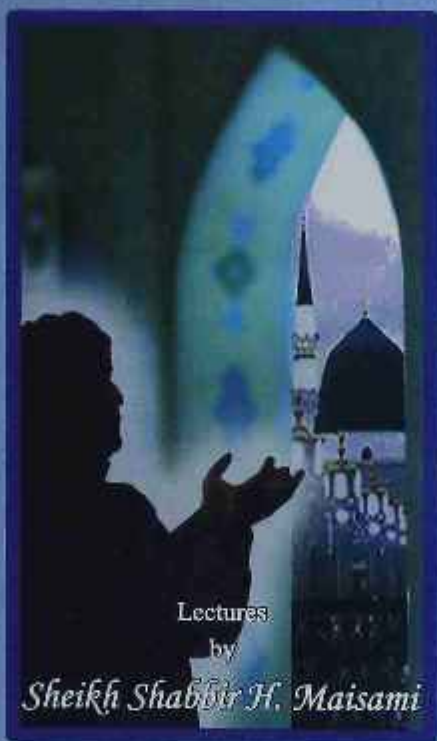


# ISLAMIC PERSONALITY

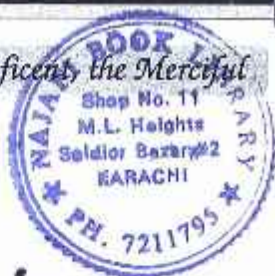


Lectures  
by

*Sheikh Shabbir H. Maisami*

**ZAHRA (S.A.) ACADEMY**

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful



# Islamic Personality

Lectures by

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**Shabbir Hassan Lakhani (Maisami)**

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*In the name of Allah (S.W.T.),  
the Beneficent,  
the Merciful*

*Attributed*

*to*

*the younger generation  
who are trying to understand  
the real spirit of Islam  
and adjusting their lives  
according to it.*

*Thus preparing for  
The Awaited Saviour  
Our 12<sup>th</sup> Imam*

*Hujjat Ibn al Hasan Al-Mehdi<sup>(A.J.)</sup>*

*“May we all be included in his prayers”.*

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*In the name of Allah (s.w.t.) The beneficent, The merciful.*

## PREFACE

Islam being the perfect way of life guided by Allah (s.w.t.) to organize the life of Human beings. But because of many reasons human beings try to run away from this mode of life.

One of the reasons is their lack of knowledge of the real teachings and its benefits for the humanity. So, it becomes the duty of those who know, to spread the correct teachings of Islam so that people are guided. Another reason seems to be the feeling of loosing the liberty and the right to enjoy the life as one feels like. But as all of us know that there is nothing like complete freedom in this world and all are bound with some type of laws, rules and regulations. Now if we choose to follow the rules made by human beings it may benefit us but it will be limited till we are living in this world.

So why not to follow such rules and regulations which are going to help organizing our life in this world and also our next life.

The present book is a compilation of lectures on how to develop a real Islamic personality, so that



we may start our journey towards perfection and also become real human being.

I delivered these lectures in short courses organized by Zahra (s.a.) Academy, in Karachi and Hawza Ilmiya-e-Qum, attended by a large number of youth interested in learning the real Islamic teachings from Philippines, U.K., France, Kenya, Madagascar, Tanzania, Uganda, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Two of my students namely:

Sisters Maria and Ghazala did the special work of compiling these lectures.

I hope they shall be rewarded by Allah (s.w.t.) and Masumeen (a.s.) for their assistance in this noble cause.

May Allah (s.w.t.) bless all those who assist our Academy in spreading the message of Ahl-ul-Bait(a.s.) all over the world.

*Shabbir H Lakhani (Maisami)*

Zahra (s.a.) Academy,  
Hawza Ilmiyah Qum,  
15<sup>th</sup> Shaaban 1419 A.H.

## THE HUMAN BEING

The following discussion is on the human being's journey toward perfection. It is essential to understand the composition and qualities of the human being, in the real sense. Human beings are composed of two elements:

- a) Body
- b) Soul

### **The Body**

This is composed of material things which make the physical structure of human being, and which is similar to animals in all respects. In this way, we can say that there is no difference between human beings and animals, in the material sense. When our body gets ill or sick, we use medicine to heal it; animals are cured by natural systems present in them.

### **The Soul**

There has been a lot of discussion about the human soul. Scholars have been trying to understand its properties and characteristics for ages. Even at present, it is still a point of discussion. In the days

of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) also, people used to ask about the origin and reality of this powerful creation of Allah (S.W.T.).

*“And they ask you about the soul, say: the soul is one of the commands of my Lord, and you are not given out of knowledge but a little.” (Holy Quran: 17:85)*

The above phrase of the Holy Quran clearly explains that it is difficult, or rather impossible, for us to understand some things related to the universe and its creation, and one of these things is silicon used in I.C. of computers and another is the “soul”. But even then, we can observe some qualities of the soul, which on one hand would prove its existence and on the other, explain to us some of its qualities or characteristics.

Before discussing the qualities of the soul we shall discuss the justification given for its existence.

- I. Human being has some qualities and expectations that are related to the material body which do not change with the changes in the body. For example:
  - a. Likes and dislikes

- b. Love and hate
- c. Inclination towards something
- d. Generosity and miserliness
- e. Bravery and cowardice

These qualities are not related to the human body, and since they cannot exist on their own and need a source of existence. We call the source of existence of these qualities as the 'soul'. These qualities are unlike other qualities related to the material body which change with the passage of time like:

- a. Health and sickness
  - b. Weight of the body
  - c. Strength and weakness
  - d. Youth and old age
2. When we observe a person, thing or place and after some time try to remember it, we imagine it with all its qualities, dimensions, colours and so on, we imagine a picture in completeness, without any change. This is not possible through this material body alone, there has to be a source of existence, which enables us to remembering these

images. Also, when we imagine, we can imagine what ever we like (although we are not allowed to imagine certain things) there has to be a place for this imagination. (That is why a person who wants to achieve a target first imagines it and then moves towards achieving it.)

3. When a person dies, there is hardly any difference in the material body just few seconds before his death and after. This proves that there was a power that was keeping the body alive and now it has gone; we call it the soul. Sleep and unconsciousness are also simple examples that show the existence of the soul, the difference being that while sleeping, the power (soul) is not disconnected completely from the body, so the person's body works but the power of thinking, imagination, etc are not in his control. This shows that other than the material body, there has to be a power which controls the body even when the person is sleeping in unconsciousness.

*"Allah (S.W.T.) takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not during their sleep; then He withholds those on*

*whom He has passed the decree of death and sends the others back till an appointed term; most surely there are signs in this for people who reflect." (Holy Quran: 39:42)*

4. These days, societies and centres have developed in many countries, which claim that they can call the spirits and soul of any dead person. Many of the people who have visited them have witnessed incidents that they themselves cannot believe. They have witnessed those who call spirits calling the soul or spirit of their near ones and then got replies to questions whose replies were known to the dead only. In this way also existence of soul or spirit has been proved. But, the question is how can it be proved that the 'being' which came and replied is actually the soul or spirit, because for proving the identity of something, first we should know some details or identification qualities, then we can find out whether it is the soul or some thing else.

As far as the soul or spirit is concerned, the fact is we cannot recognise it, as we have no information about it, so recognition is not possible. On the other hand, we cannot

neglect the fact that the replies which one gets in the instances mentioned above are sometimes 100% correct. But because it is Allah (S.W.T.) who is the Creator, we believe that He has created infinite number of creations, some of which are Shaitan, Jinn, etc, and some of these creations have the power of knowing and observing things. Things which are not known to us; so when we call the being which replies to our question we assume that it is a soul or spirit, but it can also be a Shaitan or a Jinn replying them.

*"In addition, most surely the Shaitan suggests to their friends that they should contend with you; and if you obey them, you shall most surely be polytheists." (Holy Quran: 6:121)*

## **Faculties of a Soul**

Once the existence of soul is accepted, the next question arises: what are its virtues and characteristics? Many philosophers and scholars have tried to explain the virtues and characteristics of soul. According to some of them, the soul is simple not composite and has the power of self-movement, so it guides and rules the body.

Aristotle defined the soul in terms of functions. According to him the soul of plant was concerned with nutrition and reproduction, that of an animal with these and with sensation and independent movement. While that of a man was concerned with all those of an animal as well with reasoned activity. He was of the opinion that soul should not be equated with mind or intellect, as he believed that soul is what makes a thing alive, so intellect can be a function of the soul and not the soul itself.

In order to perceive in a more profound way of understanding the study of the soul, a deep observation of the faculties or powers and virtues (related to the soul) present in human beings, is necessary. These are:

- a. Power of thinking
- b. Power of attention



- c. Power of reasoning
- d. Power of judgement
- e. Power of imagination (past, present, future)
- f. Power of expression
- g. Power of speech
- h. Power of differentiating between good and bad, useful and harmful (conscience)
- i. Power of decision-making
- j. Power of feeling (emotions)
- k. Power of self-criticism
- l. Power of satisfaction
- m. Power of dreaming
- n. Power of learning
- o. Power of remembering
- p. Power of memorization
- q. Power of forgetting
- r. Power of action
- s. Power of anger and fierceness
- t. Power of desire

The list shows most of the powers that are retained by the soul and used by it when needed. Some of the powers are common between human beings

and other creatures of Allah (S.W.T.) but most of them are specifically for the human beings and these actually differentiate between human beings from animals. The power of attention, memory, reasoning, judgement, imagining and thinking combine together and help performing the act or process of knowing, termed as cognition.

In our discussion of building an Islamic personality, we have to bring the power of imagination, feeling, liking and disliking under control. The control of the power of thinking which along with the power of 'conscienceness' (ability to differentiate between good and bad) should help the power of decision in finalizing whether an act should be performed or not, irrespective of the fact that the act is related to body or is related to the soul.

The power of imagination, feelings of like and dislike when under the control of power of thinking can differentiate between good and bad. Self-criticism helps the power of decision in finalization, about anything. The power of criticism helps the person in refraining from an act, which was inhuman, thus giving a chance to correct the action next time.

Now we can understand that because of the power of decision, human beings are thinking creatures and therefore known as the best creations of Allah(S.W.T.) and thus are also answerable to Allah(S.W.T.), where as other creations, do not have the power of thinking are thus not answerable for their acts; rather we observe that they all are programmed and have no choice except to go ahead according to the program and serve their cause of creation.

### **Habits and Actions**

Human beings have been endowed with two types of habits and the human body performs two types of actions.

The two types of **habits** are:

- a. Easily changeable, like sleeping, eating, etc.
- b. Those become second nature; like nature of helping other human beings, offering Salaat at its right time, etc.

Similarly the two types of **actions** are:

- a. *Involuntary* – these are not in control of a person, like the heartbeat, circulation of blood, etc.

- b. *Voluntary Actions* – they are in control of a person, like reading, writing, fasting etc.

In character building, we deal with types of actions, directly controlled by a person, for which he is answerable to Allah (S.W.T.).

### **Stages of an action**

Before we go ahead, it is necessary to understand the process through which the person passes before he decides about any type of action.

### **Steps of thinking**

Before a person intends to perform an action, he passes through various stages, as described below.

1. Facing the matter – for example when you first heard and thought about the Mazhab Shinasi Program (Islamic orientation course), this was the stage of facing the matter.
2. Imagining the matter itself after facing the problem or trying to imagine how it would be.
3. Imagining its advantages and disadvantages, then you weighed the pros and cons of coming to Qum for the program.

4. Confirmation: advantages and disadvantages, in this case you might have asked someone about it that has attended the classes before.
5. Decision to perform or not to perform the course of action, after inquiring about the advantages and disadvantages of the course. That is, you made your mind whether to attend or not.
6. Action of moving or away from it, finally either you decided to stay at home or started preparation for coming to Qum with the intention of attending the Mazhab Shinasi Course over here.

### **Case study for the steps of thinking before action**

When a habit becomes the second nature, then the person does not pass through all the stages of thinking before action, rather after facing the problem he directly goes to the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. For example: if a person has a habit of getting up for Namaz-e-Shab (predawn prayers) everyday, it becomes his second nature. He just decides to get up and pray it [5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> stage only].

In these lectures we intend to understand: what are the good habits, so that we make them our second nature.

## **Akhlaq**

Akhlaq is an Arabic word that originates from word “Khulq”. In English there is no word equivalent to this Arabic word, which includes ethics conduct and morals.

### **Definition of Akhlaq**

Many scholars of this field have described definitions of Akhlaq. Three of them are given below.

1. “Condition” of the soul because of which it is performing an action that becomes second nature. This definition is accepted by majority of Islamic scholars dealing with this subject.
2. “Actions” that are classified as good or bad and the person who performs them is either rewarded or punished. Western philosophers and some Islamic scholars also accept this definition.

3. Good actions are coined as Akhlaq and bad actions are known as 'anti-Akhlaq'.

In the first definition Akhlaq is considered to be as a "condition of soul", in second it has not been related to soul rather the actions are classified as good or bad and in the third one only "good actions" are considered as "Akhlaq".

The first definition is the best one as it explains the Akhlaq in a way explained by Islam and is accepted by large number of Scholars of Islam.

### **Importance of Akhlaq in Islam**

Islam has greatly emphasized on character building. The Holy Quran points to the character of the Holy Prophet Mohammed (S.A.W.W.) in the following words:

*"And surely you [O Prophet] have the highest morals." Holy Quran: 68:4*

This verse emphasizes on high morals and Akhlaq of Holy Prophet.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) has said:

1. The person who has the best character has complete faith (Eeman)

2. On the Day of judgement the most heavily regarded thing will be good character (Husn-e-Khulq).
3. The one whose character is good and deals nicely with his family will be nearer to me on the Day of judgement.
4. One who insults a believer (Mu'min) announces war against Allah (S.W.T.).

Someone asked the Prophet (S.A.W.W.), "What is religion?" The Holy Prophet replied, "To be (of) good character".

Someone asked Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.), "A person prays and fasts all the time but creates problems with his speech. What about him?" the Holy Prophet replied, "He will go to hell."

The Incident of Sa'ad ibn-e-Ma'za: The Holy Prophet fully participated in the funeral of one of his young companion named Sa'ad, his mother was very happy as she thought he shall definitely go to heaven, so she said, "Oh Sa'ad, congratulations for going to heavens." The Holy Prophet replied, "He is being pressed". Later on his companion asked, "Why did you behave like that?" The Holy



Prophet (S.A.W.W.) replied, “His Akhlaq with his family members was not good”.

Here it becomes clear from the Ayat and narrations that Islam greatly emphasizes on Akhlaq or good character. The question, which may come to our mind, is, why is it that Islam emphasizes so much on Akhlaq that at times one feels that having good character and Akhlaq is more important than performing Ibadat. It is a fact that laws makes a person perform his duty but cannot make him love his duty. Similarly the Islamic laws (Fiqh) teach us what the duties of a Mu'min are, but don't make him or her perform the duties. And even if the person performs the duty they might do it because they might be afraid of the consequences or perhaps because they are interested in the rewards and benefits of the duty; but one cannot force a person to perform their duty lovingly. Akhlaq has the power, which makes the person perform the duty lovingly, wholeheartedly without expecting any reward or benefit. Any work done with such feeling has the real value and a profound impact on the society.

Now we can understand the saying of Imam Ali (A.S.) when he says,

“There are people who obey Allah (S.W.T.) for the sake of (some reward), that is Ibadat of businessman. There are people who obey Allah (S.W.T.) as they are afraid (of its consequences), that is Ibadat of slaves. There are people who obey Allah (S.W.T.) for the sake of thanking Him and worshipping Him because He deserves it, that is Ibadat of independent person (not performing the duties because of any pressure, rather doing it out of his own independent will).”

It is a realized fact that actions performed with the spirit of independent will is definitely worth in this world and that action done with an independent will is worth thousand times more than the action or work or duty performed under pressure. A soldier forced to fight for a cause will try to run away whenever he gets a chance to do that. On the contrary, a soldier fighting for a cause on his own will shall do it even at the cost of his own life. Similarly if a person becomes a real Muslim and obeys Allah (S.W.T.) out of his own will, tries to perform his duties in the best way. So, if all Muslims living in a society do the same, the society will become a piece of heaven. But the fact prevails that some people do obey Allah (S.W.T.)

but they do it either they are afraid of hell or they want to achieve high levels of heavens and some do just because they are born Muslim, with the result that they just perform their duties without caring for their Akhlaq or character. The outcome of such a society can be seen in many so-called Islamic countries.

Many Muslims around the world are born Muslims, so they perform their Islamic duties but because they have not accepted religion on their own will, they hardly show devotion and interest in applying the Islamic laws in their country or society. On the contrary, those who get converted and become Muslim they show their enthusiasm in applying the Islamic laws in their life and society. Hence, we conclude that an action performed willingly gives much better results than an action performed by force or for the sake of some reward or for saving oneself from punishment. It is Akhlaq, which helps a person perform a duty on his own will and without any pressure just for the sake of thanking and pleasing Allah (S.W.T.)

## **Pleasures and Pains of a Soul**

Pleasure is a condition experienced by the soul when it perceives something harmonious with its own nature and pain and suffering occurs when the soul comes in contact with things which are in disharmony with its nature. Different faculties of soul have different pleasures and pains, for example, pleasure of reasoning faculty lies in gaining knowledge about the real nature of things, and its pain lies in ignorance and deprivation from such knowledge. The pleasure experienced by the faculty of reason or intellect is the strongest and purest of all and is exclusive, natural and inherent to the human beings. It is also constant, not subject to the changing experiences in the daily life, and is temporary without any lasting value.

Pleasure related to the power or faculty of anger and fierceness lies in the feeling of being victorious. Delight of the faculty of desire and passion is enjoyment of foods, drinks and sexual association while denial of these enjoyments causes pain to it.

Pleasure of the faculty of imagination lies in the visualization of particulars that leads to the appearance of carnal desires and tendencies.

However, its pain lies in the insufficiency and inadequacy of these visions.

Human beings and animals share the pleasures of these last three faculties with some differences. These animal pleasures are in fact so low and trivial that man is ashamed of them and tries to conceal them. If it were to be said of a man that he derives great pleasure from eating, drinking and engaging in sexual activities, he shall be ashamed and upset about it. While, if such activities and pleasures (such as gained from the power of intellect) were becoming for man, not only would he not be ashamed of them, he would in fact be glad if such a matter were published widely and be proud of it.

We conclude, that the kind of pleasure that is becoming for man and could be said to be really gratifying, and not be such in appearance alone, is the one experienced by the reasoning faculty of soul. This type of pleasure like other pleasures has many degrees. The highest degree of which is experienced by understanding the reality of this universe and cause of creation, which results in recognizing the Creator and finally makes the person near to Him and obey Him in the best way.

This is the highest level of pleasure of faculty of reasoning.

Most of the people get busy with other pleasures and thus stay away from the real pleasure. A person who once tastes the real pleasure tries to gain more and more and pays less attention to other pleasures, as he knows that other pleasures are temporary, rather, compared to the real pleasure they are not worth calling pleasures.

In our discussion we shall try to understand the basic steps, which may lead us to the real pleasure, thus achieving the highest level of satisfaction, which leads towards ultimate perfection, the target of a Mu'min. It is important to be noted that in some religions like Hinduism and Christianity one has to leave the pleasures of food or sex for the sake of achieving higher levels of real pleasure, but on the contrary, Islam condemns this idea and guides its followers to enjoy the pleasures of the faculty of desire and passion and also achieve the higher levels of real pleasure.

The life style of Prophet Mohammed (S.A.W.W.) is the best guide for all the Muslims. He got married, had children, lived like a normal human being and along with that achieved the highest level of

satisfaction. The second best example is of Imam Ali (A.S.) and Hazrat Fatimah (S.A.). They also lived a normal life and achieved the highest level of salvation. So Islam very clearly tells its followers that achieving the highest level of satisfaction and salvation is possible even after one satisfies the faculty of desire and passion, within the Islamic limits.

### **The Negative Explanation of Zuhud and Taqwa**

Unfortunately the negative explanation of Zuhud and Taqwa has taken over the minds of Mu'mineen, the result being that today if you tell people, that it is their duty to have a respectable life, serve the masses by solving their spiritual and material problems, have a political system, they start thinking that an innovation (Bid'ah) is being introduced in Islam.

There can be two main reasons for such thinking:

- a. The negative approach towards the world and its material things started infusing among Muslims because of integrating with Non-Muslims especially Christians and Jews. The history of Islam after the death of

Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) shows that many Christian and Jews embraced Islam and after that they started quoting the stories from their books. Many simple Muslims also started referring to them for the explanation of the verses of Holy Quran related to other Prophets.

Some people also introduced the innovation (Bid'ah) of telling the stories in the mosque, simple Muslims used to enjoy them and in this way slowly and steadily their concepts regarding world and worldly desires started changing and they also developed the idea that a pious person is one who stays away from the worldly things. We come across the situation where people criticize Imam Ali(A.S.) or Imam Hassan (A.S.) or Imam Jaffer-e-Sadiq (A.S.) for benefiting from the worldly things like a normal man.

- b. The worst situation faced by the Muslims after the death of Imam Ali (A.S.), in which they were crushed and oppressed. On the other hand the rulers were enjoying the luxurious life, with all the facilities from the Baitul Mal, the ultimate outcome was that



layman started hating the world and material things, thinking that who so ever benefits from these things moves away from Allah(S.W.T.).

### **The Correct Thinking**

Islamic teachings explains this life as a transit stage and guides the Muslims to take maximum benefit out of it for the life hereafter, but he should not get involved in it in such a way that he forgets to prepare himself for the next world.

*"Wealth and children are an adornment of the life of this world. And the ever abiding, the good works, are better with your lord in reward and better in expectation." (Holy Quran: 18: 46)*

The verses on one hand declare the major worldly things like wealth and children as an adornment of this life, but immediately after that explains that if a person lives an Islamic life and performs good works, shall be rewarded by Allah (S.W.T.). Everyone knows that in performing good works and helping Mu'mineen one has to have some material things, otherwise he himself might be among those who need help and thus will not be

able to help other Mu'mineen and perform good deeds, in its real spirit.

The teachings of Islam regarding these worldly things are very clear and without any confusion. Islam says: Don't become mad after these worldly things; do not make them the target of your life. On the other hand do not leave them completely, rather enjoy them, and take full legal benefit out of them, along with that perform good deeds and help human beings with these things. Islam emphasizes that when you achieve them do not become too happy and if these things go away from you do not become sad and unhappy, rather thank Allah (S.W.T.) for the time it was with you.

*"And seek by means of what Allah (S.W.T.) has given out the future abode. And do not neglect your portion of this world. And do good as Allah (S.W.T.) has done well to you, and don't seek to make mischief in the land. Surely Allah (S.W.T.) does not love the mischief-makers."*

*(Holy Quran: 28:77)*

A question might arise in ones mind: if it is so simple then why has Amirul Mu'mineen Ali (A.S.) criticized this world so much in his sermons and

quotations. The answer is that Imam Ali (A.S.) has criticized the negative or worldly use of this world and not the world as a whole, as a cultivation place for hereafter. Had the world and its material things been something really bad, it would not have been considered as a place suitable for cultivation for the life hereafter.

We conclude that a real Mu'min benefits from these material things within the parameters of Islam, but does not become mad after it. He takes the maximum advantage out of it and cultivates for the next life. In simple words he rides them and does not let them ride on him.

The ultimate goal therefore, of a Mu'min, as explained before, is to go towards perfection in the way explained by the Holy Quran and the infallible guides, and to do all this only for the sake of happiness of Allah (S.W.T.).

According to the teachings of the Ma'sumeen, if a person tries to achieve the goal with the above intention he gets special help from Allah (S.W.T.), which includes the following:

- a. Power to differentiate between right and wrong also known as wisdom (Hikmat).

*"He gives wisdom to whom He wills, and whoever is given wisdom, he indeed has been given a lot of good. Only people of understanding will pay attention to it."*  
(Holy Quran: 2:269)

- b. Power of control over body: The person achieves special powers and he develops the capability of performing unimaginable actions.
- c. Power to see things hidden from the eyes of other people. The curtains of the unseen are removed from their eyes, and the person is able to realize the facts of universe and understands the real meaning of following verse of Holy Quran.

*"The seven heavens declare His glory and the earth (too), and those who are in them; and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with his praise, but you don't understand their glorification. Surely He is Forbearing, Forgiving."* Holy Quran: 17:44

- d. Power to observe heaven and hell. The person will be able to perceive Barzakh. Hazrat Ali (A.S.) in Khutba-e-Hammam has said: "Mu'mineen live in this world, but

their souls are in the heaven. They observe the heavens and literally see people enjoying their stay there...”

## **Main Steps for Achieving the Esteemed Goal**

In this chapter important and very basic steps for achieving the real goal of life shall be discussed briefly.

These steps are divided into three sections.

**Section A:** Explains the actions related to the person only

**Section B:** Explains the duties related to the Creator

**Section C:** Explains the duties regarding other human beings

### **Section A**

- 1) Acquiring Knowledge
- 2) Taking care of (T.T.T.F.A.)
- 3) Taking care of (Ujub/Self satisfaction)

### **Section B**

- 1) Having real faith in Allah (S.W.T.)
- 2) Thanking the Creator (Ibadat)
- 3) Repentance (Tawba) & Forgiveness (Istighfar)

## **Section C**

- 1) The law of Akhlaq
- 2) Positive thinking
- 3) Respecting Parents and other Mu'mineen
- 4) Keeping warm connections with relatives
- 5) Being Humble with believers
- 6) Giving service to Human beings
- 7) Ignore and Excuse Mu'mineen
- 8) Saving yourself from all types of sins

## **Section A:**

### **1. Acquiring Knowledge**

Knowledge is the guide in the darkness of life, so Islam emphasizes a lot on it. The Holy Quran is book of knowledge. The first revelation on the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) was:

*“Read, in the name of your Lord, Who created. Read and our Lord is most Honourable, Who taught with the pen, taught man what he knew not.”*  
(Holy Quran: 96:1-5)

At another place the importance of those who have knowledge is explained in this way.

*“What! He, who is obedient during hours of the night, prostrating himself and standing, takes care of the hereafter and hopes for the mercy of his Lord! Say: Are those who know and those who do not know alike? Only the men of understanding are mindful.”*  
(*Holy Quran: 39:9*)

There are many more verses, which clearly emphasize on the importance of knowledge and a learned person; one may refer to the following verses.

- a. Surah Saba (34:6)
- b. Surah Haj (24:54)
- c. Surah Mujadalah (58:11)
- d. Surah Fatir (35:28)

The narrations from the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) and Ma'sumeen (A.S.) also emphasize a lot on the importance of Knowledge.

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) has said,

“Gain knowledge even from the far away places like China, surely acquiring knowledge is responsibility of every Muslim (male and female).”



At another place it is quoted that Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) said,

“Acquiring Knowledge is responsibility of every Muslim, and clearly note that Allah (S.W.T.) likes those who gain knowledge.”

According to another quotation from Holy Prophet(S.A.W.W.),

“Acquiring knowledge is a pillar of Islam and those who gain knowledge shall receive their rewards with the Prophet (S.A.W.W.).”

Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S.) emphasizes on the importance of knowledge by explaining the level of a learned person as compared to a simple Aabid who is usually busy performing particular Ibadat and Zahid who stays away from the worldly things. He has also said that an Aalim is better than a thousand Aabids and a thousand Zahids.

Question: What type of knowledge is important?

The reply is very simple and natural. Any type of knowledge that guides a person towards the creator and prepares him to serve humanity is considered to be the real knowledge and this type of knowledge has real importance in Islam. So, if a person goes on attending lectures and reading

books, but neither tries to understand the cause of his creation nor serves humanity, he can be named as accumulator or source of knowledge but he can not be given the title of Aalim or a learned person.

Real knowledge is not that which is acquired, rather the actual knowledge is that reflects from the personality of a person and such a person can be named as an Aalim or scholar. The reflection of knowledge is only possible when person gains knowledge, understands it, and absorbs it. The result being that, it reflects from his personality, just like the moon (which gains the light from sun and reflects it). So, reflection of knowledge is a real sign that the person has knowledge and he is the one who can pass the knowledge to others.

Once a person gains such knowledge, then he is able to understand the philosophy of his creation and thus performs his duties accordingly with the result that he starts moving towards the goal of life. To end this discussion I shall quote some enlightening narrations from Ma'sumeen (A.S.).

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) has said,

“Whosoever acquires knowledge, he is like a person who fasts every day and stands the whole

night (performing Namaz), and surely a chapter learned by a person is better than the gold equivalent to the mountain of Abu Qubais, in the way of Allah (S.W.T.).”

He has also said,

“One who dies while gaining knowledge, shall meet Allah (S.W.T.) in such a way that there will be no difference between him and the Prophet except the level of Prophethood.”

Imam Jaffer Sadiq (A.S.) said,

“Everything performs Istighfar for a person acquiring knowledge, even the fishes in the sea and birds in the sky.”

The ultimate outcome of acquiring real knowledge is:

- a. Real faith in Allah (S.W.T.)
- b. Realization of duties towards the Creator and creation

## 2. Taking care of T.T.T.F.A.

### a) Thoughts

Islam on one hand suggests Muslims to discuss the Islamic ideology, which includes the existence and oneness of the Creator, His qualities (like knowledge and power) and does not accept a person or Muslim unless he develops full faith in Allah (S.W.T.) through correct reasoning. But on the other hand it asks human beings to refrain from thinking about the actual reality of the Creator as our thinking power is limited as we can't perceive many material things we cannot perceive the actual reality of creator. So we have been asked to ponder in his signs and not himself. So, a Muslim should thoroughly discuss the ideology but control his thinking regarding the actual reality of Allah(S.W.T.). Of course, Islam emphasizes a lot on observing the nature and appreciating the wisdom and power of the Creator through his creations and it is considered as the best Ibadat.

*“Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, there are signs for men who possess wisdom. Those who remember Allah, standing, sitting and reclining of*

*their sides, and think in the creation of the skies and the earth, saying "Oh our Lord! You have not created all this in vain. Glory is to you! Save us from the torment of the fire (of Hell)."*

*(Holy Quran: 3:190-191)*

Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) said,

"Thinking for a few minutes is better than Ibadat of one year."

Imam Ridha (A.S.) has said,

"Too much fasting and offering Salaat is not Ibadat, the real Ibadat is thinking about the creations of Allah (S.W.T.)."

According to these traditions any one can gain Thawab of one year of Ibadat by contemplating on the different creations of Allah (S.W.T.) and if a person starts this practice he shall understand that how nicely and perfectly Allah (S.W.T.) has created this universe and as a result his faith will increase in his Lord.

## **b) The Tongue**

Although it is only a piece of flesh and has no power in itself but when a person uses it, the result can be great construction or destruction. Once Hazrat Luqman was asked to slaughter a goat and bring the best part of it, he brought its tongue. Next time when he was asked to bring the worst part of it, again he brought its tongue. When he was asked why he did so, he replied that tongue is a very sensitive thing. If it is used properly it can solve many problems and if used in a wrong way, it can create problems for many people.

Imam Baqir (A.S.) has said,

“The tongue is (the) key of all good and bad deeds, so a Mu'min should seal his tongue as he seals his gold and silver in a safe place.”

Imam Ali (A.S.) has said,

“To secure the tongue and do Ihsan (goodness) are among the best qualities of a human being.”

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) has said,

“One cannot stay away from sins unless he keeps his tongue in control.”

A person can perform at least 30 sins just by using his tongue, so one can understand how important it is to take care of the tongue. Before we speak, we should:

Think what we are going to speak is permitted or not. If permitted, is it useful or useless?

If it is useful, are we talking to the related person or not?

If we are talking to the related person, is it the right time to talk or not?

If it is right time to talk, will (what we say) be effective or not?

So hardly 25% of our words, used in 24 hours, can achieve the target and 75% may be just waste of time if it was not Haram. The rest shall be credited in our account to be questioned on the day of judgement by Allah (S.W.T.). So the best formula regarding the use of tongue is given by Amirul Mu'mineen (A.S.) when he says, "Think before you speak, because a Mu'min first thinks and then speaks and a non-believer first speaks and then thinks." The best thing is to recite Zikr by tongue continuously and among the Zikr the following are very much recommended.

- SUBHAN-ALLAH WALHAMDOLILLAH  
WALA ILAHA IL-LAL-LAHO  
WALLAHO AKBAR
- ALLAHUMMA SALLI ALA  
MUHAMMAD WA AALE MUHAMMAD  
WA AJJIL FARAJAHUM
- LA ILAHA ILLAL-LAHUL-MALIKUL  
HAQQUL MUBEEN

**c. Time:**

People heading towards a fixed target give a lot of importance to their time and try their best to achieve maximum benefit out of it. Usually people don't give importance to time, as they think there is ample time in life, but a stage comes when he realizes that the time is lost and it cannot be retrieved. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) has said, "The first question in the grave will be: "How did you spend your time?"" People usually waste their time in talking uselessly, thus getting no benefit either for themselves or for other human beings. So one should be careful regarding one's time, as it will not return.



#### **d. Food**

All living beings utilize food for their survival and growth, so it is necessary to have food. No one can live without it. The point is: what type of food should be utilized and how much? Allah (S.W.T.) has created different types of foods, so that human beings can enjoy and take maximum benefit from it. On the other hand, he has asked human beings to stay away from certain types of food, as their harms are more than their benefits.

So, firstly the food should be Tahir and not Najis or forbidden. Secondly it should be from the sources permitted in Islam, for example it should not be stolen or grabbed from some one. The money used for buying the food should also be Halal as the food bought by illegal money also has negative effect on the soul of the person, commonly known as hardening of the heart (a condition of soul due to which the person does not accept the facts easily and also does not like to repent on the sins he has performed, with the result that slowly and steadily, he moves away from Allah (S.W.T.)).

One of the tyrant rulers from the Abbasi dynasty asked a pious learned scholar to teach his son, the

scholar refused. The ruler emphasized a lot but he did not accept. Then he asked him to become the chief justice. He again refused. Finally, he asked him to have dinner with him. The pious learned scholar accepted the invitation. Next morning he informed the tyrant ruler that he was ready to become the chief justice and that he would also teach the prince.

Ayatollah Sheikh Abdul Karim Hairi, the founder of Hawzah-e-Ilmiyah, Qum was once invited to the house of a wealthy Mu'min in Isfahan. Grapes were served to him. He took the grapes and immediately put them back. The host asked him the reason. He said he didn't feel like eating them. When he returned to Qum, his students forced him to tell the real reason for not eating those grapes. He said, "When I picked up the grapes, I saw blood dripping from them". The students wondered why, as the host was a Mu'min and paid his Khums, Zakat, etc. The students went to Isfahan to inquire about the grapes. The host called the servant who admitted that he knew that Sheikh Hairi (R.A.) was in a hurry, so he got the grapes from the neighbour's farm, thinking that he would ask for their permission later.

Food being Halal or Haram has a big effect on us. Haram food makes us hard-hearted. If you cannot cry in front of Allah (S.W.T.) during your supplications, check the food you are eating. Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.W.) taught us to seek Allah (S.W.T.)'s shelter from a heart that is not humble and from dryness of eyes.

*“O Allah (S.W.T.), I seek your shelter from a heart that is not humble and eyes which shed no tears.” Munajat 14 of Imam Sajjad (A.S.)*

Imam Ali (A.S.) used to cry during his Duas. A Prophet's companion, Abu Darda (R.A.), once came running to Lady Fatimah (S.A.) stating that Ali (A.S.) was unconscious. Bibi Fatimah (S.A.) assured him that he usually fainted owing to the excess of crying in his prayers and that it was his usual practice. No doubt we cannot be like him, but even then there should be tears in our eyes, when we repent for our sins and negligence. So, if we are not able to cry on our condition of sin, there are chances that one or more things which make the person hard-hearted have been performed by us. One of them is the consumption of Haram and Najis food.

### **e. Actions**

One, who wants to achieve the high status of perfection in life, should follow the instructions of the guides sent by Allah (S.W.T.) and live according to their instruction. They have guided us on what actions of life should and should not be performed. So Mu'min tries his best to perform actions, which will benefit him in this life and hereafter and refrain from sins, which are harmful for both this world and the world hereafter.

Allah (S.W.T.) could have permitted all the human beings to do what ever they like, but considering the fact that He created us to achieve the highest level of humanity, he guided us so that we may not face problems in finding the correct path.

*"On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil, it shall wish that between it and that (evil) there were a long duration of times; and Allah (S.W.T.) makes you to be cautious of (retribution from) Himself; and Allah (S.W.T.) is compassionate to the servants."*

*(Holy Quran: 3:30)*

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) has said,

“Oh followers! Take care of the day when actions will be checked thoroughly.”

He has also said,

“Oh those who obey Allah (S.W.T.)! Be sure that you check your own self; your own body has eyes and there are some who are writing down each and every action of yours and number of your breaths. Neither darkness nor dawn can stop them from observing you nor is the time very near.”

He has also said,

“On the Day of judgement, there will be witness for every action, even for those which are performed in a closed room.”

Imam Jaffer-e-Sadiq (A.S.) has said,

“Take account of your own self before the account is taken from you.”

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) said,

“Oh Abuzar! Take account of yourself before account is taken of you. It is easier for a person to take account of his own self.”

He has also said,

“Be ready for the great Day when all actions will be shown and nothing will be hidden from Allah (S.W.T.). Oh Abuzar! No one can be a pious person unless and until he takes strict account of his actions much stricter than the account taken from a partner. So you should know: from where the food has come, where the drink has arrived from and what is the source of your dress? Are they from Halal or Haram sources? Oh Abuzar! The one who does not care about where his wealth comes from, Allah (S.W.T.) will not care from which door he enters hell.”

### **3. Taking care of Ujb (self-satisfaction or self-righteousness)**

It is a disease of Muttaqeen (the pious). A Muttaqi person may feel satisfied with his/her worship and good deeds: this is a dangerous and slippery ground. Once, two men went inside a place for prayers, one pious and the other sinner. When they came out the pious was empty-handed and the sinner a clean man. This is because the pious man was proud of his Ibadat, and the sinner repented for his sins, so Allah (S.W.T.) accepted the

repentance of the sinner and rejected the worship of the self-righteous person.

Prophet Isa (A.S.) advised his students to enter their synagogues with the feelings of a sinner and not with a self-righteous attitude (Bible).

Imam Hassan (A.S.) said at the gate of the mosque, before entering for prayer, say, "O Allah (S.W.T.)! Your servant is at your door (ILAAHI, 'ABDUKA BIBAABIK). O good! The bad one is before you (YA MOHSIN, QAD ATAKAL MUSEE). You have ordered the good among us to forgive the bad. You are good, and I am bad.

So forgive the badness in me with the goodness in you, O most generous one."

Never feel self-satisfied with your Ibadat or Taqwa. When you do something good, don't say or think, "I have done it". Think and say, "Allah (S.W.T.) gave me the chance." Also, do not think you have done Allah (S.W.T.) a favour (Ihsan). Rather, Allah (S.W.T.) has done you a favour by guiding you to a good act.

*"What! Is he then whose evil deed appears so attractive that he beholds it good, equal to the one guided aright?"*

*(Holy Quran: 35:8)*

Imam Ali (A.S.) said,

“Take care! Don’t be satisfied with your action. This is the best chance for Satan to overcome you and nullify all your good deeds.”

Prophet Musa (A.S.) asked Satan about the colourful cloth, which he saw in his hand, Satan answered, “I put it on the believers who are satisfied with their actions and thus they’re in my control.”

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) has said,

“To protect a person who performs late-night prayers without miss; Allah (S.W.T.) sometimes makes him over sleep so that he misses his prayer. Thus he/she does not feel satisfied about his/her worship and develops the feeling of repentance.”

The solution to this disease is to keep on thinking that whatever you do is by the power of Allah(S.W.T.) and it is because of His Blessings and Mercy. Otherwise it would not have been possible to utter even a single word.



## **Section B:**

### **1. Having real faith in Allah (S.W.T.)**

Faith plays an important role in the life of every person. A Mu'min does have faith in Allah (S.W.T.) but the degree of it differs due to which we observe different lifestyle of Mu'mineen. Depending upon the degree of faith a person shows his patience when he faces difficulties and problems in life and tries to solve it with the help of Allah (S.W.T.). So a real Mu'min should feel that although his actions do have effect on his future but if he has deep and real faith in his Creator, he shall be able to face the situation with confidence expecting the help of his Master.

Faith in Allah (S.W.T.) can be increased by the recitation of Holy Quran specially the verses which quote His signs and offering Namaz and asking His help at the time of difficulties

## **2. Thank the Creator for all blessings.**

The glorious Quran recommends us to beg Allah(S.W.T.) for the ability to thank:

*"My Lord, enable me to be thankful for the blessings with which You have blessed me and my parents, and to do good that shall be pleasing to you, and include me in the list of Your good servants." {The prayer of Prophet Sulaiman (A.S.)}*  
(Holy Quran: 27:19)

*"My Lord, enable me to be thankful for the blessings with which you have blessed me and my parents, and to do good that shall be pleasing to you. Make good the character of my progeny. I turn to you repentant, and I am of those who have surrendered to you."*  
(Holy Quran: 46:15)

Although the word 'blessing' is used for the good things, which can be enjoyed by a person immaturely, in our discussion it includes all the problems and tests through which a Mu'min is made to pass through for purification and for making him remember Allah (S.W.T.) all the time. That is why when a person, not liked by

Allah(S.W.T.) because of his actions, asks for something his request is fulfilled earlier than a Mu'min's request, as Allah (S.W.T.) wants the first one to move away quickly and wants the Mu'min to continue asking so that he stays near Allah(S.W.T.): Therefore if our requests are fulfilled quickly, we should be on guard! Perhaps Allah (S.W.T.) has stopped liking us because of our actions!

So, we should thank Allah (S.W.T.) in all conditions and situations. Here, the two prayers of the Prophet (S.A.W.W.) are most appropriate. One is the prayer, during pilgrimage in Makkah, when walking between the mounts of Safa and Marwa, in remembrance of the perfect faith of Lady Hajra, the mother of Prophet Ismail (A.S.):

*“O Allah (S.W.T.)! Grant me positive thinking concerning You, under all conditions, and a true attitude of putting complete trust in You.”*

The second prayer asks for the highest state of mind mentioned at the end of Chapter 89 of the glorious Quran, the Dawn (Al-Fajr):

*“O Allah (S.W.T.)! Give me a soul at peace with You; which believes in the meeting with You; which positively faces all the problems and tests of life; and which is satisfied and content with whatever You provide.”*

Once we develop the faith in our Lord, we are sure that He will select the best for us. The best way of thanks is to feel in the heart that all the blessings are from Allah (S.W.T.). Prophet Musa (A.S.) said to Allah (S.W.T.), “There are so many blessings and bounties from You on us that I cannot count them. What can You say about thanking you for them.” Allah (S.W.T.) replied, “This feeling that you cannot thank Me because of countless blessings, is the best way of thanks.”

“Oh Allah (S.W.T.)! We also really feel that we cannot thank You, as there are so many blessings and bounties, that it is impossible to count them. How can we thank you for them?”

### **3. Repentance (Tawbah) and asking Allah (S.W.T.)'s Forgiveness (Istighfar):**

More often than not, a person living in this world may perform some sins intentionally or unintentionally. In such cases the Merciful Lord has opened the door of forgiveness and pardon. This is also a great sign that our Lord loves us and does not want us to go to Hell.

So if by mistake, we commit a sin, we should quickly repent and ask for Allah (S.W.T.)'s forgiveness. If we don't do this, a black spot develops in the heart. Slowly and steadily, because of repeated sins, the heart becomes dark. This leads to the 'hardening' of the heart and thus the person is not ready to obey Allah (S.W.T.). Therefore we should ask Allah (S.W.T.) to excuse us at the very time the sin is committed; we should not delay Istighfar even for a second.

The best way of Istighfar is to feel regretful or sorrowful about the wrongdoing. If any problem has been created because of that wrongdoing, it should be rectified, so that Allah (S.W.T.) may excuse us, usually people utter the words of Istighfar and think that it is enough, but it should

be remembered that correction, or rectification, is an important part of Istighfar.

*"Allah (S.W.T.) only accepts the repentance of those who do wrong in ignorance, and then quickly repent. These are they whom Allah (S.W.T.) will pardon. Allah (S.W.T.) knows and is wise." (Holy Quran: 4:17)*

*"But he who repents after his wrong actions, and corrects, Allah (S.W.T.) will surely forgive him, indeed Allah (S.W.T.) is Forgiving, Merciful."  
(Holy Quran: 5:39)*

## **Section C:**

### **1. The law of Akhlaq**

Usually the problems which arise in a family or society is because of the fact that people don't select for others what they select for themselves, with the result that they neglect the rights of others. This leads to crisis and disharmony. Sometimes without any reason the rights of a person are neglected or taken away. This creates a bad feeling in the heart of the affected person, giving rise to differences leading to grave consequences. So, the law of Akhlaq is **'Select for others what you select for yourself.'**

### **2. Positive thinking:**

#### **a) Positive thinking towards Allah (SWT)**

We should think positively about everything in this world. Usually when we face problems, we start feeling that Allah (S.W.T.) is not just. In becoming a true Mu'min and meeting our target, we should instead say Alhamdulillah in times of trouble. This is because perhaps, we are being tested and it means that Allah (S.W.T.) does not want us not to get too involved with the material world. Rather, if we do not face any discomfort at

least once in 40 days, we should be upset; as there are chances that Allah (S.W.T.) might have left us on our own, according to Ma'sumeen (A.S.).

*“Do people think that just because of their becoming a believer they will be left unexamined? Surely those before you have also been examined thoroughly. Surely we will test you with your soul, body and material things. Good news for those who have patience and at the time of examination say, “We have come from Allah (S.W.T.) and have to go towards Him.”*  
*(Holy Quran: 29:03)*

So at every stage we should thank Allah (S.W.T.), as He is the Lord taking care of His creation.

### **b) Positive thinking towards Mumineen (believers)**

This implies that we should not pass judgement against any Mu'min according to our own explanation of his actions. Islam emphasizes on Husn-e-Zan, which means thinking highly of others. When we see someone coming out of a bar the first thought that may come to our mind is that he drinks. But it could be that he went to stop



someone else, or that he went there for some other important matter.

*“O you who believe! Avoid too much suspicion, for some suspicions are sin.”*

*(Holy Quran, 49: 12)*

*“And follow not, which you do not know. In fact, the hearing, the sight, and the heart, all these shall be questioned about it.”*

*(Holy Quran 17:36)*

Imam (A.S.) has said,

“When you observe someone doing something (abnormal), try to find a good reason for it; unless and until you get a proof that he has actually done something wrong.”

He has also said,

“Try to find out some good explanation for the actions of a Mu'min and if you are not able to find any, then keep trying but do not suspect a Mu'min.”

A man came to Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.) and said that some very trustworthy Mu'min had informed him that another trustworthy Mu'min committed

some act, but when he asked the person himself, the person denied it. The Imam said,

“Then believe the Mu'min and don't accept the words of others about him.”

*“If you see a person doing something wrong, try to find 70 excuses for that; and if you are not able to do so, then condemn yourself for not thinking of an excuse for a Mu'min brother.”*

*(Quotation seen by Ayatollah Mazahiri)*

The fact is that the integrity of a Mu'min develops over years and if you speak about him, even if it is a fact, the integrity is crushed in minutes, whereas there are chances that he might have asked Allah(S.W.T.)'s pardon for it. Instead by us speaking about it we are crushing a personality and a big sin is written in our book.

This does not mean that we should leave our family members alone without guidance; rather we should always keep a check on our family so that they may not go astray. When we see a person doing something 100% wrong, then our only duty is to do “Amr Bil Maruf” and “Nahy Anil Munkar” (enjoining others to do well and stopping them from committing bad).

If someone is doing something against the integrity of society, in this case some other steps should also be taken. We should be like the honeybee that always moves towards the good flowers and not like a fly that always moves towards dirt.

### **3. Respect**

#### **a) Respecting a Mu'min**

This step is very important in order to attain a perfect Islamic personality. Usually we respect a Mu'min only if it implies some benefit in return, whereas we should respect a Mu'min because Allah (S.W.T.) loves him. The three very important steps in respecting a Mu'min are:

1. Not to insult
2. Respect
3. Assist

In many communities insulting a Mu'min has become a social pastime; it is especially seen in schools and colleges as a very common practice. Sometimes the jokes are insulting also. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) stood near the Kaaba looked at the walls and said,

“Your respect is very important, but that of a Mu'min is even more important”.

*“O you who believe! Let not people laugh at (another) people; perhaps they are better than they are. Nor let women laugh at other women, who may be better than they are. Do not find fault with one another, nor call each other by nicknames; evil is a bad name (for any one) after accepting the faith; and whoever does not repent, these are they who are the unjust ones.” (Holy Quran: 49:11)*

*“They say, “If we return to Madinah, the honourable ones will certainly drive out the weaker. In fact honour belongs to Allah (S.W.T.), and to His Messenger and the believers, but the hypocrites do not know.” (Holy Quran: 63:8)*

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) has said,

“One who insults and disrespects a Mu'min, Allah (S.W.T.) will insult and disrespect him.” And, “The one who goes towards helping a Mu'min, on every step his sins are forgiven and good actions are recorded.” And,

“To respect a Mu'min is to respect Allah(S.W.T.)”.

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) has reported in ‘Hadith-e-Qudsi’ (Traditions quoting Allah (S.W.T.)’s words) in which Allah (S.W.T.) says, “The one who insults a Mu'min announces an open war against me” or “should prepare himself for war against me.” A person came to Imam Hassan (A.S.) and asked him to help solve his problem. The Imam (A.S.) said, “Have you seen my brother Hussein (who is perhaps better in solving this problem)?” The person replied, “Yes, but I don’t want to disturb him because he is performing I’tikaf.” The Imam(A.S.), “If you had asked him, he would have got greater reward (than that of I’tikaf).”

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) has said,

“The one who solves the problems of a Mu'min, Allah (S.W.T.) will solve 2 of his problems in this world and 72 in the Hereafter.”

A person came to Imam Sadiq (A.S.) and said,

“The Mu'mineen in our town are very pious.” The conversation went on as follows:

*Imam (A.S.):* Do you mean the powerful group helps the less powerful?

*Person:* No.

*Imam:* Do they go and visit the poor?

*Person:* No.

*Imam:* Do the people solve the problems of other Mu'mineen?

*Person:* No.

*Imam:* Then how can you call them Mu'min?

According to this narration sending money to the poor is not enough. Respecting and visiting them, and having sympathy for their difficulties is more important.

### **Imam Ali (A.S.), the perfect Model**

When the Imam passed away, people of Kufa started asking, "Where is the person who used to come in the middle of the night to give us food and clothing?"

### **Imam Zain-ul-Abideen (A.S.)**

Despite having 1000 servants, he used to distribute food to the poor himself, to an extent that his skin used to become hard and the hard skin had to be removed.

Imam Sadiq (A.S.) said,

“If a person keeps a guard (secretary) so that people cannot approach him directly and easily, Allah (S.W.T.) will create a wall between him and heaven on the Day of Judgement.”

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) has said,

“Whosoever makes a Mu'min happy, makes me happy and Allah (S.W.T.) will solve his problems on the Day of Judgement. The one who makes fun of a Mu'min, Allah (S.W.T.) will make fun of him on the Day of Judgement. People who make fun of Mu'mineen will on the Day of Judgement run towards heaven. As they're about to enter, the door will close. They'll run towards the other door, but the same thing will happen.”

So in the light of all these narrations it becomes clear that, we should not only refrain from insulting a Mu'min, rather we should respect him and try our best to solve his problems.

## **b) Respecting Parents**

According to the concept of some philosophers, children are not born by their choice so there is no reason for them to respect their parents. The most

destructive outcome of this philosophy is that the family set-up is destroyed, which is the best and safest place for proper upbringing of a child; and the result is that the society does not have well trained members.



## **Advantages of a family Set-up:**

a) *Proper upbringing:*

Parents know what is good and bad for their children, they try to bring up their children in the best possible way. Once the children are away from their parents, they can be moulded in any direction.

b) *Security:*

In a society, it is very difficult to safeguard the rights of children. This can be done in a family set-up very easily, thus children feel secure and confident, which is very important in building their personality.

c) *Special care:*

As the family is a small society, special care can be taken for the nourishment, health and education of a child; but if they are left on their own, such special care cannot be taken.

d) *Love and affection:*

A child needs love and affection for his proper upbringing. It can be given by personal attention and not in a general upbringing.

*"Say: Come I will recite what your Lord has forbidden to you-- (remember) that you do not associate anything with Him and show kindness to your parents..." (Quran: 6:151)*

*"And remember when We made a covenant with the children of Israel (saying), "You shall not worship but God, and (shall do) good to your parents..." (Holy Quran: 2:283)*

*"And your Lord has commanded that you shall not worship any one but Him, and be good to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you, don't say to them (even so much as) "Uff", nor criticize them and speak to them a generous word. And lower to them the wing of humility out of compassion, and say: "My Lord! Have mercy on them as they cherished me when I was little."  
(Holy Quran: 17:23-24)*

A man came to Prophet Isa (A.S.) and said, "I do everything for my mother, as she is very old and can't even move. Have I compensated her for all that she's done for me?" Prophet Isa replied, "Even one moment of her labour pains is not equal to all the pains you have taken."

Prophet Yahya (A.S.) was asked by Allah (S.W.T.) to be good to his parents, and not be proud or disobedient (Surah Mariam: 14). In the same Surah, Prophet Isa (A.S.) said:

*"I am the servant of Allah (S.W.T.). He has ordered me to be good to my mother, and not proud or unfortunate" (Quran:19:30-32)*

Luqman, the wise, also enlightened his son on Allah (S.W.T.)'s order regarding parents:

*"We have instructed man about his duties to parents: How his mother carries and nourishes him in her body, in weakness upon weakness, and how she gradually stops breast-feeding within two years after birth; therefore, be thankful to me and to your parents. To me is the final return. But if they force you to worship others together with me, if which you have no knowledge, don't obey them, but continue to serve them kindly and patiently in the work. Follow the road of one who runs to me. Then to me will be the return of you all. And I will inform you of what you were doing."*

*(Holy Quran: 31:14-15)*

A man said to Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) when he was leaving for Hijrat, "I want to accompany you but my parents are very upset." The Prophet told him to go back and serve his parents. In another incident a man came to Prophet (S.A.W.W.) and said, "I want to do something good." The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) replied, "Be good to your mother." He asked the same question again, and the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) replied, "Be good to your mother." Once more, he repeated the question and the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) replied, "Serve your mother." When he asked the question the fourth time, the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) replied, "Be good to your father."

There was a young man who was on his deathbed, but could not recite the Kalima (expression of faith). The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) asked his mother whether she was happy with him. The mother replied in the negative and said, "He neither obeyed me nor respected me." The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) requested her to excuse him; the mother agreed and then he was able to recite the Kalima. The Prophet asked the young man at the deathbed what he had observed. He said, "First there was a black ugly-shaped strong person who kept his hands on my mouth and I couldn't read

the Kalima, but suddenly he went away and I could read it.”

The duties of children towards their parents continue also after death of the parents. Children, who do not pray for their departed parents, become ‘Aaq, which is they fall into the group of disobedient, disrespectful and undutiful children - the disowned children. They would never enter Paradise even if they were respecting their parents when alive. Here, we should make it clear that in all these verses of the Holy Quran, the emphasis is on serving and respecting our parents, and not necessarily only obeying them. Of course at times respect might be in the form of obedience, but it is not the case all the time. So we should respect them and perform our religious duties which are much above obeying them.

#### **4. Keeping warm connections with relatives (SILATUR-RAHIM or SILATUL-ARHAAM)**

It is our duty to keep good connections with our relatives whether they are believers or not. Islam has emphasized it a lot. The Holy Quran says:

*“And those who break the covenant of Allah (S.W.T.) after its confirmation and cut asunder that which Allah (S.W.T.) has*

*ordered to be joined and make mischief in the land; (as for) those, upon them shall be curse and they shall have the evil (issue) of the abode." (Holy Quran: 13:25)*

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) said that three things are absolutely disliked by Allah (S.W.T.):

1. Shirk (Involving someone else in the worship and service of Allah (S.W.T.)) (Holy Quran 31:13; 4:48, 116)
2. Losing contacts with relatives - 'Qati'atur-rahim'. (Holy Quran 13:25)
3. Ordering bad actions and stopping good actions (Amr bil Munkar Wa Nahy Anil Maruf). (Holy Quran: 9:67)

The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) has also advised us not to lose contact with relatives, even if they go their separate ways. A person came to Imam Sadiq(A.S.) and said, "My relatives insult me and have broken off relations with me. Should I continue my connections?" Imam (A.S.) said: "Yes, they will go to hell for their deeds, but you should not go to hell by discontinuing your relations."

In another narration Imam (A.S.) said, "Anyone who has a bad relationship with his family will be

1000 years away from the fragrance of heaven.” The minimum level of good relationship is the greeting of Assalaamun Alaikum (peace be upon you), by letter or verbally, or making a phone call inquiring their health, etc. It is a big sin to break off relations with one’s relatives. This is commonly known a Qati’atur-rahim (see footnote in Silatur-Rahim).

### **5. Be humble with believers (Mu’mineen)**

Humbleness is not just doing ‘Salaam’ or bowing in respect. Rather, it is a condition of the soul by which you never consider yourself be better than others. You remind yourself all the time that Allah(S.W.T.) gives you all your abilities, and He can take them away any time (See Qaroun’s pride in the Holy Quran 28:76-82). The result of it is that you respect every Mu’min and your attitude is never insulting.

### **The result of humbleness:**

- a) You will always lower yourself in front of other Mu’mineen. That is, you will have and show a modest opinion of your own importance. You will always be ready to admit and learn from your mistake.

- b) Pride will never come near you, as pride is a result of considering oneself better than others. You will always be generous with the words 'Please', 'Thank you' and 'Sorry' in your dealings with others.

### **Signs of humbleness**

1. Sit wherever you get a place. When you enter a mosque or any gathering, do not wait for people to get up and give you a place. Don't feel that if you sit at the back, you will not be seen or noticed or that it would be disrespect to you. Just sit wherever you get a place.
2. Do not hesitate to help with household chores. You should not feel, "Why should I do work at home? It is against my dignity and honour?" An 'Aalim in Tehran felt that he was better than a sweeper who was cleaning the road. He repented, and for days cleaned the road and did the duty of that sweeper.
3. Say Salaam first: don't wait for someone to greet you first. Rather we should try to be the first to say Salaam, especially to children, as it is the Sunnah of Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) and Ma'sumeen (A.S.).



4. In the two prostrations (Sajdah) of every unit (Raka'at) of your daily prayer, follow the advice of Imam Ali (A.S.) and reflect on verses in the 20<sup>th</sup> chapter (TaHa) of the Holy Quran. That is to say, remind yourself in the first Sajdah that your origin is dust (particular of hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen). Your sitting position, after the first Sajdah, is your short period of life in this world. And as you return to the second Sajdah, remind yourself that you will be resurrected from the dust to stand before Allah (S.W.T.) on the Day of Repayment.

*“From it we created you, and into it we shall send you back, and from it will we raise you a second time.”*  
*(Holy Quran: 20:55)*

According to a Hadith: Anyone, who has even a small germ of pride, Allah (S.W.T.) will not allow him/her to enter paradise (Jannat) and all his/her (Ibadat) will be rejected.

The cause of pride is to think of yourself as being better than someone. The effects or results of pride are:

- a) Jealousy
- b) Backbiting

c) Blaming etc. and thus a chapter of big sins open.

One of the signs of pride is to think that you are not proud of anything. The best solution to pride is that whenever you see a Mu'min, look towards his positive points and not the negative ones and always try to speak well of every Mu'min.

## **6. To excuse others**

To excuse others is very important, because when people live together there is bound to be a conflict. The choices are:

1. Either fight (with tongue or fist)
2. Cut off connections with them
3. Excuse the person (Islamic choice)

The best formula for an Islamic society is that 'Whosoever thinks that he's not wrong, rather he's right, should go and say sorry to the other person.' The Holy Prophet (S.A.W.W.) says, "A person lifting a heavy weight is not as strong as the one who has a strong hold on himself."

The fact is that you will never find negative points in a person or thing you like and love. Therefore, we will never find negative points in the bad

words of a person we like and similarly never find positive points in the good words of a person we hate. So we should start liking all the Mu'mineen as Allah (S.W.T.) and the Ma'sumeen (A.S.) like them, thus we will not harbour enmity or ill feelings towards them or their actions.

The Holy Prophet's (S.A.W.W.) army, with martyrs and the injured was returning from a holy war. The prophet (S.A.W.W.) congratulated them on their excellent performance on the war-front but called it 'Jihad-e-Asghar' (small war), and said that they should prepare for Jihad-e-Akbar (the bigger war): here he meant a person's war against his/herself. To excuse a Mu'min is a real example of this bigger war.

*"And the punishment for a wrong action should be in proportion to the wrong done. However, he who forgives and corrects his reward is with Allah (S.W.T.). Surely Allah (S.W.T.) does not love the unjust."*  
*(Holy Quran 42:40)*

*"If you do well openly or do it in secret or pardon an evil then surely Allah (S.W.T.) is Pardoning, Powerful."* *(Holy Quran: 4:149)*

*"(They are) those who spend (benevolently) in ease, as well as, in straitness; and those who restrain (their) anger and pardon men; and Allah (S.W.T.) loves the doers of good (to others)."*

*(Holy Quran: 3:134)*

*"And they should pardon and overlook. Do you not love that Allah (S.W.T.) should forgive you? Allah (S.W.T.) is forgiving, merciful." (Holy Quran: 24:22)*

The Holy prophet (S.A.W.W.) has said that the four best things for the world and the hereafter are:

1. If someone does an injustice to you – excuse him/her.
2. If relatives disconnect relations - you connect.
3. If someone does wrong to you - you do good to him/her.
4. Give to the one who has stopped giving you.

## **7. Saving yourself from all types of sins**

An inventor or factory owner who makes something knows of the maximum benefit that can be obtained from that thing. He also knows what will increase the output and what will decrease the

output of the product; he therefore publishes a booklet giving such information – for example, a car handbook, a washing-machine manual and so on.

Similarly Allah (S.W.T.), the Creator knows what things are harmful and what hinders the achievement of our target, so he has explained all of them. Therefore all the harmful things, commonly known as sins, are forbidden. It is clear that our Creator loves us and wants all of us to achieve the goals set for living. For that, he has sent thousands of messengers, so many books and Imams. Through them, He has informed us about the things which are helpful and those which can stop us from achieving the target of life. Otherwise the Creator who could allow us to eat cows, goats and other animals might just as well as have allowed us to eat anything we like and perform anything we wish.

Therefore, we should refrain from sins not because we shall go to Heaven or from fear of Hell but rather as a mark of respect for our Creator. It would not have made any difference to Him, as he could have allowed us to fulfil our desires by other than Halal means; He could have allowed us to fulfil our desires at anytime in anyway. However,

as these things are harmful for us, and we ourselves cannot find reasons for these harmful things in our short life span, so the Merciful Creator has guided us and informed us of the ways the good and the bad.

From the above discussion, conclude that:

- a. We should refrain from forbidden things and acts, even if there is no punishment for performing them.
- b. If someone gives us a gift, we should thank him and try not to use that thing against the wishes of the person who has gifted us. Allah (S.W.T.) has blessed us with all the necessity of life as a gift, so we should not use them against His wishes.
- c. When someone is observing us, we do not perform any action that is against the norm and we try not to displease him. So, as we know that Allah (S.W.T.) is always observing us, we should refrain from any action which will displease Him.
- d. We are going to meet Ahl-ul-Bait (A.S.) at the time of death, in Barzakh and on the Day of Qiyamah. So if we have displeased them by performing sins, how shall we be able to

request them for their intercession (Shafa'at)?  
Won't we feel ashamed?

In addition to all this, if we do not develop a shield against sins, commonly known as Taqwa and Warā (a condition of soul in which refraining from sin is its second nature) there are chances that at the time of death the faith is taken away. That is why it is suggested to read Dua-e-Adila and to develop the practice of performing good deeds.

When we perform sins at a place where no one can see us, on the day of Judgement Allah (S.W.T.) will bring more than 10 witnesses against us. Imam Khomeini (R.A.) said, "Don't perform a sin even when you are alone, as the Judge Himself is a witness also."

## CONCLUSION

These are the fourteen basic points which are very important for every Mu'min and especially for those who want to attain a perfect Islamic personality and climb the higher levels of Ma'refat (Insight), named as Leqa-ul-Allah (Meeting with Allah (S.W.T.)) and be included among those who are the real servants of Allah (S.W.T.). These are they who are strive in the way of Allah (S.W.T.) and are satisfied with what Allah (S.W.T.) has given them and Allah (S.W.T.) is also happy with them.

*"O soul that is at peace! Return to your Lord, you are pleased with Him, and He is pleased with you! Enter among My servants! Enter My Garden!" (Holy Quran: 89:27-30)*







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