

Akhlaq- Grade 10

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AKHLAQ - CLASS 10

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Terminology & Vocabulary

Compulsive:	Habitual; Usual
Futile:	Useless; Ineffective
Gloat:	Take pride in
Haqq-un-Naas:	Rights of People
Impulsive:	Hasty; Reckless
Muttaqi:	A pious person (Keeping away from sins)
Seerah:	Lifestyle
Spiteful:	Unpleasant; Unkind
Taddabur:	Ponder; Contemplate
Taffakur:	Think deeply; Analyze
Tafseer:	Explanation to the meaning of verses of the Holy Qur'an
Tahajjud:	Sacrifice of Sleep
Vices:	Bad Deeds; Negative Aspects

Seeking Advice in Islam

What do you do when you are having any sort of difficulty?

Do you search for answers and solutions to your problems?

Most people turn to a trusted friend or a family member, and this helps them to ease their burden and at the same time find the solutions to their dilemma. Just as we seek help for various tasks, we also need help in our thinking and perceptions. One of the best ways to do this is to seek counsel from others.

When many minds get together, they are stimulated and strengthened in their thoughts, allowing for better results and conclusions. This can be referred to as counseling or seeking advice.

→ Counseling plays an important role in Islam especially in the development of the social character of an individual.

During the time of the Holy Prophet (S), people used to pay great heed to his sermons and would seek his advice concerning various issues. It is highly recommended to imitate the Seerah of the Prophets and take lessons from their lives.

A few years after the migration of the Prophet (S) to Madina, news reached him that the Quraysh and idol-worshippers of Makkah were planning to attack the newly established Islamic Government.

The Kuffar had bribed many smaller tribes to join them and managed to gather a large army for this purpose. The soldiers had been promised great rewards after the battle.

Back in Yathrib (now Madina), the Holy Prophet (S) gathered his companions for an urgent meeting to discuss this impending attack. He told them about the news he had received and then said:

*We must discuss what is to be done to protect ourselves.
Let us think and come up with an effective strategy.*

The people who had gathered there began to exchange ideas about how to best defend themselves. Some suggested that they meet the enemy in the field as they had done before in previous battles.

Others disagreed to this, and finally after a lot of deliberation Salman al-Farsi stood up and reported about how enemies were dealt with in his hometown. They used to create ditches in the outskirts of the town, so that the enemies could not enter it. The results were always positive and victory was gained many times.

This idea had never been attempted among the Arab strategies and everyone thought it was excellent. Soon, everyone was busy in the digging of the *Khandaq*. Although it was a very difficult task, the Muslims managed to complete it because they were determined and united in the effort. Eventually the Muslims achieved victory over the Quraysh and idol-worshippers.

Thus, we can appreciate that seeking advice and discussing issues are very important factors in decision making. It is essential though, that one airs his views while respecting the ideas and opinions of others. Counsel is one of the ways of strengthening the fabrics of Islamic society.

Imam Ali (A) says:

*Whoever thinks that he can do with his own ways, will indeed perish.
However one who discusses and seeks advice from others,
and benefits (learns) from others experiences will indeed prosper.*

This tells us that we must seek advice from others. However, we must also be careful to listen to those who are wise, and give honest opinions, otherwise the procedure would be futile.

Imam as-Sadiq (A) has explained to us the qualities of those from whom we should take counsel. Such people should be:

- Wise
- Experienced in the matters we are talking about
- Pious and God-conscious, and
- Should have good intentions.

The Holy Qur'an says:

**It is due to the Mercy of Allah that you [O Prophet] deal with them gently.
And had you been rough and hard hearted,
they would certainly have dispersed from around you;**

**Pardon them therefore, and ask pardon from them,
and take counsel in them in the affair, and when you have decided,
then place your trust in Allah, surely Allah loves those who trust.**

Aali Imraan (3): 159

Taqwa (Piety)

- Taqwa - In Islamic terminology it is defined as the action of **restraining** oneself from disobeying the commands of Allah (SWT).

The word *Taqwa* is derived from the Arabic root word 'waqaya', which means 'to safeguard' or 'to abstain'.

When Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (A) was asked to elaborate on the meaning of the word, *Taqwa*, he replied,

Submit to the command of Allah (SWT) and do not approach the prohibited.

→ **Benefits of Abstaining From the Prohibited**

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (A) said:

To refrain from eating a single morsel of haraam, is near Allah (SWT), more valued than the performance of 2000 rakah of recommended prayer.

He continued:

Strive more to perform good deeds. However if you cannot perform a good act (at least) do not disobey (the commands of Allah (SWT)).

Because if one lays the foundation of a building and does not spoil it, then, even if the progress is slow, the building will definitely rise.

Similarly, if a person lays the foundation and at the same time ruins it, then surely the walls of this building will never be raised.

These Ahadith clearly give us the reasons for keeping away from sins. The person having taqwa is called a '**muttaqi**' and he has a great status in the eyes of the Almighty, according to the Holy Qur'an:

Verily the most honored of you in the eyes of Allah (SWT) is the one with most taqwa (piety God fearing).

Al Hujurat (49): 13

There are people who do a great amount of good deeds however they do not abstain from Haraam. Indeed, what is the status of such people?

→ Good Deeds are Accepted Only if Accompanied by Piety

A Hadith says,

Even if you stand for prayers like a tent peg planted on the ground and keep fasting till you resemble a dried stick, and you stoop like a bow, Allah will not accept any of your deeds unless you have the piety to guard yourself against evil deeds.

→ Refraining from Sins is Genuine Worship

Another hadith explains that abstaining from sins is the basis of religion.

Hence, refrain from sins in order to become the most pious worshipper. Adorn yourself with piety. Do not perform a single good deed without piety.

Surely that deed is most acceptable by Allah which is accompanied by piety, even though it may be little.

Hence if you succeed in remaining aloof from sins, then even if your good deeds are insignificant, they would still be accepted by the Lord.

Imam Ali (A) was asked by his companion, Hammam about the behavior of people having Taqwa.

Pious people are those who speak the truth, their dress is simple and they walk in a humble way. They keep away from haraam deeds. They also listen carefully to beneficial information and knowledge.

In this world there are many tempting things, which are haraam. When one tries to avoid them and build up the will power then he is said to be acquiring Taqwa. And the basis of Taqwa, like all other good deeds is *Ikhlās* (Sincerity).

Imam Ali (A) says:

**Do not *pretend* to obey Allah, but obey Him sincerely and faithfully.
Let this desire of obedience be engraved in your mind,
and be deep rooted in your hearts.
Let it rule over your words and deeds.**

Sermon 203 – Nahj ul Balaghah

Patience (Sabr)

→ What is Patience?

Patience means to remain silent and to avoid complaining about one's problems to anyone, except Allah (SWT), to seek His help, thank Him for His bounties and to be content with Allah's (SWT) Will.

**O you who believe,
seek assistance through patience and prayer;
Surely Allah is with the patient ones.**

Al Baqarah (2): 153

The Masumeen (A) have explained:

There are three categories of patience:

1. Patience while engaged in Ibadah (Wajibat like Salah, Sawm, Hajj, etc.)
2. Patience during misfortunes and hardships (A highly preferred form of obedience to Allah (SWT)).
3. Patience in keeping oneself away from haraam deeds (The best form of obedience to Allah (SWT)).

Patience also means that you have to be satisfied with whatever condition Allah (SWT) keeps you, whether in health or sickness, hardship or comfort, youth or old age, strength or weakness, wealthy or poor, because He is aware of the outcome and necessity of keeping you in such conditions. He is the All-Knowing and All-Aware.

→ The effects of having patience

Having patience before performing any good deed purifies your niyyah (intention) and ensures that you are acting solely for the pleasure of Allah (SWT).

**And be patient!
Surely Allah does not waste the reward of the good-doers.**

Hud (11): 115

Patience during any action encourages one to remember Allah (SWT) and does not give rise to 'Riyaa' (Show off).

Patience after performing a good deed means you should not be proud (of having been given the opportunity) to perform it, otherwise your good deed is wasted.

Allah (SWT) has promised blessings to those who are patient during the time of difficulties.

**Those who are patient and do good,
they shall receive forgiveness and a great reward.**

Hud (11): 11

Paradise is for those who are patient. A patient person gets as much of a reward as a martyr who performed jihad alongside the Holy Prophet (S).

Think

Contemplate on your day-to-day routine. How many situations can you think of where you can implement the virtue of patience as a replacement for impatience, frustration, and anger?

What is usually the consequence of such impatience, frustration and anger?

Anger

- Anger is defined as "**extreme displeasure**", which means to be annoyed at someone's words or actions.
- The Arabic word for anger is pronounced as *Ghaydh*.
- Anger is a disease of the soul. It causes many problems, which shall be discussed below.

When a person becomes angry, he loses control over his mind, thereby becoming violent and can end up breaking items, saying impolite things, etc. all of which he will be sorry for later on.

This is why it is very important to be able to control yourself when angry, since just with a few words, you can destroy, beyond repair, that which may have taken years to form.

Imam Ali (A) beautifully describes anger:

*Anger is a fire kindled: he who restrains it, puts it out;
but he who lets it loose, is the first that is consumed by it.*

This shows that a person who can not control his anger will be the first to be damaged by what he says, or does.

→ What is anger caused by?

Anger is caused by many circumstances, examples of which are pride, stubbornness, jealousy, envy, etc. If you are wrong, and someone tells you so, you can either accept it, or become proud and insist that you are correct. In other words, you refuse to admit that you are wrong.

Imam Ali (A) has also said that:

Ill-temper spoils good actions, just as vinegar spoils honey.

If you add one drop of vinegar in honey, you spoil the honey; and hence, as soon as you get angry, you taint your deeds with the way you act.

Anger is also proven to be extremely dangerous. Many people lose their mind when angry, and start fighting, and shouting. They become violent, beyond reason. Only later on, after calming down, do they realize that the things that they have said and done have in fact spoilt their own reputation, and have destroyed the image of their family, religion, as well as their own, in front of others.

It also illustrates that there is no benefit in becoming angry. The person, who grows angry, wastes his energy; at the same time he has not gained anything.

Uncontrolled anger is leads to the eradication of one's hard earned deeds and a'maal. Think of all the days and nights that you have fasted, prayed, given charity, every little virtuous action – all of this get erased when one leashes out his/her anger onto others.

- ❖ If we remember Allah (SWT) when we are angry, and forgive those who have hurt us or harmed us, He will also remember us on the Day of Qiyamah, and will Insha Allah, forgive us.

Suicide

- Suicide is defined as a conscious and deliberate taking of one's own life. It is Haram to commit suicide.

**O you who believe! Do not kill (or destroy) yourselves:
for verily God has been to you Most Merciful.**

An Nisa (4): 29

→ Common Causes of Suicide

People commit suicide for the following reasons (among others):

- Anger and Frustration
- Insanity
- Lack of Attention – Feels neglected and unwanted
- Desperation – Inability to cope with problems

The ultimate objective of person committing suicide is escape – to escape from the problems of this life.

Suicide can take many forms; it can be through consuming poison, slitting wrists, or even taking harmful substances, which are lethal and will eventually kill you (such as drugs).

Allah (SWT) has given us life as a gift. The body is on "loan" to us, and will be returned to Allah (SWT) after we have used it. The soul however can not be killed or destroyed except by Allah's (SWT) Will.

**And He gave you life, then will He cause you to die,
and will again bring you to life, and again to Him will you return.**

Al Baqarah (2): 28

→ Why Is Suicide Haraam?

Suicide is Haraam because the person who commits it:

1. Loses his faith in God
2. Defeats the purpose of his existence
3. Destroys that which he has not right to destroy

1. Loss of Faith

One of the Greater Sins is to lose hope in receiving mercy from Allah (SWT). When a person commits suicide due to frustration or desperation, he feels he can no longer cope with the pressures of life, then he is losing hope in Allah's (SWT) mercy.

Allah (SWT) tells us in the Holy Qur'an,

**Surely We shall test you with fear and hunger,
and loss of goods, lives or the fruits (of your toil),
but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere.**

Al Baqarah (2): 155

The Almighty is explaining to us that our faith will be tested with hardships in this life. It is during these times that we must be patient and have Sabr.

Those who are impatient and give up (commit suicide) have lost faith in the mercy of Allah (SWT), because He has promised us that after hardship He will give us relief. He has also promised us that He will not give us hardship that we can not bear it.

Allah does not impose upon any soul a burden greater than it can bear.

Al Baqarah (2): 286

2. Purpose of Existence

The purpose of this life is to be examined. This does not mean that we can not enjoy this world, yet we must remember that this world is only part of our final aim.

Committing suicide is like walking out of the exam half way. When you end your life, your book of deeds is closed.

In an exam, you try your best, even if it is difficult, it is obvious that the more you answer, the more marks you will gain. However if you were to stop writing half way, any marks which you could have gained are now lost.

Similarly any blessing or change of circumstance due to the mercy of Allah (SWT) is lost once you commit suicide. You have walked out of the biggest exam of your life. The results will not be too good on the Day of Judgment either!

3. Destroying Life

Allah (SWT) has given us the greatest gift - LI FE.

To destroy it reflects ungratefulness, and can be equated with a child publicly humiliating and insulting his/her parent.

Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an,

Nor take life - which God has made sacred - except for just cause.

Bani Israail (17): 33

Our life and body have been given to us by the Grace of the Almighty. By killing oneself, we are rejecting His blessing and refusing it, instead of turning towards Him with thanksgiving, we choose to destroy it instead.

Time

Time being such an important factor, Allah (SWT) in His infinite mercy revealed Sura Asr on His noble Prophet (S). Being a Sura of only 3 verses, it guides man towards the greatest goal – time management.

Each day, we have 24 hours during which we sleep, work, maintain our household, interact with our family, learn, etc.

As the days, months and years go by, we say with surprise,

*Where did time go?
Time flies so fast!
I just didn't have time for that!*

We tend to think we are the victims of too many demands, too much work, and loaded with too many commitments, but the truth is indeed amazing.

We are not at the mercy of limited time, in fact, we are its masters.

Every day gives us 24 new hours to be utilized in the manner each of us chooses, according to the priorities we have established for ourselves. If we throw away the opportunities, then there is loss and defeat; if used wisely, one can do anything one desires.

Time Management is a practical tool for every person who is always *'running out of time.'*

For this reason, many people keep a small note book and begin to record the daily activities, errands, conversations, work periods, breaks, leisure, day dreams, TV, meals, travel, chores, etc. and their durations.

We should track ourselves throughout the day. At the end of the week, we should study our records and pose a few questions for ourselves.

How many unnecessary activities, non-productive, inefficient instances filled our days? Did we do them out of habit or desire? Did we achieve the goals we had set?

This kind of record-keeping gives us a good idea of how we are wasting our time, and not bearing any constructive measures.

Studies show that meetings, telephone calls, paper work, gossip etc. are the biggest time wasters and particularly at offices.

Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (A) says:

*Man has 3 days to think and ponder on.
One, which has passed, that is, Yesterday, gone away from our hands,
One is Tomorrow, for which he is not sure to meet, and
One is Today, which is his most important 24 hours.
Do not waste a minute of it.*

The object of true management is to increase productivity in those activities that can help to achieve our goals and aims.

The world today has most developed and fastest modes of technology, yet people continue to cry out that they have no time to pray, no time to look after my aging parents, no time to feed the poor, no time for my family, no time for this and that, etc.

Interesting though how we have enough time to sin, to eat, to gossip, to laze around, to enjoy life, yet no time for any fruitful achievements.

Death is always lurking near. Death sees no time, no age, and no status. Let us make the most of the time available to us, or else we shall regret on the Day of Judgment, wishing we could have managed our time wisely.

Benefits of Early Rising

There is a lot of benefit in sleeping early at night and then rising up early. One's health improves, and the memory is sharpened.

Among the 10 signs of a true follower of the Ahl ul bayt (A), the first one is rising up before dawn.

During part of the night, pray tahajjud beyond what is incumbent upon you; maybe your Lord will raise you to a position of great glory.

Bani Israail (17): 79

These verses explain that there is a special prayer at that time which the Almighty had recommended his beloved Messenger to perform. This night prayer is generally called **Salat ul Layl**, also known as Namaaz Shab and Salat al Tahajjud.

This night prayer carries special distinction. The Holy Qur'an and ahadith place great emphasis on its performance. It is said that by continuous performance of this salah, one's heart becomes a center of illumination of Divine light.

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

Jibra'il has made so much of a recommendation about night prayer to me that I assume the righteous of my Ummah will not sleep during night.

Tahajjud means keeping wakeful during the night. At night people are fast asleep and the pleasure of Allah (SWT) is showered on the one who leaves his sleep and wakes up to supplicate to Him.

The Holy Prophet (S) mentioned that if one wishes to seek the pleasure of Allah (SWT), one should get out of his warm bed in such a way that his eyes are full of sleep (heavy) and yet he gets ready for Salat ul Layl. At this point, Allah (SWT) is so pleased that He praises the person to the angels and announces the forgiveness of the person's sins.

There is a verse of the Holy Qur'an, which, if recited, enables one to wake up at a desired time. This is the last verse of Sura Kahf

Assignment

Find the above-mentioned verse from the Holy Qur'an, memorize it and write its verse number, and translation.

Laziness

- Laziness means to idle around, and just pass time and avoid responsibility.

Islam accords no value for people who sit idle. When the Holy Prophet (S) would see a physically strong man, he would want to know if he worked, and if he didn't, he would comment, *'He has lowered himself in my eyes!'*

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

The purest food that one eats is that earned by hard work.

The Holy Prophet (S) cursed those who had grown used to idleness and hence became a burden on others. For example, one leaves his clothes, shoes, books, etc. all around, only to be picked up by their mothers or maids. This is a burden inflicted on others, and is considered injustice (*dhulm*) upon others.

In the Holy Qur'an Allah (SWT) says:

Man shall have nothing except what he strives for.

An Najm (53): 39

Work is a form of worship. Whilst one is working he is also busy in Ibadah. We learn this from the lives of our Aimmah (A), that they never left their work for others – they even watered their garden and fields themselves, and when people offered to help, they would reply, *'God loves those who help themselves.'*

The 5th Imam (A) was cultivating his farm one hot day. A man decided to admonish him and came to the Imam. The man asked Imam why he was seeking worldly gain in the hot weather. The man then told Imam that he might die in that condition.

The Imam (A) replied:

If my death comes and I am in this condition, I will be dying while I am busy obeying the commands of Allah (SWT), whereby my family members and I are independent of your help and that of other people.

Islam encourages us to put in efforts, to struggle and be prosperous. Work is considered praiseworthy and carries the spiritual reward like any action of worship. Let us shun idleness and complete our school work, home work, office work, errands, etc. without leaving it for tomorrow, because who knows if they will see tomorrow or not?

The Tongue

- The tongue is a great gift of Allah (SWT). It can either be the cause of lessening and relieving peoples' sorrows if used correctly, OR if misused it can increase their hurt and distress.

Vices committed through the tongue are:

- a. Vain Talks
- b. Abusive Language / Sarcasm / Insults
- c. Betraying Secrets
- d. Backbiting (Gheebah) and Slandering (Tohmah)
- e. Lying

Allah (SWT) says,

Have you not considered how Allah sets forth a parable of a good word (being) like a good tree?

Ibrahim (14): 24

→ A good tree is basically one that has fresh leaves, gives shelter and bears good fruits. Allah (SWT) compares a good word to a good tree because a good word is just like a good tree which can give shelter to people. A kind word to the needy or a calming statement to a frightened is a better shelter than any material help.

As the tree bears fruits for the future, so does a good word. In future when needed, one can then acquire help from people whom you have spoken well to.

One should always speak **kindly, truthfully, generously and politely**.

Strive to speak only sensible things. All words uttered should preach good things and bring love, care and unity instead of hypocrisy and hatred.

❖ An excellent section of Dua Makarimul Akhlaq quotes,

O My Lord!

**Make my tongue mention YOU
instead of uttering a bad and shameless word,
instead of backbiting someone,
instead of disgracing or insulting a believer,
instead of attacking someone's honor.**

Lying

- Lying means being insincere, dishonest and untruthful.

Lying is one of the worst evils. It is said to be the cancer of the soul. It is because of lying that other vices such as greed, anger, arrogance and many more materialize on the surface. Lying is capable of destroying the self.

The tongue, though soft, delicate and most certainly small in size, performs an extremely important job when it comes to obedience and disobedience. It is the tongue that leads one off course, and to enormous destruction.

It is the tongue that assists in lying. Liars live in a fantasy and imaginary world. They are false consolers of their souls and themselves. By portraying their lives as illusions, they like to make up things and situations according to their imagination, but never dare put them into practice.

Liars are impulsive, they do not take time to think and reflect about their actions, thoughts and situations. They lie without thinking and realizing, leading to another immorality. If a person is a compulsive liar, he probably possesses a very good memory, for the liar has to keep up with one lie after another.

A liar's promise or word is never accepted and appreciated. He loses self-respect, becomes a laughing stock, does not possess a positive attitude, and becomes a mental freak. His objective in life is to plan out innovative ideas of lying.

→ Instances when one Lies

- When one is scared / fear of being punished
- Lying for selfish motives and achievements
- When one is envious
- When one is angry and revengeful
- Out of habit, because you are practicing it everyday
- When one wants to be accepted in a society
- When you feel you may be mocked
- When you want to hurt someone's feelings
- Mental illness

Liars suffer from a mental disorder, which keeps them from speaking the truth.

Those who resort to lying feel spiritually and mentally weak and humiliated, for lying is the weapon only of the weak and the coward.

- ❖ No liar is ever ready and willing to face the truth and confess that they lied – not only is this difficult, it also requires a great deal of courage to deal with the truth.

However, one would rather admit the truth and accept the consequences, rather than fool everyone, especially if it involves lying to those who care about you, such as your parents, family, teachers, etc. You will be appreciated and recognized for your honesty.

Lying is a character that leads to all other evil traits.

Imam Hasan al-Askari (A) said:

*All spiteful traits are placed in a house, and the key to this house is **lying**.*

Think

***One lie leads to another. What is the truth in this statement?
What should one do when they find themselves in such a situation?***

Cheating

- To cheat means to gain something by trickery. Cheating is obviously Haraam.

There are many different ways of cheating, a few examples are:

- a) To hide the defect of something one sells to another person.
- b) To copy from someone during an exam.
- c) To borrow money off a person and then never pay it back.
- d) To collect money for a charity, and then spend it on yourself.

→ If you have to cheat to do something good, it is better not to do the good deed. The final result, however noble, does NOT justify the means.

One thing about cheating is that no matter how many people you cheat, or how well you can cheat, you can NEVER cheat yourself nor Allah (SWT). If you are cheating someone, your conscience (the positive aspect of the nafs) will realize immediately.

Some people say that it is OK to cheat people, as long as they are not Muslims.

This is **NONSENSE!** All people have rights, and to cheat them out of their rights is forbidden; it does not matter who they are, or what they believe in.

→ Why is Cheating Haraam?

Because:

- 1) You are gaining something, at someone else's expense.
- 2) You are gaining something, without working for it.

Islam is very strict regarding justice. If you are to get something good, it must be through your own deeds, and not through the efforts of someone else's.

Haqq-Un-Naas

- *Haqq-un-naas* means the rights of people. Every person has certain rights which are vital, and should not be taken away.

Thus Allah (SWT) can forgive us for the sins that we commit against Him, provided we repent for them sincerely; but how can He forgive us for the sins that we commit against others. That would be going against His Justice.

We can not be forgiven for breaking the rights of others, unless the person, whom we have wronged, genuinely forgives us, whether he is a Muslim or a non-Muslim, a sinner or a believer.

A person has a right over you even when he is not there. Imagine you were at a gathering, talking with others. Even if I am not at that gathering, I still have a right that I should not be insulted, nor my reputation tainted.

This means that if you do Gheebah or Tohmah in which my name is mentioned then you have committed a sin against me.

This sin against me cannot be forgiven unless I have forgiven it. This is the reason why we should avoid committing actions that breach the rights of others.

Islam is a religion that not only benefits a person directly, but also helps the community in general. Where else can we find laws that command us to guard other peoples' reputation in public and private? Each of us has a responsibility to the other: to maintain justice and respect the rights of the other.

Islam advises that we should seek forgiveness from the person who we have wronged before either person dies. If one person dies before forgiving the other, there is no direct way of obtaining forgiveness, and that sin will carry forward until the Day of Judgment. Consider the magnitude of such a sin!

These social crimes such as usurpation, stealing, bribery, usury, etc. shatter the community as they cause enmity and hatred.

Let us remember this the next time we are about to commit a sin against another human being.

Usurping Other People's Property

- Usurping means to take something (seize), which is not rightfully yours, by force. The force can be physical, but can also include threats, blackmail, insults, taunts, etc.

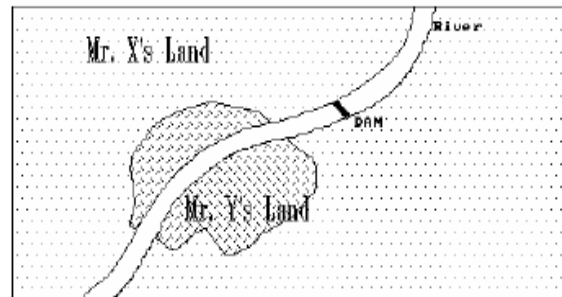
Usurpation is Haraam because it is an unfair gain at the expense of the victim (person whose things are being usurped), who is powerless to help himself.

The person doing the usurping is using the worldly power and wealth given by Allah (SWT), to acquire the property/rights of someone who is not as well off.

Imagine there were two farmers Mr. X and Mr. Y.

Mr. X's farm is very big, and he wants to buy Mr. Y's farm to make his own farm even bigger.

However, Mr. Y refuses to sell his farm. Mr. X then builds a dam across the river and blocks it off from Mr. Y's land. This means that Mr. Y runs out of water to feed his cattle, to water his crops, etc.



Mr. Y goes bankrupt and has to sell his farm to Mr. X, who then opens up the dam.

This is an example of usurping other people's property, because Mr. Y is forced to sell the land, even though he doesn't want to.

One of the worst things to usurp, is another person's right. In many countries, you will find that the central authority do not give the population the basic human rights, which Islam commands for all people.

Stealing

- Stealing means to take what does not belong to you with the niyyah (intention) of not returning it. To steal is absolutely Haraam.

There are people who have made an outrageous statement saying that it is all right to steal as long as it from a non-Muslim. *Does this make sense to you? Of course not!*

You are not allowed to steal from anybody, whether he is a Muslim or not.

Stealing does not only mean going and taking something from someone. Very often it can occur in a more subtle way.

For instance, if I buy a bus ticket to get from Dar to Morogoro, and I use that same ticket to go to Iringa, even though I know that I am not allowed, then that is also stealing. This is a form of cheating, and though many people deny this as such, however it is considered as stealing.

When an object is stolen, that object becomes Ghasbi (stolen property).

For example, if a man who is fasting steals a shirt and then wears it. Later, he offers his prayers, and in the evening he breaks his fast. Since the shirt was Ghasbi, the Salat will not be accepted, and the reward of the fast is also lost.

→ Why is Stealing Haraam?

Stealing is forbidden because you are benefiting from other people while they lose out.

Through stealing, you are gaining at someone else's loss. If someone is working to earn or obtain something, and you take it away from them, then it is unfair, unjust and deserves severe punishment.

Bribery

- To bribe someone means to influence their decision by offering them payment of money, or some other worldly gain.

This is a **major** sin and is condemned by Islam.

Imam Ali (A) has said that:

*God has cursed one who takes a bribe,
one who gives a bribe, and
one who causes a bribe to be taken.*

The reason that Allah (SWT) has forbidden bribery for us is that it is extremely unfair.

Suppose there is a person who is stealing money from a company. A second person sees the man taking the money; this person can go and inform the authorities. However the thief offers him some money and therefore is influenced into changing his mind, and does not call for the police.

This is bribery. It is Haraam because the person is letting money or other riches make up his mind, not his heart or conscience.

→ If something is right, you should stand up for it, it doesn't matter what others say or think.

→ If something is wrong, you should not do it, no matter how much people will pay you for it. Never let anything influence your decision from the truth.

A person who accepts a bribe is cursed by Allah (SWT), because he is selling his heart (conscience) for this world, this means in the next life, he will be among the losers.

What other examples of bribery can you think of?

Compare the temporary gains achieved by bribery to the long-term loss.

Usury

- Usury means to charge too much interest.

We know that to charge interest is Haraam anyway. Interest means that if you lend money, you charge a bit extra when the person comes to pay you back.

Example:

You lent Tshs. 10,000/- to me, and when I come to pay you back, you ask for Tshs. 11,000/-, then this is interest at the rate of 10%. This is Haraam.

Usury means to charge too much interest.

Example:

You lent Tshs. 10,000/- to me, and when I come to pay you back, you ask for Tshs. 15,000/-, then this is usury because now the interest rate is much higher at 50%.

Allah (SWT) tells us in Qur'an,

Allah has made trade lawful and has forbidden usury.

Al Baqarah (2): 275

**Oh you who believe! Fear Allah and give up your demand for usury.
If you do not, take notice of WAR from Allah and his Apostle.**

Al Baqarah (2): 278, 279

→ Why is Usury Haraam?

One of the reasons why usury is Haraam is because you are taking advantage of people who are not as well-off as yourself.

Whatever you have: money, good clothes, or some other wealth, you should thank Allah (SWT), because He is the One who gave them to you. Does He charge you interest on what He gives you?

Since that money is given to you, you have no right to lend it to somebody and ask back for more than you gave, because that is also a sign of being greedy.

Self-Building

- Self-building is the name given to refinement, purification and training of human Selves.

The Divine messengers came to teach mankind the path of Self-building, nourishment and perfection of the Self, as well as to accompany them as their guide, and to emphasize the importance of good morals/ethics.

A human being is endowed with different kinds of faculties of the *Self*:

- ◆ Self related to its Physical body
- ◆ Self related to its Animal instincts
- ◆ **The human Self** (Most valuable and precious Self).

Therefore if a human being strives for Self-building, he must build its human Self and not his animal or physical Self.

→ What is the Self?

The Self comprises of all the ideas, perception, and values that characterize “*I*” or “*ME*”. This includes *What I Am* and *What I Can Do*.

The Self is a being whose aim is to reach or achieve perfection. Every human aspires for its own perfection in accordance with its inborn intellect regardless of its circumstances.

Hence, encouragement and appreciation play a very vital role in the motivation of the Self. If deprived, the Self suffers from incompetency, low Self-esteem, and feels unworthy.

The Holy Prophet (S) has also maintained an exceptional significance towards Self-Awareness:

Whoever has recognized himself, has recognized Allah (SWT).

→ Why Should One Develop the Self?

Imam Ali (A) has said:

*The Self is like a precious jewel, whoever strives for its protection,
will be helped in attaining exalted position,
and whoever acts negligently in its protection,
it shall be pulled towards humiliation.*

From the saying it can be ascertained that the human Self should be guarded and nourished against evils and vices. If it is not protected, it will lead to weakness of character and lower Self-esteem.

The process of striving towards perfection, piety, nourishing the Self is called *Jihad ul Akbar*.

This is a war against the inner Self which starts from the time you realize what is good and what is bad up to the time of your death.

The observer of Jihad ul Akbar knows the nobility of Self and so he will:

- Guard it against lowliness of passion (of Anger and Power)
- Guard it against false desires
- Have more compassion
- Be free of wants and needs.

Jihad ul Akbar can be practiced when one wants to purify the Self, recognizing the Self, and during situations of hardships and trials.

A human being can not be perfect without undergoing trials and hardships. This process of trials and hardships keeps one steadfast and strong willed.

→ How to Recognize the Self?

All the concepts and principles in the field of character-building revolve around the soul. It is the soul, which is capable of reforming and disciplining, and it is also capable of acquiring higher human qualities and excellences. It is the soul, which generates a series of ethical laws particularly for the human being that the animal neither possesses nor requires.

Islamic terminology, calls one aspect of the human soul **Nafs ul Lawwamah** - the *Self-Reproaching spirit*. It is one of the surest means of perfecting one's character and behaviour through **Self-Evaluation** and **Self-Criticism**. Only in this way can we save ourselves from being a prey of all the vices in this world.

If we cultivate the habit of continuous Self-criticism, we will progress towards the stage of spiritual perfection, which is known as **Nafs ul Mutmainnah**.

In order to put this faculty of the soul in constant use, the Self-criticism must begin before our vision has blurred, and before evil makes a slave of our soul, otherwise, we will fail to recognize evil when it approaches.

→ Poor Development of the Self

When the Self is not properly developed, it leads to an **Inferiority Complex**.

This inferior complex is a killer mental disorder, because it oversees the whole network that is inter-woven with the Self.

The symptoms of this deadly condition are when the Self has willed and has chosen not to let its potential power and intellect be recognized by itself. This may be due to ignorance, wrongly set goals of achievements and ambitions, and thus the Self gets consumed deep into the vices. Hence the Self's behaviour and character can stoop down, and resembles that of a wild animal.

→Lack of Self-Confidence, Assurance and Low Self-Esteem

The development of intellect, talent and other useful faculties in a person, guides one to Self-confidence, and one can live a happy and contented life.

On the contrary, a pessimistic individual under the influence of negative thoughts, weakens his constructive faculties and undermines his own capability for action.

This is a typical example of a person who constantly moans and complains about every activity it happens to undertake, like jobs, living with a family, the community, friends, etc.

This kind of frustration only invites failure in life and is consumed with vices and all the deadly diseases of the soul. Hence, it will drive an individual to become a bitter person.

A negative spirited person lowers its characters to such an extent, that it would always be a slave and not a master of its own Self. As long as it continuous in such a frame of mind, it would be impossible for it to gain human dignity.

Only when the Self has recognized and examined its potential power, intellect and strength, can it set goals of achievements to succeed in life and attain perfect harmony. The progress and development rate greatly depends on the **will** of the Self and the **choice** of the Self.

Inability to reach the desired goals and success does not mean that the Self lacks the potential power or intellect. But since it depends on the **will** and the **choice** of the Self, this choice and selection is not possible without knowledge and recognition.

The greater the range of knowledge, the greater the possibility of acquiring positive learning and Self-recognition.

→ Draw Backs of Self-Building

The process of Self-building, that is, Jihad ul Akbar (war against the inner-self), is **a lifetime process**. During this period, the human Self should be on guard against Shaitan, who is very cunning, manipulative.

Shaitan is capable of deceiving the human Self, thinking that they are observing the war against the inner-self, but what they may end up doing is become boastful, greedy, arrogant, and have a very high level of ego.

All these are the vices that one should keep away from, and also be aware of throughout the process of Self-building.

Chastity

- To be chaste means to abstaining from the immoral or unlawful, from adultery; to be pure, decent of speech, restrained, and simple.
- This is the opposite of permissiveness, which means to live a life *without* fixed moral principles.

Islam places great emphasis on chastity and it is this aspect, among others, which is consistently under attack in the western world.



→ Why should we be Chaste?

A person's chastity is a gift given by Allah (SWT). It is a sign of purity and noble character. It is a very prized and personal possession. When a person marries, he/she enters a new stage of life. The bond of marriage is cemented by the couple, sharing something that is personal and intimate to them. This helps to secure the marriage from breaking up in the future.

If people do not guard their chastity, and treat sexual relationships as casual, then they are losing the higher purpose which Allah (SWT) has made, the sharing of something very intimate which binds the two people.

Allah (SWT) has made the human being from several elements; one is the physical element with the five senses of touch, taste, sight, smell and sound. Then He added a whole new dimension to human beings, he gave them thought and understanding.

If we treat our most private parts without modesty, and go and abuse them carelessly, we will gain a physical pleasure, but we will lose all the love and contentment which our mind can give us.

Thus, if we are permissive and have sexual relations whenever the urge arises, we will be lowering our dignity from the human intellect to that of the animal/physical element, and we will be missing out on the real sense of living.

→ Why is it Difficult to be Chaste?

The Western society has lost all concept of spiritual life. They have closed the eye inside them and have concentrated totally on physical pleasures.

Sex is something which has been made into an open pastime and enjoyment. This attracts our desires and makes us want to join in. Almost all pleasures are orientated around this idea, Internet, TV, books, magazines, bars, and cinemas.

Unfortunately, these forms of media strongly influence our thought processes and end up damaging the mind and body.

It is only because we can not see the long-term effects of being unchaste that we may be attracted to it. Our elders who have seen these effects warn us, but we call them old fashioned. We must learn from their experiences, and heed their guidance.

→ How can we be Chaste?

Being chaste does not mean keeping yourself locked up, away from the West. It means listening to everything they is said and then make a thoughtful decision on that which is right and that which is wrong.

It also means controlling your desires and not letting them direct you into committing something which you know might give you physical pleasure, but on the higher level, will make you lose out.

We can be chaste by avoiding telling dirty stories or jokes, by not watching films/TV which display indecent scenes and that cause arousal, by not allowing our relationships with people of the opposite sex get too close, and by generally asking ourselves in our heart,

*Am I doing this because my desires are telling me,
or because my intelligence is telling me?*

The path to enjoying life truly is very difficult, and is balanced on both physical and spiritual aspects.

It is like climbing a mountain; only when you reach the summit, can you look around you and see how beautiful everything is. And when you look down below, you see everything from a different point of view.

- ❖ When you see the maze of life from above; the paths, which confused you while you were in the maze, are now suddenly clear and easy to see. You come to realize the significance of subduing your desires in order to enjoy the ultimate outcome.

Wealth and Pride

Wealth is a trust from Allah (SWT). Many wealthy people love to show off and gloat about their wealth.

Islam considers the rich as trustees of the wealth granted upon them, so instead of boasting of their acquired wealth, fame and pomp, they are required to utilize their wealth for betterment of the deprived classes.

In Hadith al-Qudsi, Allah (SWT) says:

The rich are my agents and the poor are my family.

Therefore whoever acts miserly with them I shall put them into a burning fire and will not care about them.

A True Story

A lady in a faded dress and her husband, dressed in a homespun suit, stepped off the train in Boston and walk timidly without an appointment into the outer office of Harvard University's President.

The secretary could tell in a moment that such backwoods, weird folk had no business at Harvard and probably didn't even deserve to be in Cambridge.

"We want to see the president," the man said softly.

"He'll be busy all day," the secretary snapped.

"We'll wait," the lady replied.

For hours the secretary ignored them, hoping that the couple would finally become discouraged and go away. They didn't and the secretary grew frustrated and finally decided to disturb the President, even though it was a chore she always regretted.

"Maybe if you see them for a few minutes, they'll leave," she said to him.

He sighed in exasperation and nodded. Someone of his importance and stature obviously didn't have the time to spend with them, but he detested people with such despicable clothing cluttering up his outer office.

The President, stern faced and with dignity, strutted toward the couple.

The lady told him, *“We had a son who attended Harvard for one year. He loved Harvard. He was happy here. But about a year ago, he was accidentally killed. My husband and I would like to erect a memorial to him, somewhere on campus.”*

The President wasn't touched and nor did he seem shocked.

“Madam,” he said, gruffly, *“we can't put up a statue for every person who attended Harvard and died. If we did, this place would look like a cemetery.”*

“Oh, no,” the lady explained quickly. *“We don't want to erect a statue. We thought we would like to give a building to Harvard.”*

The President rolled his eyes. He glanced at the odd dress and homespun suit, and then exclaimed, *“A building! Do you have any earthly idea how much a building costs? We have **over** \$7,500,000 in the value of buildings here at Harvard.”*



For a moment the lady was silent. The President was pleased. Maybe he could get rid of them now.

The lady turned to her husband and said quietly, *“Is that all it costs to start a university? Why don't we just start our own?”*

Her husband nodded.

The President's face wilted in confusion and bewilderment. Mr. and Mrs. Leland Stanford got up and walked away, traveling to Palo Alto, California, where they established the University that bears their name, Stanford University, a memorial to a son that Harvard no longer cared about.

Drinking and Gambling

→ Drinking

Another word for liquor is alcohol. Alcohol includes all beers, spirits, wines, malts and ciders.

Alcohol is strictly forbidden because it is extremely harmful to the human body, mind and soul.

Alcohol is harmful in the sense that it takes you away from your real Self. It reduces the concentration of the mind, and one is not able to have complete control over the NAFS.

As a result you are more likely to commit a sin than you would have been otherwise. This lack of concentration also affects your mind, and your judgment. You can get very angry and can do things, which you will regret later on. All this is caused by the fact that your mind does not have total control over your body.

Alcohol damages the body by destroying the liver and slows down the reactions. This can cause accidents especially when driving.

→ Gambling

To gamble is Haraam. This sin is as bad as drinking and Allah (SWT) has linked them to each other, when He tells us in the Holy Qur'an,

**O you who believe! Verily intoxicants and games of chance,
are only a abomination of Shaitan's handiwork,
so stay away from it that you may be successful.**

Al Maidah (5): 93

**They ask thee about wine and gambling.
Say: 'In them is great sin, and some profit, for men;
But the sin is greater that the profit.'**

Al Baqarah (2): 219

Gambling is forbidden because a person can lose everything he owns in a jiffy, and put not only himself, but those who depend on him in hardship.

It is also **addictive** (you can not stop once you have started).

Never let yourself become addicted to anything, because you are then under the control of that habit. Islam wants your mind to have control over the body, and not vice versa.

Our Magnificent Muslim Ummah

The Holy Qur'an has placed great emphasis on recognizing all Muslims as one unified Ummah.

Once you have accepted the basic beliefs of Tawheed, Nabuwwah, Imamah and Qiyamah, you become part of the Ummah and have a duty towards maintaining and nurturing it. That is why it is necessary to appreciate the Islamic principles of unity.

There are *more* than one billion (1,000,000,000) Muslims throughout the world! They are from different tribes, various colors and speak a variety of languages, yet all share the same fundamental and basic faith in submission to the Oneness of Allah (SWT).

The brotherhood in faith, which Islam established, is nothing short of a miracle and a great one too. There is no equal to the wonderful brotherhood of Islam, in any other faith or religious order in the world.

We have no caste system, colour bar or financial / social distinction whatsoever. Once an individual embraces Islam, any restrictions he suffered in his former faith are once and for all annihilated. He becomes a member of the international human brotherhood of believers of one Supreme Being – Allah (SWT).

Sadly, Muslims live in different parts of the world and the geographical borders have created a great obstacle in each and every land, even those governed by them. We live like foreigners and do not share the same thoughts.

Islam is a gift, which considers its Ummah as one solid body, sharing the same responsibilities, expressing the same joys and sorrows. Muslims should not consider each other as strangers from other Islamic or non-Islamic state.

The Prophet (S) used to say,

*Whosoever does not think of the betterment and welfare of others
is not from among my Ummah.*

Think

**The above is very serious statement.
How is it relevant to us in the current situation?
What role can you as a youth / student play?**

→ Solidarity and Brotherhood amidst the Muslim Ummah

Muslims must try and be ONE so that they are not easy targets for the Kuffar. We should realize that the enemies of Islam have already begun to create deep-rooted divisions and differences amongst the Muslims from different nations, tribes and created plots to discriminate races and nationalities from one another.

Look at the situations of Muslims in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Kashmir, etc. where the Muslims are in misery, constantly being attacked by political and cultural problems.

The Muslim Ummah should be an Ummah of honor and dignity. It should be Independent of non-Islamic values and laws, it should be a powerful society that can not be attacked, and sets an example for the rest of the world.

The late Spiritual Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran – Imam Khomeini constantly reminded Muslims to maintain and safeguard their unity. He encouraged the Muslim Ummah to work on strengthening itself. Once during Hajj, he warned the pilgrims:

**O Muslims of the world! Awake!
Remove the chains of negligence and ignorance from yourselves!
Secure your independence and the greatness of Islam.
Muslims should not adopt non-Islamic values.**

**You should be steadfast in your faith and persevere against the Kufr values.
Gain your independence;
Islam has bestowed you with the gift of independence that can resist the
hurricanes of the East and West.
Be victorious for the sake of Islam.**

Ponder

- ❖ Muslims from every nook and corner of the world are unified under ISLAM. It is the duty of all to respect, honor, help, and express their concern for one another.
- ❖ Muslims should free themselves from the enslavement, dictatorship and other man-made concepts. They should remain free thinkers and worshippers of Allah (SWT). It is obligatory upon all Muslims to defend their God given rights.
- ❖ The Muslim Ummah should not allow itself to be oppressed and should express its true beliefs of Islamic values.

Think and Answer

1. What are the fundamental principles that make Muslims one united body?
2. What are the ways that create disunity among the Muslim Ummah?
3. What are the plots and intentions of the enemies of Islam?
4. How can the Muslims safeguard their honor, dignity and independence?
5. If two Muslim countries are in conflict and war, what is the duty of other Muslims in this regard?
6. Describe at least two ways that the above problem could be solved.