Ali (A) say about earning a halaal livelihood?

9. If we cheat what does that say about our nafs?

10. What can we do with our nafs to please Allah?

## **Chapter 8: Going to the Theatre and Watching Movies**

At one time going to the movies was thought to be haraam, since the cinema was predominantly used for movies that contained bad language, obscenities, songs, and dance.

Today, we have television inside our houses, and can see anything we want to. Thus the question of whether we go to a movie or not does not apply any more, it is rather a question of what we watch.

It is kind of like eating at a restaurant. To go to a restaurant to eat becomes Haraam only if the food they serve is Haraam. However if the restaurant serves halaal food, then there is no problem to go and eat there. Therefore it doesn't matter whether we go to a restaurant or a not, it is what we have to eat that is important.

If we go to see a movie that shows offensive scenes such as people acting shamelessly or hardly wearing any clothes, then of course it becomes Haraam.

However, if we go to watch movies that are of educational interest or for fun, without seeing anything Haraam, then they are permissible.

Unfortunately, many movies today are aimed at the desires of the youth. These films show scenes that encourage youngsters to think and practise those thoughts that should be kept under control by the youngster's own will power. These films are Haraam because they influence the actions of the one who watches them. They make the desires of the nafs so strong that it becomes very difficult to control, and often the mind gives in and becomes the slave of our desires rather than our intellect.

Another factor that makes movies haraam is the presence of music. One point people often bring up is that nowadays all movies and programs contain music. If the music is such, that it is one of the major themes of the movie or program, then the program should be avoided. However if the music is in the background, and is not the central theme of the program, then it is permissible to watch. This is because according to the fatwa (verdict) of both Ayatollah Al Khomeini (may Allah rest is soul) and Ayatollah al Khui (may Allah keep him well), background music is allowed. This also applies to watching television in our own homes.

There are movies that are obviously funny, but contain jokes that are filthy and crude. These are not the movies you should watch, since they provide a negative influence over you.

Then there are movies that are decent, and respectable, where you will gain an insight into human behavior, develop your imagination, or learn and at the same time have fun. These movies are permissible.

At the end of the day, if we want to go to see a movie, we must ask ourselves why. If the movie will be fun, but will still contain sections that would go against our principles, then we should avoid it. Especially in a theatre, you are exposed to whatever is on the screen, so you cannot switch it off like a television, nor can you forward it like on a video.

This is a major test of your willpower. Allah has given you a test; can you control your nafs from tempting you to watch R rated or worse movies, or will *it* control *you*? There is no Adult rating in Islam. If a movie is obscene, shameless, or pornographic than it is Haraam for all to see, whether you are 5 years old or 50.

You will notice, at first it will be very difficult to refrain, but as soon as you make your mind up and be firm, you will feel as if your character has improved a hundred times, and you will not even be tempted any more. You will ask yourself, how can I have let that nafs of mine have so much control over something that I can now see to be so childish and materialistic?

## 8.1 Worksheet: Going to the Theatre and Watching Movies

Circle T for True & F for False:

1. It is Haraam to watch movies.

True

False

It is Haraam to go to the Theatre.

True

False

2. It is permissible to watch movies in a theatre if there are no indecent scenes, pictures or songs in the movie.

True

False

3. It is alright to watch any rating of movies if all spectators are adults.

True

False

4. A person that has the willpower of avoiding movies that are inappropriately rated no matter what his age, exercises control of his Nafs and pleases Allah.

True

False

5. If a person is an adult, it is permissible for him to watch movies that please him, even if they contain inappropriate material.

True

False

6. One can watch movies at theatres, or at home as long as they contain descent language, scenes, and clothing.

True

False

Choose the best answer:

7. Some good movies have a couple of inappropriate scenes. What would be the best choice in this case? One could:
  - a. Still watch the movie, after all it is generally good
  - b. Consider it Haraam
  - c. Watch the movie on a DVD so inappropriate scenes can be skipped.
  
8. Some movies are inappropriate to watch at all, but all your friends say you have to watch it. You could:
  - a. Tell your friends your parents are so mean you can't watch it.
  - b. Ask your friends if you could watch it at their house.
  - c. Tell your friends you really are not interested in watching the movie.
  
9. Some friends may ask you to lie to your parents & join them for a movie that contains nudity and bad language. You should:
  - a. Make an excuse not to watch the movie, since not only would you be watching something Haraam, but you would be lying to your parents as well.
  - b. Watch it only if their playing it at their home.
  - c. Go and watch it to see if you and your friends get caught.

## Chapter 9: Music and its Effects

Islam does not recommend or encourage music amongst a community. Let us see why. Human beings are highly versatile and can adapt to different situations easily, so it is very rare that everyone will react to an influence in exactly the same way. Thus all human beings may not be affected by a **tiny bit of alcohol**, or a **little music** to the same degree.

However, Islam is a religion for all the people **AS WELL** as the individual. Therefore, if there is something that affects a large percentage of people in an undesirable manner, such as alcohol causing drunkenness and disorder, then Islam will make it Haraam at the very beginning on the basis that "**PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE.**" This means that it is better to stop something bad from happening in the first place rather than doing something about it after it happens. This is a logical approach.

Allah also says in the Holy Qur'an, that some things in small quantities do have good effects for us, but the bad effects outweigh the good, therefore overall it is harmful and so forbidden.

They ask you concerning wine and gambling. Say: "In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit." .... Thus doth God make clear to you His Signs: in order that you may consider. Surah 2:219

So what is undesirable about music?

Music has an affect on the mind and the body. The effect depends on the type of music.

With some types of music, soft and soothing, one relaxes and opens up the mind, closes the eyes, and drifts off to another world, perhaps a world of fantasy.

With other types of music, the mind is almost possessed. Very often, with loud music, played at discos, and parties, people begin to dance and move in rhythm to the music. This causes them to lose control of their nafs, so that they dance with partners, come very close and lose all sense of shame, and think of or commit acts that are the result of their desires.

Music is also addictive. It becomes like a drug. People require more and more of it and find it very difficult to stop, and to obtain the same effect, they play the music louder and louder, which may negatively effect their hearing or nervous system.

Music has a general negative effect on society. Many youngsters growing up in the western world identify themselves with a certain band and club. There are posters in their bedroom, and their clothes and personality change to emulate this idol. Rather than getting influenced by great personalities in the past or present their hero becomes this music idol that takes them away from reality.

It is unfortunate that the society we live in, defines enjoyment as anything that makes you forget the world: music, alcohol, drugs which have two common factors, (i) they are an escape from reality, and (ii) they are addictive. Yet if you live the simple life prescribed by Islam, you will find contentment in reality and not have to escape it.

Many singers, and groups can be seen to use music to arouse the desires that should be controlled. Many of the groups today are scantily dressed and make indecent gestures while performing.

Music affects us in the same way as alcohol; it causes us to be unaware of our actions. We can become very angry if the music around us is loud and dominating.

Places like discos and parties, cause people to lower their guard, and act in a loose and permissive manner. You start to dance to music, soon letting that music control your actions and your thoughts. This can lead you to perform other immoral actions too. So not only should we avoid music, but also we not go to places that are designed to play music, or places where people solely meet to dance.

One final point to be aware is that Allah makes things Haraam for our benefit. We should try and understand why things are Haraam and justify them as above, but at the end of the day, if we are convinced and have faith, we will accept the rules of Islam. It is vital to ask questions and thus understand our faith, but we should never become so stubborn and say, "just because I don't understand something I don't have to follow it."

Allah is our creator and He is closer to us than our own skin. We must realize that His laws are there to help us perfect our own character and fulfill our function as being His deputies on this earth.

Verse 3 of Suratul Mu'minoon.

***and those who, from what is vain, keep themselves aloof.***

Vain, Imam Ali (A) says that all that is void of remembrance of God is meant by this term. With the Ahlul Bait this term included all useless entertainment, wasteful of time, including musical enjoyments. Vain games played just to while away time, are also covered by this term.

So is absolutely all music haraam? Can't we listen to any music other than background? Actually shariah says that war music played to boost the morale of an army is permissible. Additionally you may listen to music that meets the following 4 conditions:

- a. The music does not have the effect of arousing the listener.
- b. The music does not take you into a world devoid of Allah.  
***Satan's plan is (but) to excite enmity and hatred between you, with intoxicants and gambling, and hinder you from the remembrance of God, and from prayer: will you not then abstain? Surah 5:94***
- c. The music does not cause you any physical or mental harm.
- d. The music does not remind you or is similar to a place where haraam is performed (such as a nightclub). Also singing of the human voice by itself is not haraam, unless it reminds you of a place where haraam is performed.

Even though these conditions allow you to listen to certain kinds of music there are many people who want to practise ihtiyat and not listen to any music at all and they may choose to do so.

## 9.1 Worksheet: Music and its Effects

Choose the best answer:

1. Music is generally discouraged in Islam because it has a tendency to:
  - a. Affect the mind and body.
  - b. Influence a person in a way that it takes them away from reality.
  - c. Both A and B.
  
2. Music makes a person:
  - a. Really, think about Allah and worship him.
  - b. Escape from reality.
  - c. Think about Islam and all the great personalities of Islam.
  
3. Music has the tendency to:
  - a. Change people into very nice human beings.
  - b. Give Thawaab to your parents.
  - c. Be addictive
  
4. Islam discourages anything:
  - a. That makes you happy and loose touch with reality.
  - b. That makes you sad and loose touch with reality.
  - C. That is addictive and can make you loses self-control.
  
5. Often when people listen to music it makes them
  - a. Want to dance uncontrollably or indecently and tap their feet.
  - b. Lose touch with reality and drift off into a fantasy world.
  - c. Forget their prayers or other duties towards Allah.
  - d. All of the above.
  
6. Playing War music to cheer on soldiers is:
  - a. Haraam
  - b. Permissible
  - c. Mustahib
  
7. Which one or more of the conditions make music permissible.
  - a. Music becomes permissible when it does not take you away from Allah.
  - b. When it does not cause you any physical harm.
  - c. When it sounds very soothing.
  - d. Both a and b.

8. If the music reminds you of some Haraam place such as a nightclub then:
  - a. Such music becomes haraam even if other conditions are met.
  - b. It is okay to listen to music if other conditions are met after all, you are not in the Haraam place.
  - c. It is permissible to listen to music as long as it is at a low volume.
  
9. If the music has the effect of arousing someone even if all other conditions are met it is:
  - a. Haraam
  - b. Halaal
  - c. Makruh
  
10. When you are thoroughly engrossed in music you may:
  - a. Think or commit immoral acts
  - b. lose all self control
  - c. Lose your sense of shame
  - d. All of the above.

## **Section II: Akhlaq (for Fiqh Class)**

## Chapter 10: Leading a Moral Life

Let us first define morals, as *"concerned with the distinction between right and wrong."*

Islam is a religion that is sent as a gift from Allah to mankind, to bring them together in peace and harmony. This can only be done if the morals of the community are pure.

Therefore in order to have a peaceful life, Islam has given man a set of social values (morals) so that each individual and thus the whole community can build up a moral character.

How are we to live a moral life ?

Each of us has a responsibility to the other, to maintain justice, to respect the rights of the other.

In the Holy Qur'an (Surah 49, ayats 11,12) Allah explains to us certain ways of behaving:

*"O you who believe! Let not some men among you laugh at others: it may be that the (latter) are better than the (former): nor defame nor be sarcastic to each other by (offensive) nicknames..."*

*Avoid suspicion as much (as possible): for suspicion in some cases is a sin: and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs (gheebat).  
Would any of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother ?"*

There are countless ways to behave in a community; the essence of all moral behavior is in **CONSIDERATION**. If one considers the needs of others, then he will not do anything to cause further hardship.

Prophet Muhammad (S) has said:

*"Prefer for people that which you prefer for yourself."*

In a very short Surah (Suratul Asr) Allah explains the way the whole of mankind should behave.  
Ayat 2:

*"Verily Man is in a loss."*

This is thought to refer to the Day of Judgment when Allah will raise man from his grave to answer about his life, some men will say that they had lived an **IMMORAL** life, and these men will

be in a loss. Some men will reply that they had been very good themselves and established regular prayers; **THESE MEN TOO WILL BE IN A LOSS.**

Ayat 3:

*"Except for such as have Faith, AND do righteous deeds, AND join together in the mutual teaching of Truth, AND of patience."*

This shows that being good by yourself is not enough, you must lead such a life so as to serve and teach the community by guiding them towards the truth and enjoining them towards good. This is known as Amr bil Ma'aruf (direct towards good) and Nahy anil Munkar (persuade against evil).

The set of morals given to mankind by Allah is reflected in the behavior (Sunnah) of the Holy Prophet and Imams (may Allah bestow peace upon them.)

Once Imam Ali (A) was asked what a person's morals should consist of, he answered:

*"When powerful, he forgives easily.  
He is generous in appropriate ways.  
His behavior is gentle.  
His actions and walk reflect modesty.  
People enjoy his affection and calmness.  
He is ready to bear pain in order to comfort others.  
In friendship he is sincere.  
He honors his promises.  
He helps the oppressed and is concerned about the deprived.  
He does not abandon those in distress; he tries to relieve their burdens.  
He respects the rights of those who are absent.  
He accepts the apologies of those at fault.  
He assists those who have assisted him.  
He does not divulge (tell) peoples' secrets.  
He does not inquire into secret affairs that do not concern him.  
He sets a good example for those who succeed him.  
His good deeds are not performed for the sake of being boastful.  
He does not fall into the same difficulty twice."*

Also, in the du'a for excellence in morals, Imam Ali Zainul Abedeen (A) has written:

*"Oh Allah, advance my faith to the greatest perfection. Let my belief be the most excellent of beliefs. Let me be honored, but do not let me fall prey to pride. Issue from my hands good to mankind, but do not let it be undone with reproaches. Give me excellent morals"*

*and save me from boasting. Give me grace to behave with sincere good-will to him who was insincere to me."*

Let us try to change these words into actions.

## 10.1 Worksheet: Leading a Moral Life

Choose the correct answer:

1. The essence of all moral behavior is in:
  - a. Having consideration for the needs of others.
  - b. Forcing others to listen to you about what is right.
  - c. None of the above.
  
2. In **Surah 49 Allah** has made it clear that he does not like people to:
  - a. Laugh at others
  - b. Be sarcastic
  - c. Be suspicious without cause and backbite.
  - d. All of the above.
  
3. Prophet Mohammad(s) has said that you should:
  - a. Want for others what you want for yourself.
  - b. Always give your money to the homeless
  - c. Always tell Kafirs that they are immoral.
  
4. "Verily man is in a loss" refers to the fact that:
  - a. Those who feel they have they have been always good will never be in a loss.
  - b. Those who have been Immoral will be in a loss.
  - c. Those who have been good but have never served the community will still be in loss.
  - d. Both b and c.
  
5. Iman is fourteen. She prays five times a day; never misses a fast, and makes sure she follows all Usool and Furoo-e-Deen. She practices Islam to the best of her ability. However when her younger brother walks in her room she yells, "Get out you jerk you're always so nosy, why are you in my room?" Is Iman considered:
  - a. Moral because the rest of her deeds are very pious and she has a right to get angry sometimes.
  - b. Immoral, because she is not considerate about the feelings of her younger brother.

- c. A decent teenager who is going through a tough time in her life too and will naturally yell at the younger sibling.
- d. Both b and c

6. Zahra is a devout Muslim and tries to do everything prescribed by Islam. She is very popular and likes this feeling. She cannot stand it if her friends start paying more attention to anyone else. To become a better Muslim Zahra will need to change herself since her behavior shows some:

- a. Consideration
- b. Morality
- c. Immorality

7. Ammar's younger sister Zoya has just messed up his video game. Ammar has spent hours and days to reach that level and his anger knows no limit. He picks a baseball bat and is about to throw it at Zoya who is crouched helplessly in a corner. Suddenly he drops the bat, lets out an angry breath and walks out of the room. Ammar displayed the following moral mentioned by Imam Ali (a):

- a. In friendship, he is sincere
- b. He honors his promise
- c. When powerful he forgives easily.

8. Explain what you think is meant by "he respects the rights of those who are absent".

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9. Give three examples of how you can be sincere with your friends.

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10. Write down three traits of a moral person other than the ones mentioned above.

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## Chapter 11: Service to Humanity

As previously mentioned it is quite obvious that Islam is a religion for a community, that teaches people to interact and bring the whole society together under one faith and to guard each other's rights.

Human beings have many qualities that distinguish them from other animals. They have supreme intelligence, they can tell between right and wrong. One feature which humanity shares with many other animals is their ability to form and live together in large communities.

The spirit of consideration is a key to morality and the central force that binds people together in a society. Human life without consideration is transformed into animal life, since every one is for himself, and it becomes survival of the fittest.

If a person cannot use his abilities to help others, and to guide them, then that person is leading a useless life. This service to others has been emphasized again and again in Islam. The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

*"One who does not take interest in the affairs of Muslims is not a Muslim. And that person too is not a Muslim who hears a Muslim calling for help and does not respond to his call".*

The reward offered for this service to humanity is so great, that few other deeds carry similar rewards.

*"One who fulfils the needs of a brother Muslim is like one who has been worshipping Allah throughout his life".*

Sometimes, you are asked for help, and you are not in a position to give it. Even in this circumstance, if your niyyat was pure then you are rewarded.

Our 5<sup>th</sup> Imam (A) has said,

*"At times it so happens that a Muslim seeks help from another Muslim and the latter, though inclined to help him, is not in a position to do so; Allah will send him to Paradise for this very resolution".*

Perhaps the best advice on service to humanity comes from Imam Hussein (A) who explained to us,

*"the requests which people make to you are blessings of Allah, so do not feel weary or uneasy".*

There are many places where we have a chance to perform services for others. There are ample opportunities in our day-to-day lives. Even if people take you for granted, or they insult you, remember that your niyyat is **for the sake of Allah (lillah)**.

### Haqq-un-naas

When talking about service to humanity it is important to mention haqq-un-naas. The phrase haqq-un-naas comprises two words, (*Haq*) which means right, i.e. a person's right to have or own something, and (*naas*) which means person, or human beings.

It can be seen from this, that haqq-un-naas means the rights of people. Every person has certain vital rights that should not be taken away. If I am holding the estate of an orphan, then it is the right of the orphan to inherit the estate when he comes of age. I should not take advantage of my position as the custodian and consume it my self.

Allah, who is Just and Merciful, will (inshallah) forgive us for the sins that we commit against Him, provided we repent for them sincerely; but how can He forgive you for the sins that you commit against others. That would be going against His justice. We can never be forgiven for breaking haqq-un-naas, the rights of others, unless the person whom we have wronged forgives us himself. This makes haqq-un-naas a major sin, and one that is unforgivable.

The next question is *"What actions break haqq-un-naas?"*

A person has a right over you even when he is not there. Imagine you were at a gathering, and were discussing with others. If I am not at that gathering, I still have a right that my name should not be insulted, nor my reputation spoilt. This means that if you do *Gheebat*, or *Tohmat*, or *Fitna* in which my name is mentioned then you have committed a sin against me.

Such a sin cannot be forgiven unless I have forgiven it. It is because of these high consequences that we should avoid committing actions that breach the rights of others. This shows that Islam is a religion that not only benefits a person directly, but also helps the community in general. Where else can you find a law the commands you, not to insult others and tells you to guard their reputation in public and private.

You are answerable for haqq-un-naas even after death. Islam advises that we should seek forgiveness from the person whom we have wronged before one of the parties dies. If a person dies before forgiving the other, then there is no direct way of obtaining forgiveness, and that sin will carry forward until the day of Judgment.

Consider the danger of this sin! Allah who can create the universe and destroy it in one stroke; who can perform any action conceivable; who is eternal and lives forever, even He cannot forgive us for crimes against haqq-un-naas. He Himself has told us that only the person who has been wronged can forgive. This does not matter whether the person is a Muslim, or a non-Muslim, whether he is a sinner, or a believer.

## 11.1 Worksheet: Service to Humanity

Choose the correct answer:

1. Islam is a religion for a:
  - a. Country
  - b. Continent
  - c. Community
  
2. Human life without \_\_\_\_\_ is transformed into animal life.
  - a. Food and water
  - b. Friends
  - c. Consideration
  
3. According to Prophet Muhammad(s) “a person that had no interest in the life of other Muslim is\_\_\_\_\_”
  - a. Not a good Muslim himself
  - b. A good person because he at least he/she takes care of himself.
  - c. None of the above
  
4. Suppose your friends needs extensive help with his homework and wants to meet you to do it at your house, but you have so many assignment due yourself that you cannot spare much time. You really want to help so you take some time out only to call your friend at home and give some quick guidelines on how to get the homework done. You probably will be:
  - a. Punished since you didn't let your friend come to your house for help.
  - b. Prone to a life of misery since you should have helped more.
  - c. Rewarded since you sincerely wanted to help and did try your best to do so.
  
5. Haqq- un- nass refers to the rights of:
  - a. Rights of your father
  - b. Rights of people
  - c. Rights of your neighbor



## Chapter 12: Care for the Environment

One way to be of service to humanity that none of us think about, is to care for the environment. You must have learnt in school about saving the earth. Islam has similar views on protecting the environment. Allah created us all, and made us the inheritors of the earth. He gave us the world and all the creatures within so that we may live and prosper by using them, not abusing them. He mentions in Qur'an

**6:165 » *It is He who has made you (His) agents, inheritors of the earth:***

When we inherit something we must take good care of it especially if we want to pass it on to the next generation. If we abuse it or neglect it we may damage it beyond repair. Our world is getting used, and abused. We cannot throw that away. We only have one world, our world, and only by keeping it clean and conserving its resources can we make sure it lasts.

Consider the house you live in and sleep in. What would happen if you did not bother to clean up the mess you made, the dishes, the clothes, the dust, and the dirt. What if you didn't care of regular maintenance of the actual building structure? If this were not dealt with, then your house would soon become uninhabitable. To make sure your house is livable you would have to sincerely and periodically maintain it. We inherited the earth from our ancestors and it is our responsibility to look after it so that we can hand it down in good condition to the next generation. Our planet has about 4 billion people, if we do not act responsibly and save the environment then where can we go when it becomes too polluted to live in?

What can we do to save the environment?

We can start by realizing that we should not waste things. Everything in this universe is created by Allah, and serves His purpose. Allah has blessed us with so many natural resources but we should have the courtesy to spend them with care use them sparingly without waste. As it is Islam condemns Asraaf. The more we waste, the more we throw away and multiplied by 4 billion it all adds up. We create so much garbage that the landfills are overflowing.

Another thing we often overlook is the use of harsh chemicals that damage the environment. We can help save it by using earth friendly products rather than chemicals that may damage the ocean and the sky.

In fact Islam tells us that we should even respect the existence of plants since Allah explains

***55:6 » And the herbs and the trees-both (alike) bow in adoration.***

Let us not be selfish and look after *all* the creations of Allah. Let us be fair to our planet and the people who will be using it after us. Our responsible actions now may save our planet for future generations to come.

## 12.1 Worksheet: Care For the Environment

Fill in the blanks:

1. To care for the environment is also a \_\_\_\_\_ to the community.
2. Allah has made us the \_\_\_\_\_ of the earth.
3. When we inherit something valuable we should look after it so we can pass it on to future generations in \_\_\_\_\_.
4. If we \_\_\_\_\_ our world we may pollute it beyond repair.
5. One way we can help save the planet is to stop \_\_\_\_\_ things.
6. We need to also remember to reduce the creation of \_\_\_\_\_.
7. According to the Qur'an plants also " \_\_\_\_\_ in adoration (to Allah)"

Short Answer Questions:

8. Write down some examples of environmental pollution.
9. Is it just commercial industry that causes pollution, or is it the individual consumer?
10. What solutions, both long term and short term can you think of to prevent pollution?

## Chapter 13: Being Just (Adl)

If Islam asks us to be fair to our planet and to Allah's creation then we should remember that *man* is also Allah's creation. So obviously we should be fair to people too, since this kind of consideration is also a service to humanity and an aspect of morality taught by Islam. All men are equal, rich or poor, black or white. This is the basic principle that Islam has always taught. If people are equal in the eyes of Allah, then they must be treated with equality. This is why it is very important to be fair and just when you are making a decision that affects other people.

The story below shows an example of just this:

*There was a man who was journeying towards Kufa. When he arrived in Kufa, he decided to be a guest of Imam Ali (A). For a number of days, he stayed with Imam (A) without divulging the purpose of his visit; and Imam (A) did not ask either. Finally the man said:*

*"I have a dispute with a particular party here and I have come to get it settled. Would you act as an arbitrator (judge)?"*

*Imam (A) said: "You are party to the dispute, aren't you?"*

*"Yes," the man replied*

*"Then you cannot expect me to be your arbitrator. If you wanted me to decide your case, you should not have become my guest. The Prophet (S) said: 'When a person has been appointed a judge or an arbitrator in a case, he has no right to play host to either of the two sides, except when they are both invited together.'"*

Justice starts with your own self. You cannot fool yourself about what you are doing. If you can be just with yourself, then it is easier to be just with others.

Imam Ali (A) has said that:

*"He is the most just man that does justice upon himself without anyone else to judge him."*

When we make decisions concerning other people, we have to decide between what we feel is right and wrong. Not between our friends and enemies. It doesn't even matter if family is involved, what is important is that the truth must be told.

The Holy Qur'an explains this to us:

***(4:135) “ You who believe! Stand out firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even as against yourselves, or your parents, or your family, and whether it be (against) rich or poor: for Allah can best protect both. Follow not the lusts (of your hearts), in case you swerve, and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily God is well-acquainted with all that you do.”***

This verse does not mean you have the right to be disrespectful to your parents or family. It means that if you see them being unjust you should not side with them and discourage the injustice if you can. If you feel that it will be difficult for you not to take sides in a decision, then ask someone else to make the decision. Islam has explained to us how important it is to be fair. Only those people who do not believe in Allah, or who do not care about what Allah says practice injustice.

***The Hypocrites, men and women, (have an understanding) with each other: they enjoin evil, and forbid what is just, and are close with their hands. They have forgotten God; so He has forgotten them.***

Allah commands us that we must be just. If we try to cheat or be unfair, then how can we expect Allah to treat us fairly on the Day of Judgment?

***(16:90) “God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that you may receive admonition.”***

Allah tells us that being just is like being pious; they both gain the pleasure of Allah.

***(5:9) “O you who believe! Stand out firmly for God, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: THAT IS NEXT TO PIETY: and fear God, for God is well-acquainted with all that you do.”***

## 13.1 Worksheet: Being Just (Adl)

Fill in the blanks:

1. The basic principle of Islam is that all human beings are created \_\_\_\_\_.
2. We must be \_\_\_\_\_ when making a decision that affects other people.
3. Justice starts with your own \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Imam Ali (a) has said, " The most just man will do \_\_\_\_\_ upon \_\_\_\_\_."

Choose the correct answer:

5. Jafer's in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. He has made a small group of friends whom he gets along with really well. However his friends always pick on a short boy in class that is not in their group. Jafer feels uncomfortable because that boy is actually quite a nice person. What should Jafer do?
  - a. Join his friends otherwise they will think he is a wimp.
  - b. Ask his friends too stop teasing the boy because it doesn't seem right.
  - c. Let his friends tease the boy but not do so himself.
6. Hanifah and Sana are sisters. Sana has been best friends for the last 3 years with Zoha, but has now found a new 'best friend'. When Zoha comes over Sana ignores her and is mean to her, thus hurting her feelings. Hanifah sides with her sister and does the same thing. What could have Hanifah done that would have been more Islamic?
  - a. She should have ignored everyone and made her own friends.
  - b. She should have been nicer to her sister's new friend.
  - c. She should have treated Zoha the same way she did before.
7. Farwah and Azeema are friends. Azeema gets in an argument with a girl at the Sunday school they go to. She uses bad language and insults against this girl. The argument escalates so that they have to go to the principal's office. Farwah knows Azeema was rude but she supports her because she is a good friend and tells the principal that Azeema has not done anything wrong. Did Farwah do the right thing?

- a. No because not only was she unjust to the other girl, she lied to save her friend.
  - b. Yes because Azeema was her friend and it was Farwah's duty to support her.
  - c. Yes because she didn't even know the other girl so how could she side with her.
8. Kulthum's little brother takes part in a school poster-coloring contest. She is asked to be a judge in the competition since she is a frequent volunteer for school events. Kulthum knows how hard her brother has worked and how eager he is to win. She doesn't think she will like any posters better than her brother's. What would be the most fair thing for her to do?
- a. She should ask someone else to make the decision because she thinks she may be biased in her opinion.
  - b. She should make sure she does judge because that way she can vote for her hard-working, eager brother and increase his chances of winning.
  - c. She should ask another friend who actually favors her brother to judge in her place.

Short Answer Questions:

9. Explain what is meant by the Qur'an when it suggests that for justice you should 'go against ...your parents, or your family..'

10. What, according to the Qur'an is the similarity between being pious and being just?

## Chapter 14: Keeping Secrets Safe

The practice of being just and fair leads us to another topic. Is it really fair to betray someone's secret? Is it really moral to tell someone's secret?

Every human being possesses secrets. They are affairs that they would rather not disclose to others, due to embarrassment, shame, guilt or such reasons.

Zahid, a 7<sup>th</sup> grader goes to school and opens up his notebook just to find out he has a pop quiz. He is really not ready for this quiz and he knows he has an 'A' average in this class. He is so worried that he might fail the quiz that he does what he never imagined possible. His notebook is open and he can glance at most of the writing. He cheats on the quiz! The teacher does not find out because he is usually such a good student that she trusts him.

When Zahid got home his secret and the fact he did something wrong both began to nag him. So he called up his friend Radha and told him what he did, but asked him not to tell anyone. Radha was so surprised that he could not keep it to himself. He let out Zahid's secret.

Meanwhile Zahid spent a sleepless night. His conscience continually bothered him. He had never cheated before. He realized in the morning that he could not go through with this. So, as soon as he got to school he went to his teacher and told her what he had done. The teacher was upset, but forgave Zahid because of his honesty and feelings of regret and told him he would have to take a make up quiz. Zahid felt so much better and walked happily back to the class where his friends were waiting. As soon as he approached them he heard one of them say, "Hey we never knew you were such a cheat!" Then they all laughed. Zahid was so embarrassed, but even more so he was angry and hurt that Radha had betrayed his trust. Radha had definitely not proved to be a good friend. If he had really wanted to help Zahid he would have kept the secret and advised Zahid to go and tell the truth.

The above story shows that by telling our friends' secrets we extremely hurt them. We embarrass them and break their trust in us. When someone tells you a secret, they trust you with something very important, and we do not realize this.

The Holy Prophet (S) has said that:

*"He who keeps no pledge has no religion".*

In the Holy Qur'an Surah 8 ayat 27 Allah says:

*"O ye that believe! betray not the trust of God and the apostle, nor exploit knowingly things entrusted to you"*

If someone was to hand over some money to you, and say "Please look after this, don't give it to anybody."

Now, if you agreed, and then were to go and give that money to someone else, you would be breaking your word, even if you were to get the money back.

It is the same with a secret, it is something entrusted to you, (AMANAT), and you do not have any right to disclose it to anyone else.

The Holy Prophet (S) has said that:

*"Four things when allowed to enter a house become the cause of spoiling and depriving it of prosperity,"*

of those four things, one of them is *the breach of trust*.

He also said:

*"A hypocrite is recognized by three signs:*

- 1. He lies when he talks,*
- 2. He breaks promises,*
- 3. He betrays when trusted."*

If someone reveals a secret to you, and you feel that by telling someone else, you may be able to help him, what to do you do?

In this case, it is not a sin to tell the other person's secret, as long as you do not give his identity, and that you SINCERELY feel that it is for his good.

One thing we should always remember, Imam Ali (A) has told us, if we cannot keep our secrets to ourselves, and tell others, how can we expect them to guard our secrets, when we ourselves cannot!

## 14.1 Worksheet: Keeping Secrets Safe

Fill in the blanks:

1. Everyone has \_\_\_\_\_, or affairs that they would rather not share with others.
2. People may not want to share certain things due to \_\_\_\_\_, guilt, or shame.
3. When someone asks you to keep something to yourself they are \_\_\_\_\_ you with something important.
4. When you reveal a friend's secret, you betray him/her, embarrass him/her, and \_\_\_\_\_ him/her.
5. If someone tells you a secret it is an \_\_\_\_\_(something entrusted upon you).

Choose the correct answer:

6. If a friend tells you a secret about something s/he did wrong the best thing to do is to
  - a. Tell others so s/he doesn't do it again.
  - b. To keep his/her secret but advise him/her to correct the wrong act or talk to his/her parents.
  - c. To go tell his/her parents right away yourself since he would never tell them.
7. According to the Holy Prophet what does breach of trust do to your prosperity?
  - a. Increase it or double it
  - b. Stabilize it
  - c. Reduce it or ruin it

Short Answer Questions:

8. What are the three signs of a hypocrite?

9. If you feel that you have to tell your friend's secret in order to help him what should you do?

10. How would you have reacted if you were Zahid's friend?

## Chapter 15: Telling the Truth

To lead a moral life one would have to make sure to always tell the truth. Truthfulness is something that everyone knows to be important, but yet it is one of the most difficult virtues to make into a habit. How many times do we lie in a day? Sometimes to avoid people or responsibilities, sometimes to get out of trouble, or sometimes just to make ourselves look big, and to get attention.

Prophet Muhammad (S) has said,

*"Leave falsehood and make speaking the truth a habit."*

*"If a person has a habit of speaking lies, he is a hypocrite until he rids himself of the habit."*

No matter who you are talking to there should never be any reason to avoid the truth. If you are honest in your dealings with people, you have nothing to hide and you should be able to say the truth without fear.

The Qur'an also tells us to tell the truth, and not to cover it with lies.

**2:42: And cover not Truth with falsehood, nor conceal the Truth when you know (what it is).**

Furthermore, our Prophet (S) has explained to us,

*"Beware of association with the liar for he is like a mirage which draws the far one nearer to you and the nearer far from you."*

If you make the habit of lying, then you will lie very often without even realizing it. You will lie to your family, your friends and everybody you meet. Then one day you will be caught out because you will have trapped yourself in a corner, and there will be no escape.

Also if you make a habit of lying you will start doing other things which are even worse. **One evil leads you to another.**

Consider the following story:

Ranya and Julia were friends and went to the same school. Ranya was Muslim but felt embarrassed when she had to do something that a non-Muslim would not understand. Julia would often ask questions about Ranya's culture and religion and that too made Ranya uncomfortable. Once Julia asked her, "Do you have to dress a certain way if you are Muslim, because I see many Muslims in scarves?"

“Oh no,” lied Ranya, “Only the really weird Muslims do that. Nobody wears the scarf in my house.” Ranya’s mom used to wear hijab and Ranya did too at the masjid. And since she was going to start middle school she had promised her mom she would wear hijab the next year herself. But Ranya did not want Julia to know all of this. She knew she had until next year. Besides Ranya also knew she would be going to the Islamic school then. Julia would never find out.

The next year, to Ranya’s horror, the Islamic school was full so she had to go back to her regular school. She had already lied to Julia and did not want Julia to think that she was not only weird but also a liar. Ranya thought hard about what she could do. Then she came up with a plan. She asked her mom if she could walk with a group of neighboring kids to school. Her mom was reluctant, but Ranya pleaded and said, “Come on mom, what’s wrong with walking if you are with a group of people. It is safe and you will not have to get out to drop me. Besides the school is only a 3-minute walk away. I promise you I will be responsible.” Ranya’s mom gave in. So Ranya walked to school and when she was out of her mother’s sight she took off her hijab and put it in her bag. On the way back home she took the hijab out and wore it again. Ranya got home and heaved a sigh of relief, glad that she was able to save face in this manner.

A few weeks later Ranya was walking to school and stopped at the spot where she took off her hijab. As she took it off and was putting it in her bag she heard someone almost scream, “Oh my God Ranya! Is it really you?” Ranya turned abruptly into the face of her good friend Julia who had also decide to walk to school that day. “I...I....,” grasping for words that couldn’t come. Julia looked at her with a disgusted expression. “Wow! I don’t believe this. How long have *you* been wearing this?”

“Quite long,” admitted Ranya.

“Well, why didn’t you tell me? I don’t have anything against it. What kind of friend do you think I am? Do you think I judge you by the way you look? Come on Ranya we’ve been such good friends. I don’t believe you lied to me like that for so long! What else have you lied to me about? You know something I can’t be your friend any more! I don’t think I can trust you!”

So for Ranya one lie led her to commit other sins: She continued to lie, she cheated her mother, she took off her hijab, and in the process she hurt the feelings of a good friend. And what did she gain but disrespect, mistrust, and the loss of a friend?



## Chapter 16: Ehsan and Shukr

In essence this means to thank Allah, for the favors that He has provided for us. Gratitude to Allah should be present in every Muslim attempting to lead a moral life. It would surely be immoral not to be grateful to our Creator who has been infinitely kind to us. To be thankful to Allah is actually an important part of worship, or faith in Islam. Imam Ali (A) has said,

*"Eiman (faith) is divided into two halves: one half lies in patience and the other in THANKFULNESS".*

People often ask how you can call being thankful an act of worship, but Prophet Muhammad (S) explains to us in very simple words the following,

*"There are people who worship Allah for the sake of (fulfilling their) desires and that is the worship of business people. And verily there are those who worship Allah out of fear of Him, this is the worship of slaves. But there are those who worship out of thanks giving to Him, this being the worship of free minded people and is the best of worship"*

Allah does not require our thanks, He does not benefit from it in any way. As always, the reason why Islam asks us to perform any action is so that we may benefit from it ourselves. By thanking Allah, we make ourselves remember that it was He who granted us His blessings; it was not just our own doing.

He declares in Qur'an Surah 27, Ayat 40,

***"...and he who is grateful, verily he is grateful to his own self, and whoever is ungrateful, then verily My Lord is Self-Sufficient and Bounteous."***

A thankful person always benefits, from Allah, as well as the people he lives with, as the following hadith shows:

*"That man best deserves a kindness who, when he is put off, bears it patiently; when he is refused, excuses it; and when he receives it, Is THANKFUL."*

If we thank Allah, and show our appreciation, then with His infinite Grace, He will grant us even more. In Qur'an, Surah 14 Ayat 7, we are told,

***"If you are grateful I will increase My favours unto you..."***

But instead, man has the bad habit to think that everything he gets is from his own work, rather than from Allah.

When we tell people that Allah has given us everything we often say, " This money which I have here, and the money that is in the bank, who has given that to me! Nobody has given that it to me, I have earned it all by **MYSELF**, with **MY** hard work."

This is surely a narrow-minded approach. There are so many things we can be grateful for: the air we breathe; the food we have; the health Allah gave us. There are countless blessings. Even if we do not have as much as one person we may have more than another. Yet, even after all the blessings Allah grants, we still forget that it is Him that has given us all we have. There are people are looking for work, for example and have a degree and job experience but are experiencing 'bad luck' so cannot find a job. Yet when they get the job instead of thanking Allah for reversing their luck they start thinking that they had worked so hard, they were bound to find the job.

Allah says in Qur'an Surah 100, Ayat 6-8,

***"Truly Man is, to his Lord, ungrateful; And to that fact He bears witness by his deeds; and violent is he in his love of wealth."***

### **How should we be thankful?**

If we have been successful in any way whatsoever we should thank Allah for the opportunities that made us successful. When we do something good, get good grades, or get a reward, we should thank Allah, because He is the one who sent the blessing to us. After we offer our prayers, we should go into Sajdah, and actually talk to Allah, thanking Him for the favors we received that day, thanking Him that no accident occurred, and that we have been given another day to live.

Our gratitude can go beyond that. It can be shown not just in prayers or in words, but in action. The best thanks to Allah is by PERFORMING SOMETHING THAT HELPS OTHER HUMAN beings, since Allah is above any needs.

## 16.1 Worksheet: Ehsan, Shukr

Fill in the blanks:

1. Ehsan or shukr means to \_\_\_\_\_ Allah, for the favors that He has provided for us.
2. To be grateful to Allah is an important part of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Imam Ali (a) has said that faith is divided in to \_\_\_\_\_ parts one of which is to be grateful to Allah.

Write T for true and F for false

4. Allah does not benefit from our thanks.
5. If we are thankful to Allah, he will grant us even more
6. If we worked hard for something it is probably our own doing that we are successful.

Choose the correct answer:

7. The best worship according to Prophet Muhammad is that which is done:
  - a. For the sake of desires
  - b. Out of fear of Allah
  - c. Out of gratitude to Allah
8. The best way to thank Allah is to say:
  - a. Thank you to him 100 times since that makes up one whole tasbeeh of thanks.
  - b. Write a thank you note to Him.
  - c. Do something that may help someone.

9. One way we could thank Allah is by:
- a. Providing food and clothing for the needy if Allah has given us enough.
  - b. Announcing at the masjid that we are very thankful to Allah because He has made us very rich.
  - c. Going into sajdah and sincerely thanking Him for every breath we have.
  - d. Both a and b
  - e. Both a and c

Short Essay:

10. Write down 5 blessings that you are thankful for (try to use examples not mentioned in this chapter). Write down how you think your life would be without these blessings

## Chapter 17: Qardh-e-Hasanah

Qardh-e-hasanah means to give a loan to those who require aid. In Islam, there is a moral duty and a unity that should bind all Muslims. This duty should be so strong that material goods should be put aside to fulfill it.

If there is a person who has had the ability to be successful and has made a good and profitable business, then he should thank Allah for the opportunities that made him successful. This gratitude should not be just in prayers or in words, but in action. The best thanks to Allah is by performing something that helps other human beings, because Allah is above any needs.

Allah has explained this concept of lending money to those who require it as a loan to Allah Himself. In Suratul Baqarah, Ayat 245, Allah declares:

***"Who is he that will lend to God a fair loan so that He will multiply it to him manifold;....."***

We should know that any loan that is lent to Allah will be paid back manifold (many times).

Allah also says in Qur'an, Surah 64, Ayat 17:

***"If you lend to God a beautiful loan, He will double it to your credit, and He will grant you forgiveness: for God is most ready to appreciate service."***

Since Allah has given you opportunities to be successful, you should go out of your way to provide opportunities for others.

If someone comes to you and asks you for financial or other aid, it becomes your duty to help him. You should lend him as much as you can if you have the means, and give him further assistance.

However, this duty is mutual. The facility of Qardh e Hasanah is been provided by Islam so that the community as a whole can develop and prosper, while at the same time become more united. Thus, the one who borrows the money should have the intention to pay it back as quickly as he possibly can, and should not delay. If he misuses the facility, then he is taking advantage of the system, and will cause difficulties for others.

What is the concept behind this giving, why is it so important?

There is a saying that a man will manage to find sleep at night even though a relative may have died the previous day, but the day he has lost his money, he will never sleep.

This highlights particular vices that exist in a man's heart, greed and selfishness. If a man is able to lend a substantial amount of money, without any profit in return for himself, then he has conquered both these vices.

He has conquered the **SELFISHNESS** by letting the money out of his hands, to give others the chance of becoming successful.

He has also conquered the **GREED** because he knows he will earn no profit on the money, because to charge interest is Haraam.

We must always help our community and people at large, if we stop to ponder for a moment, tomorrow we will not be on this earth any more, but our book of deeds will remain open. If we leave behind us people who will remember us for helping them, we will still gain blessings. If on the other hand, the only memory that people have of us is our meanness, then on the Day of Judgment, what will be the use of all our wealth and rich

## 17.1 Worksheet: Qardh-e-Hasanah

Fill in the blanks:

1. Qardh-e-hasanah means to give a \_\_\_\_\_ to those who require aid.
2. The duty to \_\_\_\_\_ all Muslims should be so strong that material goods should be put aside to fulfill it.
3. A person who has had success should \_\_\_\_\_ Allah for the opportunities that have made him successful.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ is above any needs
5. The facility of Qardh-e-hasanah is provided by Islam so that the community as a whole can \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, while at the same time become more united.
6. In the Qur'an Allah has promised that if anyone lends to Allah, Allah will:
  - a. Multiply it to him manifold.
  - b. Make him pay interest.
  - c. Make sure his mortgage gets paid.
7. Giving a loan to Allah actually refers to:
  - a. Giving a loan to someone in need of it.
  - b. Providing opportunities for others.
  - c. None of the above.
8. Qardh-e-hasanah should be mutual. This means that
  - a. If someone gives a loan to you should give one to your neighbor
  - b. If you give a loan to someone then that person has to you a loan when you want it
  - c. If you give a loan to someone that person must try his or her utmost best to return it to you as soon as possible.

9. When a Muslim gives another a loan he has conquered two vices. These are:

- a. Selfishness and greed
- b. Extravagance and Lying
- c. Gossiping and Cheating

10. When we die and we have helped people in our life then we:

- a. Still gain blessings when they remember us
- b. Make life very hard for them
- c. Have made it to heaven.

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