



INTRODUCING YOUR CHILD TO  
ISLAM, IMAAN, AND IHSAAN

ABDUL QADER ISMAIL

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For our three jewels,  
Abu-Bakr, Abu-Hurayrah, and Hannah.



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*A`udhu billahi min ash-shaitani r-rajim*  
*(I seek refuge in Allah from Shaitan, the accursed one)*

*Bismillaah i`r Rahmaan i`r Raheem*  
*(In the name of Allah, The Kind, The Caring)*

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# Foreword

This book has a variety of subjects which will benefit parents who want to teach their children about the three important aspects of our religion; Islam, Imaan and Ihsaan. Islam consists of religious practices: prayer, fasting, pilgrimage and charity. Imaan is our faith or belief system, the things we believe in. Ihsaan is concerned with moral character, spiritual ideals and social relationships. This is what really completes and perfects the true believer.

This book is very instructive, for example in the chapter on the Qur'an (the final revelation), Dr Ismail explains what the Qur'an is regarding its similarities to previous revelations given to earlier Prophets such as the Psalms, Torah, and Gospels, but also why it is considered the greatest miracle of the final Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He challenges the readers to reflect on why this is, and he invites and instructs his readers to read, understand and then live by the Qur'an. In conclusion he says *'Allah has blessed us with this most special miracle, His own speech. Its purpose is to tell us how to please Allah so He rewards us with His Paradise. Then how can we call ourselves Muslims if we don't read, understand and act upon it?'* This is guidance that the reader needs, this is the goading and inspiration that this book gives.

Each section is followed by a series of incisive questions and activities. So this is a book that is a textbook, a workbook and most importantly a book parents can share with their children and in this way build that very important parent-child relationship as well as build the vertical axis that is the relationship between ourselves and our Lord. I want to commend Dr Ismail for this wonderful work and pray that Allah gives him more strength to carry on educating our next generation.

Dr Musharraf Hussain Al-Azhari (OBE, DL)  
CEO & Chief Imam Karimia Institute





# Introduction

Hadith Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) is one of the most well-known, in which Hazret Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated:

*While we were one day sitting with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), there appeared before us a man dressed in extremely white clothes and with very black hair. No traces of journeying were visible on him, and none of us knew him. He sat down close by the Prophet (peace be upon him), rested his knee against his thighs, and said, "O Muhammad! Inform me about Islam."*

*The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Islam is that you should testify that there is no deity except Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, that you should perform Salaat, pay the Zakaat, fast during Ramadan, and perform Haj to the House, if you are able to do so."*

*The man said, "You have spoken truly." We were astonished at his questioning him (the Messenger) and telling him that he was right, but he went on to say, "Inform me about Imaan."*

*He (the Messenger of Allah) answered, "It is that you believe in Allah and His Angels and His Books and His Messengers and in the Last Day, and in Qadr (fate), both in its good and in its evil aspects." He said, "You have spoken truly."*

*Then he (the man) said, "Inform me about Ihsaan." He (the Messenger of Allah) answered, "It is that you should serve Allah as though you could see Him, for though you cannot see Him yet (know that) He sees you." (Muslim)*

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When the man left, the Prophet (peace be upon him) asked Umar if he knew who that man was. Hazret Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) replied that Allah and His Prophet know best. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, *“That was Jibra’il (may Allah be pleased with him) – he came to teach you your religion.”*

As the Prophet (peace be upon him) revealed to his companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), this Hadith contains a summary of our religion. It starts with the outward, the five pillars of Islam describing the obligatory, ritualistic acts of worship. This is followed by the inward - Imaan, what we must believe in to be able to call ourselves Muslims. The separation of these two facets of our religion is important, since it is possible someone performs the outward acts without having sincere belief in their heart. Conversely, someone may profess to having Imaan but due to weakness of their faith this does not result in performing the obligatory acts of worship incumbent upon us. What this tells us is that true faith will always manifest in our actions, but it is also true that the strength of our faith can increase by steadfastly following the commands of Allah and the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him):

*My slave does not draw closer to Me by anything more beloved to Me than that which I have made obligatory upon him (Fardh), and My slave continues to draw closer to Me by doing supererogatory deeds (Nawafil) until I love him... (Bukhari)*

Finally, the Hadith describes Ihsaan – which can be translated as ‘perfection’ or ‘excellence’. It is teaching us how to elevate our worship to the level of perfection by describing two states. The lesser of these is to worship Allah while knowing with certainty that He is watching you. If we truly believe this then it would stop us from committing sins, from disobeying Allah, even when we are alone. It would also mean that our worship of Allah is done with true sincerity, just to seek His pleasure and not because we feel we have to, or to show-off to others. As we draw closer to Allah, through our obligatory and supererogatory acts we will

reach a stage where during our worship, by His mercy, we will feel we are in the presence of Allah. When this happens the sense of calm and feelings of delight we will experience during our worship will be greater than anything else we have ever experienced. This will make us yearn to engage in Allah's remembrance (Dhikr'Allah) whenever we can, and for as long as possible. This is the higher form of Ihsan, and what the Hadith means by saying 'seeing Allah'.

The perfect example of this was the Prophet (peace be upon him), who would climb the mountain of Hira to meditate in seclusion within the cave, who would fast without break for days at a time, who would stand for prayer at night for so long his feet would swell, who told us that the coolness of his eyes was the Salaat, and who went on the miraculous night journey (Isra w'al-Miraj) above the seven Heavens, into the presence of Allah. This may be impossible for us, but we are told that the Salaat is the Miraj (ascension) of the Mo'min (true believer), that we are closest to Allah during Sajda (prostration), and that when we recite Surah Fatihah this is actually a conversation between a slave and his Lord; Allah is listening to and replying to every verse.

The purpose of this book is to help parents teach their children about Islam. This is done through short chapters on the fundamentals of our faith. Each chapter is written in simple, easy to understand English, without extensive use of quotations from the Qur'an and Hadith, instead paraphrasing to help with understanding for even very young children. Although concise, similar to the Hadith Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) each topic aims to help parents introduce their child to not only outward aspects of our religion but also the inward. This is through emphasis on understanding the Divine wisdom behind commandments and how fulfilling these will help us draw closer to Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him), in this life and the next. Questions and activities are included for each chapter, to increase engagement with the material and reflection in the reader as they go about their daily lives.

# Allah – The One, True God

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was asked by the Arabs who weren't Muslims to describe the God he was asking them to worship. In reply, Allah revealed Surah Ikhlas:

*Say: He is Allah, the Unique!*

*Allah the Eternal.*

*He is not a father nor a son.*

*None is equal to Him (Qur'an 112)*

This is one of the shortest Surahs of the Qur'an, but it gives us a list of things that all need to be true for something to be our God. When we think about this, we will see that it is only Allah for who everything in this list is true, and so it is only Him that we worship. This is such a special Surah of the Qur'an that if we read it three times we get as much blessings as if we read the whole Qur'an.

Allah was not created but He created everything else. Allah always existed even when nothing else existed, and He will always exist. When Allah wants to create something, for it to exist, He only has to command 'Be'. Everything needs Allah but Allah doesn't need anything. All of His creation worships Allah, even things we don't think are alive like rocks, water, wind and fire, but we cannot hear them or cannot understand them. Allah is the All Powerful, The Irresistible; whatever He wants happens and nothing happens without His allowing it to happen. Allah is the All Knowing; He knows everything that has happened, is happening, will happen, and could happen. He even knows our thoughts and feelings which we keep hidden. Allah is not within time; time is one of His creations and doesn't affect Him, so for Allah there is no past, present and future. Allah is unlike anything in His creation, He is unique.

Allah is not male or female, He has no parents and He has no children. Allah does not need to eat or drink, sleep or rest.

We do not know what Allah looks like. In the Qur'an and Hadith Allah talks about Himself having a face, hands, feet, ascending and descending, but we cannot say from this that He has a body or body parts in the way His creation does, or that He moves from one place to another. We just accept His descriptions of Himself without trying to explain them.

Allah has 99 names but the one name that contains all other names is 'Allah'. The rest of them describe Him, they tell us about what He is like e.g. The Just, The Powerful, The Wise, The Maker, The Protector. In the Bismillah, Allah tells us His names of Rahman and Raheem, The Kind, The Caring. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that Allah loves us more than a mother loves her baby. Even if we have done as many bad deeds as to reach from the earth to the sky or as many as the waves on the oceans, if we ask forgiveness from Allah (whose names also include The Forgiver, The Pardoner), He will forgive all our sins.

Allah also has frightening names like The Humiliator, The Avenger, The Withholder. He will be The King and Judge on the Day of Judgment and if He is not happy with us, we may have to go to Hell. But Allah has told us that written above His Throne is that His mercy overcomes His anger. This tells us that Allah loves to forgive his creation more than getting angry with and punishing them, and in fact He is looking for any excuse to do so. This is why when we do good deeds the blessings for them are multiplied 10-700 times or even more, but bad deeds are only counted once. It is also why there are some special acts and times of the year when Allah forgives our sins, such as when we do Haj, or fast on the Day of Arafat, or fast during Ramadan, or pray during Layla t'al-Qadr or pray Salaat at-Tasbi.

Some people think that the things Allah has commanded us to do, to pray Salaat, to give charity, to fast, to go on Haj and Umrah, to read Qur'an, to respect people and have good manners, these are to make our life difficult. What we should realise is that if the whole of creation was

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to do what Allah has asked us to do and worship Him as much the Prophets it would not increase Allah in any way. In the same way if all of the creation was to disobey Allah, and to be as ungrateful for everything Allah has given us as the Shaitan, we would not decrease Allah in any way. What this tells us is that Allah has given us Islam as our religion and way of life only for our benefit, to allow us to live a peaceful life, to have a relationship with Him, to make Him happy and be rewarded with His Paradise.

Allah says that He was a hidden treasure and He wanted to be known so He created everything. He also tells us that He created us to worship Him and that if we try to get closer to Him, He will come even closer to us. What this tells us is that Allah wants to have a relationship with His creation, He wants us to remember Him, to know Him and to get closer to Him. When we pray Salaat we are talking to Allah, He is listening to us and answering us. Within the Salaat, Allah tells us that he is closest to us when we put our forehead on the ground in Sajda, the prostration. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that the best way to worship is to pray as if you are seeing Allah, and if you cannot do that to be certain that Allah is seeing you.

Some people who don't believe in Allah wonder why, if Allah is All Powerful and The Most Kind, why do bad things happen in the world? The answer to this is that this world is not meant to be Paradise, that is the place where nothing bad will ever happen. This world is a test for us, to see if we deserve to go to Paradise. Some people Allah tests by making their life difficult, some people Allah tests by making their life easy. But however long this life is, and however difficult it may be, it is nothing compared to the afterlife, in which we will live forever, so think about how kind Allah is that if we spend a small part of our short lives in this world doing what He has told us to, being patient in whatever Allah tests us with, He will reward us with His Paradise forever? And even if we have been bad our whole lives, until we die Allah is waiting to forgive us, all we have to do is ask.

In conclusion we will never be able to fully understand or even imagine what Allah is. But if we follow His commands, if we try to please Him in everything we do, if we try to remember Him at all times, then we will get closer to Him, become one of His friends (Awliyah-Allah), and He will allow us to begin to know Him.

### Questions

- Who is Allah?
- What do His different names tell us about Him?
- Why should we worship Him?
- How can we make Allah happy with us?
- How can we get to know Him?

### Activities

- Write a list of the ways Allah is different from His creation
- Try to learn a different name of Allah each day
- Write down what you would say to Allah if He was in front of you



# The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was 40 years old when Allah started teaching Him the Qur'an and told him to tell others that he was a Prophet of Allah. But even before that everyone knew him as the most truthful and trustworthy person, they knew that he had never told a lie. Other people would even leave their things with him, since they knew he would never cheat or steal. He had the best of manners, he was always polite and never argued, quarrelled or got into fights. He would always do what he could to help other people, especially the orphans and the poor, and even animals. He even taught us not to harm plants and trees. He always had a smile on his face. He enjoyed spending time with his wives, talking to them, joking and playing with them, he would also help them with the housework. He loved children, he would play with them and would take time to talk with them about what was going on in their lives. He would ask his friends and followers for their advice instead of making decisions on his own.

Even though the religion that was common in Arabia at the time was of worshipping idols, the Prophet (peace be upon him) never did this, he knew that it was wrong to worship pieces of stone that could not benefit or harm him in any way. He would spend hours and even days sitting in a cave on the mountain of Hira, meditating and remembering Allah. He did not love worldly things, he did not want to be rich or have a big house, or lots of horses or camels; whenever he had any gold or money he gave it away to the poor.

When Allah started to teach him the Qur'an and he told others of his Prophethood, the non-Muslim Arabs became his enemies and would call him a liar, a poet, a magician, a madman. But he never replied by calling them names or swearing at them, he would instead try to teach

them about Islam, about Allah. This was because he was worried about them, about what would happen to them if they continued doing bad things, that Allah would punish them and send them to Hell. The Prophet loved everyone and wanted everyone to make Allah happy and go to Paradise. The Quraysh would not just say bad things to him, they would also hurt him. While praying at the Kaaba they put the intestines of a camel over him and tried to strangle him. They would throw their rubbish on him and put thorns in his path. In Taif they stoned him until his shoes were filled with blood. In the battle of Uhud they injured his face and tooth. They tortured and even killed his followers and the rest had to leave their families, homes and things behind in Makkah to escape to Madinah. But even when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had an army of Muslims and so could take revenge and kill the people who had hurt him and his followers so much, instead he forgave them and prayed for them. Seeing how kind he was even his enemies would want to become his friends and many converted to Islam just because of this.

In this there is a lesson for us, if we copy the character of our Prophet (peace be upon him) and treat people with kindness and good manners they will want to get to know us, to be our friend. When they learn our good behaviour is because we are copying the character of the Prophet (peace be upon him), that this is what Islam teaches us, they will not believe any bad things they hear about Muslims or the Prophet (peace be upon him). If Allah blesses them, they may even become Muslim themselves.

### Questions

- What was the Prophet's character like (peace be upon him)?
- What did other people think of him?
- What was he like with the people who treated him badly?
- What did he like to spend his time doing?

### Activities

- Try and spend a whole day without arguing with anyone – what was it like to do this?
- Follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and help with the housework
- When you next see a stray animal, be kind to it, or if you see someone being cruel to it, tell them to stop

# What Did The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) Look Like?

The companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them all) loved him so much they would like nothing more than to sit with him and look at his face, but they had so much respect for him that they couldn't do this and would lower their eyes. This is why many of his companions could not describe what his face looked like.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was of medium height, neither very tall nor short. He had wide shoulders and his hands and feet were large. People who do work with their hands all their life (like the Prophet) usually have rough hands but his were softer than velvet. When he walked he leaned slightly forward as if he was walking downhill, so he walked quickly with long steps but his footsteps were soft, he didn't stomp. His chest was wide, his stomach was flat. He did not have a lot of hair all over his body and between his shoulders was the 'Seal of the Prophethood'. This was a piece of raised skin, the size of a pigeon's egg, with hairs on it. It was the same colour as his skin or slightly red. A description of this had been given to earlier Prophets (peace be upon them all) to identify the last Prophet (peace be upon him).

His skin colour was not very pale nor dark, it was white with a slight redness to it. His hair was thick, slightly wavy and reached between his earlobes and shoulders. His face was oval shaped, his forehead was large and he had a wide mouth. His eyes were large and dark, with long eye-lashes. He would usually look downwards and when he looked at people he didn't stare at them. His eyebrows were not joined together and he had a vein on his forehead. When he was angry this vein would stand out. His nose was thin, he had high cheekbones and full cheeks, and his front teeth had slight space between them and were clean and white. His beard was full and his neck wasn't thick.

He was so beautiful his companions would compare his face to the full Moon or the shining Sun. For some non-Muslims it would just be enough to see him to know this was not someone who could lie, that this must be the Prophet of Allah. There are even some reports that he didn't have a shadow. In fact it is said that the full beauty of the Prophet was hidden by Allah, because if it had been shown to this world no-one would have been able to look at him. The poet of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Hassan ibn Thabit (may Allah be please with him) wrote this about him:

*And more excellent than you, my eye has never seen  
And more beautiful than you, no woman ever gave birth to;  
You were created free from any flaw whatsoever,  
As though you were created just the way you wanted!*

*(Diwan Hassan ibn Thabit)*

When he talked to someone he would turn to face them completely, to give them his full attention. He didn't speak too much but he also wasn't stingy with his words (which can be rude). When he was interacting with people he was happy and smiling. If you were to look at him when he was alone he looked very serious, almost even sad because he would be thinking about Allah.

Things which came from the body of the Prophet (peace be upon him), or even came into contact with him became special. The sweat of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was so sweet smelling that the companions used to collect it to use as perfume. When he went for Umrah or Haj he would shave off his hair, which the companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) would treasure. Khalid Ibn Walid (may Allah be pleased with him) even put them in his hat and would never fight a battle without it on his head. If a companion was unwell they would come to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and collect the water that fell off his body as he was doing Wudhu, they would drink this and become well. If a companion was hurt the Prophet (peace be upon him) would put his spit

## What Did The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) Look Like?

on the part of their body that was injured and by the power of Allah they would be healed.

In conclusion, we are very lucky that even though we are not alive at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to see him with our own eyes, his companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) described exactly what he looked like. Maybe if we read about what he looked like and really want to meet him, we might be so blessed as to see him in our dreams. The Prophet himself said that whoever sees him in a dream, it is as if they have seen him in real life because the Shaitan cannot make himself look like the Prophet (peace be upon him).

### Questions

- What did the Prophet's face look like?
- What did the Prophet's body look like?
- How did the Prophet walk, where did he keep his eyes?
- How did the Prophet talk to people?

### Activities

- Try and attend a Mosque event in which they show a hair of the Prophet (peace be upon him) – think about how this is actually a part of the Messenger of Allah
- Imagine you had a hair, or some clothes that belonged to the Prophet (peace be upon him), think about what would you do with it
- Think about how you can copy the appearance of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

# What Should we Do When Someone Insults The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him)?

In the Qur'an Allah tells us the stories of 25 Prophets, but we know there were many thousands sent from the time of Hazret Adam to our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them all). In the Qur'an Allah tells us how their people didn't believe them, called them names, tried to hurt and even killed many of them and their followers.

In the Qur'an and from the life story of the Prophet we know how difficult his life became after Allah told him to tell the people of Makkah that he was a Prophet. They called him a liar, a poet, of copying stories from the Jews and the Christians, of being mad, and of being a magician. When he was praying at the Kaaba he had the intestines of a camel thrown on top of him and they tried to kill him by strangling him. He had rubbish thrown in his way every day and when he went to Taif to invite the people to Islam they threw stones at him until his shoes were filled with blood. The non-Muslims made the lives of the Muslims in Makkah so terrible they escaped by going to Madinah, and even then the non-Muslims fought wars against the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers. So when we hear people insult the Prophet we need to remember that this isn't something new, he faced much worse during his own lifetime.

Allah told his Prophet (peace be upon him) to ignore these people, to treat them with patience and kindness, to continue telling them to do good and stop doing bad things. Even after conquering Makkah, and when the Angel of the mountains asked him if he wanted to crush Taif, the Prophet forgave instead of taking revenge. So when we hear someone insulting the Prophet (peace be upon him) we should know they are only saying this because they are disrespectful people, who either don't know

What Should We Do When Someone Insults The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him)?

of the Prophet's true character and teachings, or they just want to hurt the feelings of Muslims. When this happens we shouldn't do what these people want, which is to get angry and say bad things in reply, or become violent. This is not what the Prophet did and not what he wanted his followers to do.

Allah says in the Qur'an that He increased the remembrance of the Prophet, but what does He mean by this? Allah says that He was a hidden treasure and wanted to be known. The first thing He created for this purpose was the 'Ruh' (soul or spirit) of the Prophet (peace be upon him). In the revelation of the earlier Prophets, the Prophet Muhammad is mentioned and Allah made an agreement with all of them to believe in the final Prophet. For Muslims, Allah has joined the name of the Prophet to His own in the Shahada (the declaration of faith) and written this on His Throne. As the earth spins, in every minute of the day somewhere in the world the call to prayer (Adhan) is being read in which we announce that Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah. Within the Salaat, Muslims around the world are constantly reciting Salaam and Dhurood on the Prophet (peace be upon him). Indeed, even Allah and His Angels are sending peace and blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him). In the Qur'an Allah tells us that obeying the Prophet is the same as obeying Him. In the Qur'an Allah talks to the Prophet in a very loving way; out of respect He does not call the Prophet by his name as He did with the other Prophets, He uses nicknames and titles instead. On the miraculous night journey, the Isra w'al-Miraj, Allah brought the Prophet (peace be upon him) above the heavens to meet with Him, a journey no-one else has ever been or will ever go on. On the day of Judgment, out of all the Prophets, our Prophet alone will be allowed to ask Allah to forgive other people, everyone else will just be asking Allah to forgive them. Basically, Allah has taken every opportunity to tell us how much He loves His final Prophet, and joined the name of His beloved Prophet to His own, so whenever Allah is mentioned the Prophet is mentioned with Him.

So when Allah has shown such love and respect for his Prophet from the beginning until the end of time, people can say whatever they



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want it is not going to affect the Prophet in anyway. All they are doing is making Allah angry with them. So maybe most of all we should feel sorry for these people, and pray to Allah to guide them to Islam.

### Questions

- Why did some people treat the Prophet (peace be upon him) badly?
- How did the Prophet (peace be upon him) behave, and what did he say to these people?
- What things tell us how much Allah loves His Prophet (peace be upon him)?

### Activities

- The next time someone says or does something bad to you, think about what the Prophet would have done, and try to follow his example
- Think about the last time someone said or did something bad to you – how did it feel? Would you ever do something like that to someone else?
- Make a list of things that tell us how much Allah loves His Prophet (peace be upon him)

# Shahada – The Declaration Of Faith

The second Kalima (the first pillar of Islam), is called the Shahada:

*Ashhadu Alla Ilaha Illa Allah - Wa Ashhadu Anna Muhammadan  
Abduhoo wa Rasulu Allah*

*I believe that there is no God but Allah (or no God worthy of  
worship except Allah), and I believe that Muhammad is his slave  
and messenger*

When someone changes their religion to Islam all they have to do is say the Shahada really believing in their heart that it is the truth. By doing this all the bad things they've done in their life up to now will be forgiven. The Shahada is written on the Arsh, the throne of Allah. When Shaitan had tricked Hazret Adam and Ama Hawa (Eve) (peace be upon them both) to eat from the tree in Paradise that Allah had told them to stay away from, they asked Allah to forgive them by the name of our Prophet. They told Allah they had seen this name joined with His on the Arsh and knew that it must be the name of someone very special.

The first part of the Shahada is belief in Tawhid; a belief that Allah is the only God, there is nothing else like Him, and He is the only One who should be worshipped. In some other religions there are many Gods, such as in some types of Hinduism, and in ancient times the Vikings, Greeks, Romans and Egyptians. In Christianity they believe in the Trinity, that Hazret Isa is the Son of God, and Hazret Mariam is the Mother of God, and so they are all worshipped. Religions in the past have also worshipped the Sun, the Moon, stars, and fire. Even in religions in which they believe in a single God they may also worship idols, like the Arabs did at the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). When we say the first part of the Shahada we are telling everyone we believe that there is no God we should worship except Allah because all other Gods are not

real, they do not exist. There is only one God and that is Allah, and so He is the only One we worship.

However, it is possible for us to not believe in other Gods, yet still do Shirk (which is to believe in other Gods beside Allah, or to give Allah partners in worship). If anything in our lives is more important than our faith, than our belief in Allah and doing what He has told us to do, we are doing Shirk. For example, if we want to be rich so much that we are ready to cheat and steal when we know Allah has told us not to, we are making money our God. To give another example, if we believe our work is so important we don't have time to pray Salaat, then we have made our work our God. Or if want to dress in a shameful way even though we know Islam tells us this is wrong but because we want to impress our friends, then our friends are our God. So if we really believe in the first part of the Shahada, that Allah is the only One we should worship, then that should change how we live our lives. Everything we do should be because we want to please Allah and not make Him angry.

The second part of the Shahada is believing in our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as the slave and messenger of Allah. The Christians believed their Prophet to be the Son of God, some of the ancient Jewish people believed the same about their Prophet, Hazret Ozair (peace be upon him). What the second part of the Shahada is telling us is that even though the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the best of all creation and the most beloved to Allah, he is a Messenger and slave of Allah, and we should not make the same mistake as other religions.

But what this also tells us is that we cannot separate the Prophet (peace be upon him) from Allah and still call ourselves Muslims. Allah didn't send us our religion directly, it was through the Prophet (peace be upon him) so he could teach us, and we could follow his example to learn how to make Allah happy. Allah has joined the name of the Prophet to His own and in the Qur'an He tells us that doing what the Prophet tells us to do is the same as doing what Allah has told us to do. He told us the Prophet has the best character (so we should try to be like him), and that

if we are disrespectful and even talk too loudly in front of him Allah might erase all of our good deeds. Allah also told us that if we have done bad things we should go to the Prophet and ask him to ask Allah to forgive us. So the second part of the Shahada is making sure we understand that being a Muslim means believing in, respecting and having love for the Prophet (peace be upon him) more than anything else in our lives, even ourselves.

Without believing in the Shahada someone cannot be a Muslim, and someone who is not Muslim cannot enter Paradise. Non-Muslims sometimes ask that if Allah is so kind why should He mind if people don't believe in Him, or believe in Him but are not Muslims, as long as they do good things? Why won't they be able to go to Paradise? Allah is our Creator, our Lord, our Master, our Owner and we are His slaves. He doesn't owe us anything, we cannot help Him in any way, we are His property and He can do with us whatever He wants. But because He is so kind He has sent Prophets with instructions so we know how to worship Him, what we need to do to make Him happy with us, and what we should not do which would make Him angry. If we choose to ignore all of this, then we can only blame ourselves if He ignores whatever we do and punishes us. But people who are non-Muslims (including those who follow other religions, those who aren't religious, and atheists - who don't believe in God) are not our enemies, we should not hate them. We might disagree with their beliefs, and we don't like the bad things that people do, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught us that we should love all of Allah's creation. We should love them so much that we want to tell them about the most precious thing we have, our faith, Islam.

In conclusion, for most of us who are born into a Muslim family saying the Shahada to become a Muslim is not something we will experience. However we should still read the Shahada every day, understanding what we are saying. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that whoever says the Shahada after Wudhu (ablution) will have all 8 doors of Paradise opened for them and they will be able to enter through whichever they choose.

### Questions

- What does the Shahada mean?
- What is Shirk?
- What is the role of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in our faith?

### Activities

- Before you pray Salaat do Wudhu and remember to say the Shahada after it
- Write down the most important things in your life and think about if they are more important to you than Allah

# Qur'an – The Final Revelation

The Qur'an is the Islamic holy book. Islam mean submission to the will of Allah (doing what Allah wants) and it is the true religion of all Prophets, from Hazret Adam to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them all). The purpose of Prophets was to teach people and show them how to follow the religion Allah sent them with. Many of them were sent with Revelation on tablets of stone, books or scrolls, such as the Gospel (Injeel) of Jesus, the Torah (Taurat) of Moses, the Psalms (Zabur) of David (peace be upon them all), and many more which have been lost. The final Prophet was given the final Revelation, the Qur'an, over 23 years. The Torah, Gospel and Psalms are still around today as the holy books of the Jews and Christians but we believe they have been changed. However, Allah has told us that He will stop the Qur'an from being changed in the same way.

The Qur'an is the greatest miracle Allah gave to the Prophet (peace be upon him). To understand why this is we must understand what the Qur'an is. It is the words of Allah, it is His speech, which He taught to the Prophet (peace be upon him). As Allah's speech, the Qur'an cannot be separated from what Allah is (in the same way as his other names which describe what He is like, such as His kindness or power). As such, the Qur'an is infinite and uncreated. Consider how amazing this is, that Allah has given us something which can be considered to be a part of Him. When we understand this, then it is easy to see why the Qur'an is the greatest form of Dhikr' Allah (remembrance of Allah) that we have.

When Allah has given us the miracle of the Qur'an what should we do with it? The Qur'an should be the most important thing in our lives. We should read it every day, even if we only read a little bit. For every letter of Arabic we read we get ten blessings. But most of us don't understand Arabic so we should also read a translation to understand

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what we are reading, what message the Qur'an is giving us. Most important of all we should also act upon what we read.

When the Prophet (peace be upon him) would read the Qur'an, he would read it as if Allah was speaking to him and he was replying to Allah. The Awliyah-Allah follow this example, they read the Qur'an as if they are having a conversation with Allah. So if they read a verse in which it talked about the glory of Allah, they would glorify Allah. If they read a verse in which it talked about making Dua to Allah, they would make a Dua. If they read a verse in which it talked about asking Allah for forgiveness, they would ask Allah for forgiveness. If they read a verse in which it described good people they would check to see which qualities they already have and thank Allah for these, and which qualities they still need and try to get these. If they read a verse in which it described the disbelievers or the hypocrites, they would check to see if they have any of these qualities, and if they do then try and get rid of them.

So in conclusion, Allah has blessed us with this most special miracle, His own speech. Its purpose is to tell us how to please Allah so He rewards us with His Paradise. Then how can we call ourselves Muslims if we don't read, understand and act upon it?

### Questions

- Which Revelations do you know the names of, and which Prophets were they sent to?
- Why is the Qur'an the greatest miracle given to the Prophet (peace be upon him)?
- What relationship should we have with the Qur'an?

### Activities

- Try to listen to a story from the Qur'an each day and think about what lesson you can learn from it

# How Should We Spend Our Time?

In the Qur'an, in Surah Asr, Allah takes an oath, or promise by the passing of time:

*By the age,*

*Humans are at a loss,*

*Except the believers who were righteous, and encouraged each other to be truthful and patient. (Qur'an 103)*

The word used, 'Asr' means time which will come to an end, which will not last forever. One of the things this is talking about is our life in this world, no matter how long we live for in the end we will all die. Every day we are getting closer to our death but no-one knows exactly when they will die. Once time has passed there is no way to get it back, it doesn't matter how rich or powerful you are, it is gone forever. This means our time is the most valuable thing we have, the thing we should be most careful about how we use. This is also because what we do with the time we have during our life in this world will be what decides what happens to us in the afterlife, which will last forever.

After Allah takes an oath by time which is running out, He tells us that each and every one of us is in loss, which means we are in danger, we are losing, we are going to fail. We are in danger of losing Allah's gift to us, an everlasting life in Paradise, full of peace and happiness. Then Allah tells us what we need to do so we do not lose this gift He wants to give us; because if we do lose it then in the afterlife we will spend forever in Hell.

Allah tells us four things we need to do to be successful. The first of these is to have faith, to be a Muslim. Without believing in Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him) all our good deeds will go to waste, they will not be worth anything on the Day of Judgment.



The second thing we need to do is to do good deeds. If we really believe Allah is our Lord and Master, that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the final messenger and that the Qur'an is the word of Allah, then everything we do should be done to make Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him) happy with us. We cannot say we are Muslims and believe in Allah and His Prophet if we don't do what they have told us to, instead doing what we want to do.

The third thing is to also tell others to do good and not do bad things. If we believe we are following the right religion, the only religion that will make Allah happy and lead us to Paradise, then we should also want everyone else to join us. This means we should teach other people about Islam through our actions and words. We should not worry whether they become Muslim or not, that is up to Allah, our job is only to tell them and show them what Islam is, in the same way the Prophets did.

The fourth thing is to have patience and tell others to have patience. When we tell others about Islam some people won't like it, they might become our enemies and say bad things to us or even try to hurt us. This is what happened to the Prophets (peace be upon them all) and the Awliyah-Allah (may Allah be pleased with them all). If we are not patient we will give up and not be able to carry on doing this important work.

So in conclusion, Surah Asr warns us that our time is running out, and unless we want to be a loser who will have to spend forever in Hell, we need to do four things: to believe in Islam, to do good things, to tell others about Islam and to have patience. Scholars of the Qur'an said this Surah is a summary of the whole Qur'an and if everyone was to do the four things this Surah tells us to do, they would all go to Paradise. Whenever the companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them all) met, they would read Surah Asr to each other.

### Questions

- Why is our time valuable?
- What will happen to us if we waste our time?
- What are the four things Allah tells us we need to do to save ourselves?

### Activities

- Write down the things you did today, did you use your time well?
- The next time you see someone doing something bad, tell them to stop - how did it feel to do this – was it easy? What did they say to you?

# Salaat – The Five Daily Prayers

Allah taught all of the Prophets, from Hazret Adam to Hazret Isa (may Allah be pleased with them all) ways to worship Him which included prostration (putting your forehead on the ground). Our Prophet (peace be upon him) was given the Salaat when he went on the Isra w'al-Miraj. This was one of the greatest miracles Allah gave the Prophet (peace be upon him), when He took the Prophet on a journey from Makkah to Jerusalem and from there to above the seven Heavens and into His presence. Even during this meeting with Allah, which Allah did with no-one else, the Prophet (peace be upon him) was remembering us, his followers, and asking Allah to forgive us. During this meeting Allah gave him a gift for us, 50 daily prayers. On the way back from this meeting the Prophet met with Hazret Musa (peace be upon them both) who told him to ask Allah to make it less, to make it easier for us. The Prophet (peace be upon him) went back and Allah made it five less. But Hazret Musa told him to ask for less still and so the Prophet (peace be upon them both) kept going back and Allah kept making it five less until only five daily prayers were left. But Allah told us that these five prayers contain the blessings, they are as valuable as the original 50 prayers.

The five daily prayers are Fardh, which means Allah has commanded us to perform them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that the first thing we will be asked about on the Day of Judgment will be our Salaat. If we have been careful in doing our five daily prayers the Day of Judgment will be easy for us. But if we haven't, if we aren't careful about praying all of them or we read them in a rush or without concentrating, then the Day of Judgment will be very scary for us. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also told us that the difference between a Muslim and non-Muslim is the Salaat, and anyone who misses even a single prayer on purpose becomes a non-Muslim. This could be because

we are lazy, or just because we don't think of Salaat as important and are busy doing something else . This tells us how careful we should be about performing our five daily prayers.

What rewards has Allah put in the Salaat for us? In the Qur'an Allah tells us that Salaat protects us from doing bad things. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that if we read the five daily prayers it is like we are taking a bath in a river five times a day. In the same way the river would wash all the dirt off our bodies, the Salaat washes away our sins.

In every Rakaat (unit) of the Salaat we pray Surah Fatihah, the 7 verses in the first Surah of the Qur'an. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us how when we read the Fatihah, Allah listens to and replies to every verse. This tells us that when we pray Salaat we are having a conversation with Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also told us the nearest we can get to Allah is when we put our forehead on the ground during Sajda, so when we want to make an important Dua we should do Sajda. This is telling us to talk to Allah because He is listening and will answer our prayers. In fact, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us the Salaat is the Miraj of the Muslim. This means that if we pray with concentration, if we read the Qur'anic verses believing that Allah is listening to us and replying to us, if we perform the movements knowing that Allah is watching us, then it is as if we are in front of Allah, on our own Miraj.

In conclusion, if we believe in what the Prophet (peace be upon him) has told us, is there any experience we can have that is more amazing than standing in front of and having a conversation with Allah? How lucky are we that we can do this five times every day? So if we really believe this to be true, how can we ever miss the Salaat on purpose, or pray it in a rush without concentrating?

### Questions

- When and where was the Salaat revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him)?
- Is it OK to miss the Salaat?
- What blessings do we get for praying the Salaat?

### Activities

- Try to pray all five Salaat in one day, including Fajr and Isha
- When you next pray Salaat try to think of nothing other than the Salaat, what you are rading, and that you are standing in front of Allah talking to Him and He is listening to you – how did it feel to pray Salaat in this way compared to how you normally pray?

# Surah Fatihah – The Seven Often Repeated Verses

This is the first Surah of the Qur'an, and is 7 verses long. This is one of the reasons it is called 'the opener' – because the Qur'an begins with it. Its translation is:

*All praises are for Allah, the Lord of the worlds.  
The Kind, The Caring,  
the Master of Judgment Day.  
We worship You alone and from You alone we seek help.  
Guide us on the straight path,  
The path of those You favoured,  
Not those who are condemned nor the misguided ones. (Qur'an 1)*

So in fact this surah is a Dua, a prayer that Allah has taught us. It contains praising and thanking Allah, Tawhid (our belief that there is no God except Allah, and He is the only One we should worship), and asking Allah to help us so we do the right things and make Him happy. These are the things the whole Qur'an teaches us about, and so this is the reason Surah Fatihah is also called 'the mother of the Qur'an' because it is like a summary of the entire Qur'an.

It is such a special Dua that Allah has told us to read it in every Rakaat (unit) of the five daily prayers. This is the reason one of its names is the 'seven often repeated verses'. When we read it in the Salaat the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that Allah listens to us and answers every verse. When we praise Him in the first half of the Surah, Allah becomes happy with us, and when we ask Him for things in the second half, He gives them to us.

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The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that a Surah as special as this was not given to the Jews or the Christians before us and there is no other Surah like it in the Qur'an. Apart from reading it in the Salaat there are other times when we should read it. Another name of the Surah is 'the cure' because it can be prayed on someone who is unwell to ask Allah to make them better.

So in conclusion we all know Surah Fatihah because otherwise we cannot pray the Salaat, but we should also learn its meaning so we can have a conversation with Allah.

### Questions

- What names has Surah Fatihah been given?
- What names of Allah have been included in this Surah?
- How are we praising Allah when we read Surah Fatihah?
- What are we asking Allah for when we read Surah Fatihah?

### Activities

- Learn the translation of one verse of Surah Fatihah each day until you know the meaning of the whole Surah
- When you next see someone who is unwell or you are unwell yourself, read Surah Fatihah and ask Allah to make them or you better

# Ayat al-Kursi - The Throne Verse

This is a very special verse which is found in Surah Baqarah, the longest Surah of the Qur'an. It is called the Throne Verse because it mentions the Kursi, but this is actually the footstool of Allah. Its translation is:

*Allah, there is no god but Him! He is The Living, The Everlasting.  
Neither tiredness nor sleep overwhelm Him.  
All that is in the Heavens and on Earth belongs to Him.  
Who dares intercede without His permission?  
He knows what lies in front of them and what lies behind,  
but they can only grasp what He wishes of His knowledge.  
His Kursi extends over the Heavens and the Earth and He never  
tires of protecting them both.  
He is the Exalted, The Majestic. (Qur'an 2:255)*

Like Surah Ikhlas, this is a special verse of the Qur'an in which Allah has described Himself to us. In it Allah uses some of his most special names, including 'Al-Hayy' and 'Al-Qayyum'. These names describe Allah, as The Ever-Living, The Self-Sustaining, the only living thing that does not die, who everything else needs but needs nothing else Himself.

Allah mentions his 'Kursi' and how it includes the Heavens and the Earth. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that the first Heaven contains the mountains and the oceans, the Earth and the sky, our entire solar system and the Milky Way galaxy within which it sits; in fact it contains the entire universe and all its billions of galaxies and huge empty spaces. But all of this, the entire first Heaven, is like a ring in a desert when compared to the second Heaven. The second Heaven is like a ring in the desert when compared to the third Heaven, and so on and so forth, until you reach the seventh and final Heaven. This itself is like a ring in



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the desert compared to the Kursi (the Footstool), which is like a ring in the desert when compared to the Arsh (the Throne).

All of this goes to show just how huge the creation of Allah is, and even though scientists with their telescopes have learned so much about Allah's creation, how little we still know. But as Allah says in this Ayat, He is the only One who knows everything that has happened and will happen, the past and the future; anything that anyone else knows is only what Allah has chosen to let them know. Allah also explains how He does not get tired or need to sleep, even though He is always guarding and protecting all of His creation, all of which belong to just Him, and no-one else.

Because of all of this, it is not a surprise that the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us this is the greatest verse in the Qur'an. He also told us it contains Allah's greatest name. We can read this verse for protection, if we read it before going to sleep the Shaitan will not be able to come close to us all night, and if we read it at home, Shaitan will leave our house. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also told us that if we read Ayat-ul Kursi after every Salaat, we will be sure to go to Paradise.

In conclusion, since this short Ayat is so special we should all try to learn it by heart, to learn its meaning and try and read it after every Salaat and before we go to sleep every day.

### Questions

- What special names of Allah are included in this Ayat?
- When should we read this Ayat, and what are the benefits?
- What does this Ayat tell us about Allah's creation?

## Activities

- Try and draw a picture of the seven Heavens
- Next time you pray Salaat read Ayat al-Kursi after it while imagining what Paradise will be like
- Before you go to sleep tonight read Ayat al-Kursi while imagining you are protected by a suit of armour

# Sending Peace And Blessings Upon The Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him)

Allah tells us in the Qur'an that He and His Angels send peace and blessings on the Messenger and so should the Muslims. We send peace on the Prophet by saying Salaam to him, and we ask Allah to send blessings on him by reading Dhurood. Allah has also included sending peace and blessings on His Prophet (peace be upon him) within the Salaat, when we sit after doing Sajda and read Attahiyat and Dhurood-e-Ibrahimi. This tells us that even though we are sending peace and blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him), this is counted as worshipping Allah, because we are doing what Allah has told us to in the Qur'an and in the Salaat and because the one we are sending peace and blessings on is the Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him). This also tells us how special this worship is. Allah commands us to pray Salaat but He does not read Salaat. Allah commands us to pay Zakaat but He does not pay Zakaat. Allah commands us to perform Haj but He does not perform Haj. Sending peace and blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the only thing which Allah commands Muslims to do which He also takes part in.

How will Allah reward us if we send peace and blessings upon His Prophet? The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that if his name is said in front of us and we send blessings on him Allah will send ten blessings on us, forgive ten of our sins, and bring us closer to Him by ten levels. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also told us that when we make Dua to Allah it does not reach Allah until we send blessings on him. This tells us that the Duas of someone who does not send blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him) are not accepted. When we send peace on the Prophet (peace be upon him) his soul is returned to his body and he replies to our Salaam. On the Day of Judgment the Prophet (peace be

upon him) told us the person closest to him will be the person who sent the most blessings on him.

So how much time should we spend sending peace and blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him)? One of his companions asked him this question, asking what if I spend all the time I would spend doing extra acts of worship (Nawafil) sending peace and blessings on you? The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him that if he did this Allah would take away all his worries and forgive all his sins.

How should we send peace and blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him)? The most simple way is what we say when we hear the name of the Prophet:- Sallallahu-Alay-Hi-Wasalam (peace be on him). In Salaat we read Dhurood-e-Ibrahimi. After Jumma we stand and read Salaam upon the Prophet (peace be upon him). There are also many other ways of sending peace and blessings which the Awliyah-Allah have written out of love for the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was always remembering us, praying for us, crying for Allah to forgive us, not only during his life on this Earth but also when he met Allah on the Isra w'al-Miraj, and in his grave in Madinah, so shouldn't we also remember him all the time? If we do, maybe we will be lucky enough to be able to write our own Salaam and Dhurood.

### Questions

- Who else sends peace and blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him)?
- What are the rewards for sending peace and blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him)?
- What are the different ways to send peace and blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him)?

## Activities

- When you next pray Salaat, when sitting after the Sajda and reading the Attahiyat imagine the Prophet (peace be upon him) is in front of you and replying to your Salaam
- When you next make Dua send blessings on the Prophet (peace be upon him) before you start and at the end, and imagine your Dua is in front of Allah, and He is pleased to see it
- Imagine the Prophet (peace be upon him) was sitting in front of you, what would you want to say to him?

# Saum – Fasting

When we fast we are not allowed to eat or drink from sunrise to sunset. This allows us to see what it is like to be hungry and thirsty. It should help us remember those people in the world who do not have any food or drink and can go days without having anything to eat or drink. This should make us more thankful to Allah for all He has given us, that we never have to worry, not even for a single day that we will not have food to eat or water to drink. It should also make us want to give more money in charity to help the poor and needy.

But fasting is not just about not eating and drinking. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that if a person does not stop lying and doing bad things, Allah does not want him to stop eating and drinking. So fasting is about controlling ourselves and our desires (the things we want to do), especially bad things like lying, cheating, stealing, arguing, being rude, or fighting, especially with our family, friends, neighbours, people we work with or go to school with.

Allah says in the Quran that He has ordered us to fast in the way the people of previous Prophets were told to fast, and that this will help us become ‘Muttaqeen’. Muttaqeen is someone who has Taqwa. This means always knowing that Allah is watching us and He knows everything that we do. Taqwa also means being scared of what will happen if we do something which Allah doesn’t like, that He will become angry and punish us. If someone is watching us, even if we don’t know that person we are still careful about what we do or say. If the person watching us is our friend or a relative we will be even more careful. We would not want them to see us do anything bad or embarrassing. Imagine if you are with your teacher, you would be on your best behaviour. Now think about the fact that it is Allah, the Lord of the universe, the King of kings, the One who made us, who controls everything that happens to us

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in this life and who will decide if we go to Paradise or Hell after we die; He is the one who is always watching us. If we really believe this, would we be able to do bad things so easily?

When we fast we are changing the things we normally do every day. We are not eating and drinking, we are trying to spend more time doing good things like praying, reading Qur'an, spending money in charity, helping others. All of this makes it easier for us to remember Allah more than we usually do, and to remember that He is always with us, always watching us. This is how fasting helps us increase our Taqwa, and this helps us to stay away from doing bad things.

### Questions

- What are we not allowed to do when we fast?
- Why do we fast?
- What is Taqwa?
- How does fasting help us increase our Taqwa?

### Activities

- When you next keep a fast, think about people who are poor and hungry in the world – think about how you can help them
- When you next keep a fast, try to stop yourself from doing anything bad the whole day – when you open your fast does this mean you can now do those bad things?
- Try and remember for a whole day that Allah is watching you – did this make a difference to how you behaved?

# Ramadan – The Month Of Fasting

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that when the month of Ramadan starts, the Doors of Heaven are opened, the Gates of Hell are closed, and the Shayatin (the devils) are chained up. This is a huge favour of Allah, that the Devil and his helpers are locked up. This means they cannot whisper to us to make us to do bad things during this special month. But if the Shayatin are chained why do we still do bad things in Ramadan? This is because of our ‘Nafs’, which is a part of our soul. It is the part of us that is like an animal, which wants to eat, drink, sleep, be comfortable and lazy. It does not care if we do these things in Halaal (allowed) or Haraam (not allowed) ways, whatever is easiest and most enjoyable. Shaitan tells us to listen to our Nafs since this will make us do bad things. If we did everything our Nafs wanted we would be like animals, all the time we would just be thinking about how we can enjoy ourselves.

As Muslims we are always struggling to control our Nafs because we are worried about the afterlife, about making Allah happy and going to Paradise. This means we should only do what is Halaal and stay away from Haraam. So in Ramadan Allah has made this easier for us by locking away the Shayatin and ordering us to fast. This not only means not eating and drinking but also staying away from all bad things. This means it is much easier for us to control and train our Nafs, to stay away from sins and spend more time worshipping Allah during this special month.

There are many other blessings and rewards for fasting in Ramadan. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that if we do an extra good deed (Nawafil) in Ramadan, such as doing Dhikr’Allah, giving charity, reading extra Rakaats (units) of Salaat, or reading the Qur’an, Allah will give us as much reward as if we have performed a Fardh (something Allah has commanded us to do) in any other month. If we do



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a Fardh act in Ramadan (such as praying Salaat, giving Zakaat). Allah gives us 70 times as much reward as doing a Fardh act in any other month. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also told us that if we fast during Ramadan because we want to make Allah happy and so that He rewards us, then He will forgive all of the bad things we have done in the past.

One of the Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them all) once asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) what he should do to enter Paradise. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told him to fast, saying there was nothing else like it. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also told us that fasting will act as a shield for the Muslim on the Day of Judgment, protecting him from the fire of Hell. In another Hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that Allah has said that He will reward every good thing we do 10-700 times, except fasting. Allah says this is because fasting is for Him and He will give the reward for it Himself. He also said that for the fasting person there are two times of happiness; the time when he breaks his fast and the time when he will meet Allah.

In conclusion, think about how lucky we are that Allah has given us a whole month of these special days each year. So when Ramadan comes, we should try and take a break from what we are normally busy with, and instead try to do as many good things and remember Allah as much as we can.

### Questions

- What is our Nafs?
- How does the month of Ramadan help us against our Nafs?
- Why should we try and do extra good deeds during Ramadan?
- What are the rewards of fasting?

### Activities

- The next time you notice your Nafs telling you to do something bad, try to ignore it – was this easy or hard to do?
- Next Ramadan try and make sure you do all the Fardh acts every day even if you are not able to fast (e.g. praying Salaat)
- Try to also do an extra Nawafil act every day (e.g. reading Qur'an, reading a Tasbeeh, giving charity, being kind to someone, etc.)

# Layla t'al-Qadr – The Night Of Power

Allah tells us in the Qur'an that it was in the month of Ramadan that the Qur'an was revealed, and that in this month we must fast. In this way, Allah is telling us of the special connection Ramadan has with the Qur'an. So during Ramadan we should read it every day, both in Arabic and its translation, so we can understand what it is telling us. Allah tells us more about this in another verse of the Qur'an:

*“We sent down the Qur'an on the Night of Power, and what can explain the Night of Power to you? The Night of Power is better than one thousand months; the Angels and the Spirit, Jibra'il, come down by the order of their Lord, bringing with them each person's destiny, peace descends everywhere until the break of dawn.”*

*(Qur'an 97)*

What does Allah mean by saying the Qur'an was sent down on Layla t'al-Qadr? Some scholars have said this night is when Allah sent down the Qur'an from Al-Lauh-al-Mahfuz (a book Allah has in which everything that will ever happen is written down) to the lowest Heaven, from where it was revealed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) over 23 years. Some scholars have said this is the night when Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) was sent by Allah to bring the first revelation to the Prophet (peace be upon him) when he was in the cave on Mount Hira:

*Iqra bismi rab bikal lazee khalaq*

*Recite in the name of your Lord Who created... (Qur'an 96:1)*

This is why Allah has made this night so special, that it is worth more than 1,000 months of worship. 1,000 months is over 83 years, which means if you received the blessings of just one Layla t'al-Qadr it is as if you spent your whole life in worship. This tells us how important the

Qur'an is, that even the days and nights that have some connection with it have been made so special. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that whoever prays on Layla t'al-Qadr hoping to get Allah's reward, all of their past sins will be forgiven.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us Layla t'al-Qadr is on one of the odd nights in the last ten days of Ramadan (21<sup>st</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>). But we can't be certain we started the month on the right day (because it depends on being able to see the new Moon). This means the only way we can be sure we receive the blessings of this night is to spend all of the last 10 nights of Ramadan in worship of Allah and doing good things.

This is a lesson for us. Allah is teaching us that we should not work hard to try and make Him happy on just one night and not care about the rest of this special month. In the same way that we should not just worship Allah and read the Qur'an during Ramadan, and not during the rest of the year. Because any time we spend, in any month, day or night, in the worship of Allah, is the best, most valuable time of our lives.

### Questions

- What is the relationship between the Qur'an and the month of Ramadan?
- When is Layla t'al-Qadr?
- What rewards do you get for the worship you do in Layla t'al-Qadr?

### Activities

- Make a plan of what you are going to do every night for the last 10 days of Ramadan (e.g. donating £1 to charity, reading an extra two Rakaat Nawafil, reciting a Tasbeeh) – think about how many blessings Allah will shower you with for performing these deeds on Layla t'al-Qadr

# Eid al-Fitr – A Time Of Celebration

Eid is a time of celebration and happiness. Eid-al-Fitr happens at the end of the month of Ramadan. We thank Allah for the month of fasting that we have been able to take part in. Islam teaches us how to do this, how to celebrate in a way that makes Allah happy.

Our celebration has three parts:

- The first is remembering and helping the poor, especially in our community
- The second is thanking Allah by worshipping Him
- The third is spending time with our family, especially with those relatives that we may not be speaking to, or even fighting with

The first point is talking about Zakaat al-Fitr, which is money given in charity before Eid. We give this money for a special reason, to help poor Muslims join in the Eid celebrations. This is so important that it must be given for every Muslim, boy or girl, man or woman, adult or child. This makes Allah happy, He will reward us not only for giving charity (which is multiplied 700 times or more in Ramadan), but it will also make up for any bad things or mistakes we made during Ramadan.

The second point is talking about the special Eid prayer. This is read in the Mosque by men, and in the Mosque or at home by women. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to eat breakfast and have a bath or shower before going to the Mosque. He used to walk there while reading the Takbeer:

*Allaahu akbar*

*Allaahu akbar*

*Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah*

*Wa Allaahu akbar*

*Allaahu akbar*

*Wa Lillaahi 'l-hamd*

This tells us that when we are happy and celebrating in Islam, we should worship and remember Allah. Muslims know that whatever happiness they have, whatever good things are happening in their lives, it is all from Allah and so they should thank Him.

The third point is talking about what we spend most of the rest of Eid doing. Once we have finished the Eid prayer we go back to our families and friends and we spend the rest of the day celebrating with them. Allah tells us in the Qur'an to take care of and be kind to our parents, relatives, and neighbors. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that if we are kind to our relatives Allah will give us a long life and give us more than we already have. If we give charity to poor relatives we get two rewards, for giving charity but also for taking care of our relatives. The people who don't take care of their relatives are cursed by Allah and He will send them to Hell.

In conclusion, whenever we have a time of happiness in our lives we should remember how Islam teaches us to celebrate, so we can thank Allah for all that He has given us.

### Questions

- Why do we celebrate Eid al-Fitr?
- How should we celebrate Eid al-Fitr?
- How should we treat our relatives (even when it is not Eid al-Fitr)?

### Activities

- For the Eid prayer go to your local Mosque on foot, reading the Takbeer out loud
- Try and find a homeless person on Eid and give them some food or money
- Visit, or speak on the phone to a relative you haven't seen in a long time

# Charity And Zakaat

One of the five pillars of Islam is Zakaat – this is Fardh, or charity that we have to give. Every year Allah asks us to give a small amount of our savings, £2½ for every £100 we have. But on top of this we can give as much as we want, whenever we want - this is called Sadaqa.

When we give charity we are not helping Allah or the people we give money to. That is because Allah is the One who helps all people – this is the meaning of His name Ar-Razzaq. If we did not give money Allah would make it so the poor people got help from someone else. So when we give charity we are only helping ourselves because we are doing something that Allah likes. Allah is the One who have given us everything we have including all our money. He only asks for us to give a little bit of this back to Him, and even that is so we can help ourselves.

When we think about how much reward Allah gives to the people who give charity, it helps us understand how much Allah loves those people. In the Qur'an He tells us that for everything we give we will get 700 times the reward, or even more. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that charity get rid of sins like water gets rid of fire. He also told us that charity stops bad things from happening to us and stops Allah from getting angry with us.

Charity does not just mean giving money. When the Prophet's companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) asked him how someone without any money could give charity, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told them they could:

- Work with their hands, earn money and give charity from that, or
- Help the needy people themselves, or
- Do good things and stop themselves from doing bad things



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In another Hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us saying 'Subhan'Allah' is a charity, saying 'Allahu-Akbar' is a charity, saying 'Al-Hamdu'lillah' is a charity, and saying 'La-Ilaha-Il'Allah' is a charity. Telling others to do good is also an act of charity, as is telling others not to do bad. In fact, he told us every good thing we do is a charity.

Charity is such a special act that it is one of the only things which can help us even after we die. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that if we spend money in charity to do something which will help people for a long time, such as build a school for children to learn in, a mosque for people to pray in, or a well for people to drink from; then as long as people get benefit from that thing Allah will reward us, even after we have died.

In conclusion, if we really believe all of this to be true then the best way to spend our time and money, which will help us in this life and the next, is in charity.

### Questions

- What is the difference between Sadaqa and Zakaat?
- Why should we give charity?
- Can we only give charity with our money?
- How can the charity we have given help us even after we die?

### Activities

- Give some of your pocket-money, or the money you get on your birthday and Eid to charity
- Calculate how much reward you will get for your donation
- Think of the last time you did something for charity that did not involve giving money – what was it? Could you do this regularly?

# The Days And Rites Of Haj – The Pilgrimage To Makkah

Dhul Hijja is the 12<sup>th</sup> and final month in the Islamic calendar. This is the month in which Haj takes place and Eid al-Adha, the festival of sacrifice (Qurbani). In the Qur'an Allah takes an oath (promise) by the first ten days and nights of Dhul Hijja. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that there are no days and no good deeds that Allah likes more than those done in these ten days. One reason for this could be that it is only in these ten days and nights in the whole year that prayers, fasting, charity, and the Pilgrimage take place together.

Before we set out for Haj (the pilgrimage to Makkah), or on the way we wear the 'Ihram'. This starts by thinking about how we are travelling to the house of Allah with our bodies, and that we also want to get closer to Allah with our souls. We also change our clothes – for men this is two white sheets wrapped around their bodies, for women it is simple, loose clothing that covers their whole body except their face and hands. This means that all the millions of people who visit Allah's house are all dressed the same, whether they are rich or poor, kings or beggars, black or white, brown or yellow. It also reminds us of how we were when we were born and how we will be when we die, naked except a simple cloth wrapped around us. All of the things we collect during our lives, our money, things we have, cars, houses, jobs, qualifications – we will not be able to take any of these with us, only our good deeds will help us. So wearing the Ihram means leaving behind everything of this world to go to Allah.

When we go to Makkah we visit the Kaaba, a huge stone mosque shaped like a cube. We do a special worship which is not done anywhere else on Earth, the Tawaaf (going around the Kaaba 7 times in an anticlockwise direction). Humans are not the only ones to do this, the

Angels that are near the Throne of Allah perform Tawaaf around it. This act of circling (going around something) is found in the very smallest to the very largest of Allah's creation, from the electrons that spin around the nuclei of atoms to the solar systems that spin around the centres of galaxies. But even if we were to just sit and look at the Kaaba, this is also an act of worship and Allah rewards us for every second we do this.

The Kaaba was built by Hazret Ibrahim with his son, Hazret Ismail (peace be upon them both). However, even before this, since the creation of the Earth this land was holy, it has always been a place of worship. It is directly below the Kaaba of the Angels on the 7<sup>th</sup> Heaven, Al-Bayt Al-Mamur – where 70,000 Angels visit every morning and evening. To help them build the Kaaba, when the walls had gotten too high, Hazret Ibrahim (peace be upon him) stood on a special stone Allah sent from the Heavens. This would move and grow larger allowing them to complete building the high walls of the Kaaba. While he was standing on it the stone became soft, so his footprints were left on it. This stone was left in the place Hazret Ibrahim (peace be upon him) prayed after finishing building the Kaaba and so this place (called Maqaam-e-Ibrahim, or the 'station of Ibrahim') is a place where pilgrims also pray 2 Rakaat (units of prayer) after finishing the Tawaaf.

In one of the corners of the Kaaba is another stone from Heaven, called the Hajr-e-Aswad (the Black Stone). While doing the Tawaaf, if possible, it is a Sunnah (practice) of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to kiss it. But if it is too busy and we cannot get close to it we can give it Salaam from a distance. During the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) the walls of the Kaaba fell down because of lots of rain and it had to be rebuilt. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was the one who put the Black Stone back into the wall of the Kaaba with his own hands. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that on the Day of Judgment the Black stone will be allowed to speak, and it will give the names of all those who kissed it as proof they are Muslim. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also told us that these two stones, Hajr-e-Aswad and Maqaam-e-

Ibrahim are two jewels from Paradise but Allah has hidden their light otherwise they would have brightened the whole earth.

There are two hills in Makkah near the Kaaba called Safa and Marwa. When we go on Haj or Umrah we run between these 7 times. When Hazret Ibrahim had reached an old age Allah gave him with a son, Hazret Ismail (peace be upon them both). Allah commanded Hazret Ibrahim to leave his wife, Hazret Hajira (may Allah be pleased with her) and his baby in the middle of the desert. This was a test, would Hazret Ibrahim be ready to give up the two most precious things in the world to him because Allah asked him to? In the desert Hazret Ismail started crying because he was hot and thirsty so Hazret Hajira (may Allah be pleased with her) ran up one hill to see if there was any water around or any travellers she could ask for help. Seeing no-one and wanting to check on her baby she ran back down before running up the other hill to do the same. She did this seven times and Allah liked her struggle so much He made us copy it. After this, in some stories it says the baby rubbed his foot on the ground while crying, in others it says the Archangel Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) hit the ground with his wing. This resulted in a water spring in the middle of the desert and seeing how much water was coming out, Hazret Hajira said 'Zam-Zam' – meaning 'stop! stop!' – in Arabic.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that Zam-Zam is the best, most valuable, most special of all waters on this earth. There are stories of some of the companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) spending weeks just drinking Zam-Zam without any other food or drink, feeling full of energy and even putting on weight. Others would drink it asking Allah to make them better because they were sick, and Allah would make them healthy again. There were two times in the Prophet's life when the Archangel Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) opened his chest and washed his heart and this was with the water of Zam-Zam. So pilgrims try to drink as much ZamZam as they can while visiting the house of Allah.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> day of Dhul Hijja is the day of Arafat, a very special day for not only the pilgrims who have gone on Haj, but for all Muslims. For the Hajjis, from sunrise to sunset they stand in prayer and remember Allah on the plain of Arafat. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that Allah shows off to his Angels on this day, saying look at all My slaves who have come to Me tired and dusty. The best time in the whole year to make Dua to Allah is on this day. On the Day of Judgment, when everyone who ever lived will be brought back to life, they will all gather around the plains of Arafat. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed Haj it was on this day that one of the most special verses of the Qur'an was revealed - Allah told us He had made the religion of Islam perfect, it was for all people to follow until the Day of Judgment, this tells us Allah wasn't going to send any more Prophets or Revelation. For those of us not on Haj, Allah is so kind that if we fast on the Day of Arafat Allah will forgive all the bad things we have done in the last year and the bad things we will do in the coming year (so two years of sins are forgiven for fasting on a single day).

From the 10<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Hijja to the 12<sup>th</sup> are the three days of Eid al-Adha, the days in which we sacrifice an animal (Qurbani). The meat from these sacrifices is given to the poor people. There are many people in the world who only have meat to eat once a year, on the days of Eid al-Adha. When we do Qurbani we are remembering another test of Hazret Ibrahim (peace be upon him). When Hazret Ismail was a child, Allah asked Hazret Ibrahim to sacrifice him (peace be upon them both). This was one of the most difficult test any Prophet has been put through, and it was a test not only for Hazret Ibrahim but also Hazret Ismail and Hazret Hajira (peace be upon them all). They passed this test, Hazret Ibrahim and Hazret Hajira were ready to sacrifice their son, which Hazret Ibrahim did with his own hands, and Hazret Ismail was ready to be sacrificed if that is what Allah wanted. The Shaitan had tried to come to each of them to stop them from doing what Allah had asked them to do but they did not listen to him and threw stones at him. We copy this on the Haj when we throw stones at the three Jamarat (pillars). Just before

the sacrifice took place the Archangel Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) replaced Hazret Ismail (peace be upon him) with a ram from Heaven and this was sacrificed instead. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that for every hair on the animal that is sacrificed one of our sins will be forgiven.

Performing the Haj is one of the 5 pillars of Islam. For those of us who are healthy and with enough money to be able to do it, if we do all the things we need to do at the right times and in the right places, with the hope of making Allah happy, and stop ourselves from doing any bad things (such as arguing or fighting with others), then the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that all our sins will be forgiven, we will be like a newborn baby.

In conclusion, the story of Haj is based on the life and tests of the family of Hazret Ibrahim (peace be upon them all). They were ready to give up everything, even the things they loved most, for Allah, and Allah loved this so much that He made Muslims follow their example until the Day of Judgment.

### Questions

- What is Ihram?
- What is Tawaaf?
- Who built the Kaaba?
- What is the Maqaam-e-Ibrahim?
- What is the Hajr-e-Aswad?
- Why do we run between Safa and Marwa?
- What is ZamZam?
- If we haven't gone on Haj what should we do on the day of Arafat?
- Why do we sacrifice an animal on Eid al-Adha?
- What reward do we get for performing Haj?

### Activities

- Try wearing an Ihram at home, what does it feel like compared to your normal clothes?
- Build a small model of the Kaaba
- Drink some ZamZam while standing, facing the Qibla, and make a Dua
- Try and fast on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Dhul Hijja
- Help in giving out the Qurbani meat

# Angels

Muslims believe in Angels. Allah made Angels to carry out His orders even though He is the All Powerful and could do everything Himself, this is the system He has created. They live in the Heavens and on the Earth, wherever they need to be to do their job. The first Angels were created long before humans but Allah creates more Angels all the time. Angels are made of light, they are not male or female and do not need to eat or drink, get married or have children.

Very few people have seen what Angels really look like but they can change what they look like depending on what they are doing. They can look like people, such as when they visited Hazret Ibrahim and Hazret Lut (peace be upon them both), or as the Archangel Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) would sometimes come to the Prophet (peace be upon him). The way in which they look also depends on who they are coming to, for example the Angel of Death, Hazret Izra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) looks very scary and angry when he comes to take the life of a non-Muslim, but beautiful and smiling when taking the life of a Muslim.

Angels have wings, some two, some four, up to 600 and maybe even more. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that when Allah gives an order, the Angels in the Heavens beat their wings and the sound is like that of a chain hitting rocks. With these wings Angels can fly, and they are faster than anything we can think of. When Hazret Ibrahim had laid Hazret Ismail down (peace be upon them both) and was about to sacrifice him as Allah had commanded, the Archangel Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) was commanded to get a ram and fly to the place of sacrifice and replace Hazret Ismail with it, all before the knife cut into his neck.



Angels are different sizes, but can change their size depending on what they are going to look like. When the Archangel Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his true form he had 600 wings and filled the sky from top to bottom and from side to side. The Angels who carry the Arsh (the throne of Allah) are so huge that from their earlobe to their shoulder is as far as you would travel in 700 years.

There are so many Angels we cannot even begin to imagine their numbers. The Kaaba of the Angels is visited by 70,000 Angels every morning and every evening, and no Angel will get a chance to visit it twice until the day of Judgment because their turn won't come again. Every person, from the time of Hazret Adam (peace be upon him) until the day of Judgment has two Angels who write down everything they do. There are also Angels whose job it is to protect every person from that which Allah has not written in their destiny, so they will only die when it is their time and not before. The seven Heavens, each of which is unimaginably big, are also completely full of Angels.

Angels do not get bored or tired doing that which Allah has created them for, and they do not have the free will Allah has given to humans, so they are not able to disobey Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that Allah has Angels who shake and cry because they are scared of Him. There are so many of them, the tears that fall from their eyes fall on other Angels worshipping Allah. There are Angels in prostration, others bowing and others standing in rows since Allah created the Heavens and the Earth, and they have not moved, and will not move until the Day of Judgment. On that day Allah will appear in front of them, they will look at Him and even though they have spent every moment since they were created, despite spending an eternity in His worship they will say: *"Glory be to You! We have not worshiped You as You deserve to be worshiped!"*

We are told some examples of the Dhikr'Allah the Angels do. In a Hadith we are told Allah has told them to do Tasbeeh - Subhan Allah Wa Bihamdihi (glory be to Allah, who is due all praise), and in the Qur'an

Allah says He and His Angels send peace and blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him). They also perform pilgrimage to their Kaaba on the Seventh Heaven.

We have been told about the names and jobs of some of the Angels. The four most famous and important Angels are Jibra'il, Mika'il, Isra'fil and Izra'il (may Allah be pleased with them all). Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) is the leader of the Angels, he has been given the most important job of bringing Revelation from Allah to His Prophets. He also helps the Prophets during their lives by Allah's command, such as when Hazret Yusuf (peace be upon him) was thrown into the well he stopped him from getting hurt. When Hazret Ibrahim was about the sacrifice Hazret Ismail (peace be upon them both), Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) swapped him with a ram from Paradise. He was there when Hazret Musa (peace be upon him) split the Red Sea in half, when the Israelites were being chased by the Pharaoh and his army. During the life of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) twice opened his chest and washed his heart with Zam-Zam, he took the Prophet on the miraculous night journey (the Isra w'al Miraj), and he led an army of Angels during the battle of Badr.

Mika'il (may Allah be pleased with him) is in charge of the weather, the sun, the clouds and rain, wind and snow, and whatever grows on the Earth. So in the way Jibra'il is in charge of bringing that which gives life to our souls, Mika'il (may Allah be pleased with them both) is in charge of bringing that which gives life to our bodies. Both of these Angels were also spiritual advisers for the Prophet (peace be upon him). Isra'fil (may Allah be pleased with him) has been given one very important job by Allah, he is the one who will blow Sur (the horn, like a trumpet) when it is time for the Day of Judgment, which will cause everything to die. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that since Isra'fil was given this job he is staring at the Arsh, he is listening carefully, and he has drawn his breath in and has his lips on the horn ready to blow, as if he is worried the command will come before he

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blinks, his eyes like two shining stars. When every living thing has died, including the Angel of Death, Allah will ask three times, *'Who is King today?'* answering himself – *'It is Allah – the One, the Irresistible!'*

There is a Hadith in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was with Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) when the Heavens split and an Angel starting coming towards them. As he came closer the Prophet saw that Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) shrunk back in himself, becoming smaller, as if he was getting ready for something to happen. When the Angel reached them he said to the Prophet (peace be upon him) that I have been sent from Allah to give you a choice, either you can be a Prophet who lives like a king, or a Prophet who lives like a slave. The Prophet looked at Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) who advised he should choose to live like a slave, so this is what the Prophet chose. The Angel left after which the Prophet (peace be upon him) turned back to Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) who said this Angel has never before come down to the earth, and I became afraid when I saw him because I thought the only time he will come down is to announce the Day of Judgment. This Angel was Isra'fil (may Allah be pleased with him).

Izra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) is the Angel of Death. He, and the Angels who work with him are responsible for taking the life of every person when they die. Other Angels include those that carry the Arsh (Throne) of Allah. Malik is the leader of the Angels in charge of Hell and Ridwan is the leader of the Angels in charge of Paradise. Munkar and Nakir are the two Angels that will ask questions of all people when they die and enter the grave. There are two Angels who sit on the shoulders of every person writing down everything we do from the time we are born until we die. There are Angels who pray for the believers who do good things. Angels also pray for forgiveness for those people who ask Allah to forgive their sins, and they search for places where people have come together to remember Allah, and surround them with their wings all the way up to the first Heaven.

What all of this tells us is that the creation of Allah is so huge we cannot even begin to imagine it. What we can see, what we know about is but a tiny fraction. The entire world of Angels is hidden from us but we have to believe in it to be Muslims. But even though we cannot see it Angels are all around us, especially those people who spend their time doing good things and remembering Allah.

### Questions

- What do Angels look like?
- Are there any Angels near you?
- What are the names of some well-known Angels?
- What jobs has Allah given them?

### Activities

- Try and draw what you think an Angel really looks like
- When you pray Salaat and do the Salaam at the end, imagine you are saying Salaam to the Angels sitting on your shoulders who write down all your deeds
- The next time it rains, think about how this is Hazret Mika'il showering the mercy of Allah on us
- Prepare the answers you will give Munkar and Nakir in the grave

# Dua – Supplication To Allah

Allah says in the Qur'an:

*"Call on Me and I shall answer you." (Qur'an 40:60)*

Dua is a very special worship of Allah in which we can talk to Him and ask Him for whatever we want. There is no limit on the number of times a day we can do this or on what we can ask for (as long as it is for good things for yourself and other people). Our Dua does not need to be in a certain language (such as Arabic) since Allah can understand all languages. It doesn't matter if we keep asking for the same thing, or keep changing our mind about what we want. It is OK if we get what we want to ask for even more. This is because Allah likes it when we make Dua to Him, when we ask Him to help us. Because when we make Dua we are being humble, remembering that we are powerless and cannot do anything. We are remembering that Allah is the creator of the Universe, He made everything and controls everything that happens. So really, it is only Allah who can make something happen or give us something. The Prophet told us:

*"Ask from Allah, whoever does not ask from Allah, Allah becomes angry with him." (Tirmidhi)*

This is because the person who doesn't make Dua is saying that they don't need Allah's help, and they don't want to, or have time to talk to Allah.

Sometimes we make Dua for something and we don't get it or it doesn't happen. This can make us feel like Allah is not listening to us, He is ignoring us. We should never think like this, in fact this is what Shaitan wants us to think. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that

we should never become impatient with Allah and say that, *"I have asked Allah but my Dua has not been answered."* (Bukhari)

So what should we think when we make Dua but it doesn't happen? The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us:

*"There is no Muslim who makes a Dua to Allah in which there is no sin... but Allah will give him one of three things:*

- *Either He will answer his prayer quickly, or*
- *He will store (the reward for) it in the Hereafter (in the next life), or*
- *In exchange, Allah will stop something bad from happening to him."*

*(Tirmidhi)*

So in fact, when Allah does not answer our Dua quickly it means He is doing something even better for us. Sometimes we want something which wouldn't be good for us but we don't know this. Or we might be making Dua for something not to happen but we don't know that it would be better for us if it did happen. This is because we don't know what is going to happen in the future, but Allah does. In the Qur'an He tells us:

*"...sometimes you may dislike something that is good for you, and sometimes you may like something that is bad for you. Only Allah knows the whole truth, not you."* (Qur'an 2:216)

So sometimes our Dua is not accepted because if Allah was to accept it, it would be worse for us. This is why the best way of doing Dua is to ask Allah to do whatever is best for us, and to make us happy with whatever He does.

A good way to help our Duas get accepted is to ask Allah to give other people the things we are asking for. For example, asking Allah to help someone get a good job, pass an exam or interview, to help someone go on Haj or Umrah, or to give someone good health or make them better.

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The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that whenever we make a Dua for someone else, an Angels near us say, “*Ameen! May it be for you, too.*” (Muslim)

So when we ask Allah to do some good for our Muslim brothers and sisters it is as if we are also asking for those things for ourselves and there is more chance of the Dua being accepted.

In conclusion, we should try to make Dua to Allah many times every day, whenever we need something (no matter how small or unimportant), every time we remember our Muslims brothers and sisters in the world who are having a difficult time, and whenever we feel like we want to talk to Allah.

### Questions

- Why does Allah like it when we make Dua to Him?
- Are your Duas always accepted?
- Why is it good to make Dua for other people?

### Activities

- Start your Dua by thanking Allah for everything He has given you
- Think of the people you know who are having any sort of difficulty in their lives, and remember them in your Duas
- Think of something that you really want – how might it be worse for you if you were to get it?
- Think of something you really don't want – how might it be better for you if it were to happen?

# Shukr – Being Grateful To Allah

Allah is our Lord and Master. He made us and if He hadn't, we wouldn't even exist. Not only did He create us, He gave us Imaan (faith) so we can call ourselves Muslims – followers of His final Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He also blessed us to live in a country where there is peace and we are safe; in many other parts of the world there is war and peoples' lives are very difficult. This country also doesn't stop us from being Muslims in front of other people, in some parts of the world women can't wear headscarves, Mosques can't be built, and Muslims are afraid to tell others of their religion because they will be beaten up or even killed. He has also blessed us with good health – with brains that can think, with eyes that can see, with ears that hear, with mouths that can speak, with hands that can hold, and with feet that can walk. We have families – mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, children. We have money in the bank, a car, a house to live in. This list is never-ending, as Allah says in the Qur'an:

*“If you were to count the gifts of Allah; you would not be able to count them.” (Qur'an 16:18)*

Unfortunately we take all these things for granted, or even complain that they are not enough. We want more, we think we deserve more. This happens because we look around us at people who have more money than us, a bigger car or house, or more children, and want what they have.

When Shaitan was ordered out of Paradise for disobeying Allah and not bowing to Hazret Adam (peace be upon him), he said:

*“...I will pounce of them from the front, behind, and from their right and left, You will find most of them are ungrateful to You.”*  
*(Qur'an 7:17)*



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We translate ‘Kafir’ as non-believer or non-Muslim, but this literally means ‘to cover up’ or ‘to be ungrateful’. Allah says in the Qur’an that He has no need of these people, that He will punish them.

Having lots of things in this world does not mean we will be happy, there are millionaires in the world who are depressed, who hate their lives, who wish they were dead. You can only be happy if you are satisfied with what Allah has given you.

To make sure we are not ungrateful and to learn to be satisfied with what Allah has given us, we should look around us at those people who have so much less than we do; children without parents, homeless people, people who spend their lives in hospitals because they are unwell, people trying to escape countries where there is war even if it means leaving everything they have behind. We should think of these people and do Shukr, be grateful to Allah for all that He has given us. When we do this, Allah says in the Qur’an that He will give us even more.

When we are thankful to Allah this should mean we remember Him more, we spend more time worshipping Him. The Prophet (peace be upon him) used to spend all night in prayer and when his wife, Hazret Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) asked him why he did this, he said it was to be grateful to Allah.

This also shows us that doing Shukr is not only with words, it should also be with actions and how we use the things Allah has given us. The eye is a blessing of Allah, its Shukr is to use it in ways that are Halal; such as looking at the amazing world around us and thinking about the One who created it. We must not use it for Haraam, looking at things that Allah has told us not to, out on the streets, in our homes, on our TVs, computers, or mobile phones. The ear is a blessing; its Shukr is to use it for listening to the Dhikr of Allah; and protecting it from listening to backbiting, swearing, or rude talk. The tongue is a blessing; its Shukr is to use it to do Dhikr of Allah, and to not use it to complain when Allah is testing us and our life is hard, and to not use it for lying, swearing and backbiting. The body is a blessing; its Shukr is to take care of it by doing

exercise and eating healthy food, and to not hurt it (such as by smoking, drinking alcohol or doing drugs).

If we do not do Shukr, if we are not thankful for the blessings Allah has given us, if we use these things in ways that make Allah angry then He might take them away from us. Instead we should try to thank Allah every day for all the things He has given us, not only by saying it, but also by how we use every part of our body. If we do this He will bless us with even more in this life and give us Paradise in the afterlife.

### Questions

- What should we be grateful to Allah for?
- How can we be grateful for the things Allah has blessed us with?
- How will being grateful help us to be happy?

### Activities

- Make a list of all the things you can be grateful to Allah for in order of importance
- The next time you see a homeless person, think about how much they would like to have the things you take for granted
- Think about ways you are using the things Allah has given you in ways that are ungrateful – how can you stop doing these things?

# How Should We Treat Our Parents?

Our mother and father loved us even before we were born. Our mother carried us for nine months inside her and nearly died when we were born. They would rock us to sleep in their arms, and wake up at night to give us milk. They would clean up our vomit and dirty nappies many times each day with a smile. When we were unwell they would stay awake all night taking care of us. They would work extra hard to earn money to buy us presents and take us to nice places. They would come home from work tired but spend time playing with us or helping us with our homework. Whenever we had any sort of problem or got into trouble they would be there to tell us what to do, to help us, to protect us. They spent their whole lives praying for Allah to help us so our lives are filled with happiness.

When we are young, we don't think about these things because this is what parents are meant to do. But ask those children who don't have parents what their lives are like; what they want more than anything else in the whole world. Or when you have children of your own, you will then realise how much your parents did for you, when you are doing it for your own children.

So given the sacrifice parents make for their children what does Islam teach us about how children should treat their parents? In the Qur'an Allah tells us to be grateful to Him and to our parents in the same sentence. In another sentence he says we should worship Him and be kind to our parents. He also tells us that when our parents become old we should speak to them with respect, not get angry with them, and be kind to them in the way they were kind to us when we were children. He even tells us that if our parents are not Muslims and are telling us to change our religion, we should not do what they say but still be kind to them.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that Paradise is under the feet of our mother and that Allah is happy when our father is happy with us. He also told us that if we even look at our parents with love Allah gives us the reward of performing Haj. One of his companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) asked him what if they did this 100 times a day. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said they would get the reward of performing Haj 100 times. There were also times in the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) when a companion would ask to join the army to do Jihad. The Prophet would ask if their parents were still alive, and if they were, he would tell them to look after their parents instead.

Allah is the One who takes care of His creation. But he does this through our parents when we are children. This is why in the Qur'an and Hadith so much importance is given to treating our parents with the love and respect they deserve. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that someone who can't be thankful to others can't be thankful to Allah. So if we can't be thankful to our parents for all they have done for us, and not only on mother's or father's day or on their birthday, but the way we treat them all the time, then we are the kind of people who won't be thankful to Allah for all He has blessed us with, including our parents.

### Questions

- What have our mother and father done for us?
- How should we treat our parents?
- How does Allah reward people who are kind to their parents?

### Activities

- Make a list of all the things your mother does for you
- Make a list of all the things your father does for you
- When you wake up tomorrow morning and see your parents, give them Salaam, a smile and a hug
- Whenever your parents do anything for you, remember to thank them

# How Should We Treat Our Teachers?

All of the Prophets that Allah sent, from Hazret Adam to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them all) were all sent as teachers. They taught their people about Allah, how to worship Him, how to make Him happy, how to be a good person, how get to Paradise. But all of the Prophets were also students, Allah was their teacher. In the Qur'an, Allah tells us how when He created Hazret Adam, He taught him the names of all things. The first word of the Qur'an that was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was 'Iqra' (Read!). One day the Prophet (peace be upon him) was walking, and passed by two groups of people. The first were doing Dhikr'Allah, the second were listening to a teacher. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "*The first is begging Allah who may or may not give them. The second is learning. I have been sent as teacher.*" After saying this the Prophet joined the second group.

Therefore, by being a student, learning and gaining knowledge, and then teaching it to others, we are following the example of the Prophets, we are doing something that Allah loves. This is not just for learning about Islam, but about every type of subject. We can't all be students and teachers of Islam, without people doing every kind of job we can't help each other and live peacefully together. Even in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), his companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) did many different jobs, some were business people, some were warriors, some were judges, some were farmers, some learnt about Islam from the Prophet and taught it to others. This also means we need to think about who are teachers are, they are not only the people who teach us at school but also our parents and the people who teach us how to read the Qur'an and about Islam. Anyone who teaches us something, it doesn't matter how little, or who they are, is our teacher. Hazret Ali

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(may Allah be pleased with him) said that if a person taught him even a single word, he would be their servant for a lifetime.

So what rewards do students and teachers of knowledge get? Allah says in the Qur'an that he gives a high position to those who learn. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that the best people are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it to others. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also told us that if we teach something good to someone else, when they do that good thing not only will they get the reward for it but their teacher will also get the same reward. This is also true even after we die, when we can normally no longer get rewards for good deeds. But if the students continue to act upon the good they were taught, the teacher will continue to get reward in their graves. He also told us that Allah, His Angels, those in the Heavens and the Earth, even the ant in the ground and the fish in the sea, they all pray for the person who teaches good to others.

So when being a student and gaining knowledge is so important, how should we behave towards our teachers? We should always be polite to them, even if other people are being rude. This includes not talking when they are talking, not shouting in class, doing the work we have been told to do, not distracting other students. We should never make fun of them, to their face or behind their back. In fact, if other people are being rude or making fun of them, we should tell them to stop. If they tells us off we shouldn't get angry, or argue and fight with them.

In conclusion, we should always remember how lucky we are that we are students of knowledge, whatever we are learning. We should also think about how lucky we are to have teachers who are giving us this most precious gift, which we can use to do good, to become a better person, to earn money to feed ourselves and our families, to worship Allah in the right way. So we should be grateful to Allah, and one way of doing this is by respecting our teachers. If we don't give them the thanks and respect they deserve, if we are ungrateful, Allah might take our knowledge away from us.

### Questions

- Who are your teachers?
- How should we treat our teachers?
- What rewards does a person get who teaches others to do good?

### Activities

- The next time you go to a lesson, greet your teacher at the start and end of the lesson, shaking their hand (if it is appropriate)
- When you do Dua after Salaat, remember to ask Allah to bless you with knowledge and bless your teachers
- If you hear someone disrespecting your teacher, tell them to stop



# What Is Jihād?

Jihād means to struggle or work hard for something. The most important Jihād we can do is against our Nafs, which is the part of us which wants to enjoy itself without worrying about whether what we are doing is Halaal (permissible) or Haraam (impermissible). If we do not struggle against our Nafs we become like animals. When we do bad things because of following our Nafs our heart becomes black and we can't get close to Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that this struggle against our Nafs is an even more difficult Jihād than fighting on the battlefield. Along with not doing bad things, part of this Jihād is to struggle, to force yourself to do good things, to follow Allah's commands and the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him), even when you don't feel like it. In fact every good thing we do because we want to make Allah happy with us and to help other people is part of this Jihād.

If we can control our Nafs we will become better people, our character will improve. When non-Muslims see our good character they will want to find out why we behave in this way. When they learn this is because we are Muslims, this is what Islam teaches us, this is the example of our Prophet (peace be upon him), they will begin to like Islam and will want to find out more about it. If Allah wills they may even become Muslims. This is another type of Jihād all Muslims must carry out: Dawah, or inviting non-Muslims to Islam. The most powerful type of Dawah, especially for ordinary Muslims who are not scholars, is to behave as a true Muslim should.

But what do we do if our non-Muslims friends or neighbours see our good character and want to learn more about Islam and start asking us questions? This leads us onto another type of Jihād, which is to learn about our own faith. Every Muslim must do this. Not only will this allow us to practice our religion properly but we will also be able to tell

others about Islam. This is the Jihad every Prophet (peace be upon them all) was doing their whole lives. So to do this Jihad we need to learn more about Islam and in this country this is easy for us. There are Mosques all around us in which we can learn about Islam in weekly circles and talks before Jumma. There are lots of Islamic bookshops with books for children and adults, and also Islamic radio stations and TV channels.

Most of these things we can do for free but someone is spending their time and money so people can benefit from these things. This is another type of Jihad. It is our job as Muslims to spend the money Allah has given us to help support projects that are teaching people about Islam.

The last type of Jihad is to stop people being hurt, whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims. If there is no peaceful way to do this, Islam allows the use of fighting. But there are lots of rules because in Islam killing someone is one of the worst things you can do, so it is only allowed if it has to be done. Allah tells us in the Qur'an that killing one person for the wrong reason is the same as killing all of humanity. A single Muslim or group of Muslims are not able to start a war just because they believe they are right, and against whoever they want. Jihad is not a religious war against other faiths, we cannot force people to become Muslims. Even when a Muslim country declares war for the right reasons, our behavior in battle must be as taught by the Prophet (peace be upon him). He told us that if we kill someone we should treat their dead bodies with respect, we shouldn't kill children, women or old men, we shouldn't damage or burn trees, especially those on which fruit grow, we shouldn't hurt animals, even if they belong to our enemy unless we need to eat them for food.

We might think that since we are only one Muslim and don't live in an Islamic country, we cannot do this type of Jihad. This is not true, sometimes we see other people being treated in a bad way. Maybe someone at school or work is getting bullied. Or in the country you live in the government has laws that cause some people difficulty in practicing their religion, getting jobs, or finding a place to live. It is our duty to help these people, this is a Jihad for us. The Prophet (peace be

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upon him) told us that if we see something wrong we should change it with our hands, and if we can't do that to change it with our speech, and if we can't even do that then we should know that it is wrong in our hearts. We can also always pray to Allah to help those people.

In conclusion, when we think of Jihad we shouldn't just think of the battlefield. As Muslims we should be doing Jihad every day; struggling to control our Nafs to bring ourselves closer to Allah and making our character better; spreading the message of Islam to non-Muslims; and always helping others.

### Questions

- What is Jihad?
- What are the different ways in which we can do Jihad?
- Are Muslims allowed to fight other people?

### Activities

- Think about something bad that you do, how can you stop doing it?
- Write a list of the things we are not allowed to do to our enemies when fighting a war
- The next time you see someone being treated badly do something to help them

# Awliyah-Allah – The Friends Of Allah

The Awliyah-Allah are people we might call our Pir, Shaykh, or Baba-Ji. In English they are called saints. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that the good deeds which Allah loves the most are the ones He has commanded us to do (Fardh), such as believing in Allah, his Prophets and Angels, praying Salaat, giving Zakaat, going on Haj. If we want to get even closer to Allah then we can do this by doing extra acts of worship (Nawafil). If we do lots of these Allah will love us. In this Hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells us that when Allah loves us, He will be the ears with which we hear, the eyes with which we see, the hand with which we hold and the leg with which we walk. Allah also says that if the person He loves asks Him for something, He will give it to him, and if someone is that person's enemy, Allah will become their enemy.

This hadith tells us about the Awliyah-Allah. They are those Muslims who are most careful about following the commands of Allah, the Fardh acts. Because it is only after doing those that extra acts of worship (the Nawafil) can bring us closer to Allah. Imagine a house, the foundations are the Fardh and everything built on top of that are Nawafil. If you don't have a strong foundation it doesn't matter how high you build the walls, the house will fall down. But you also don't just want the foundations, what kind of house is that to live in? You want a beautiful big house with many floors and many rooms on each floor. This explains the importance of following the Fardh acts and also doing extra Nawafil; to make our faith beautiful and bring us closer to Allah.

What does it mean in the Hadith to speak with the voice of Allah and to see with His sight? There are different ways of understanding this. One way is that as someone gets closer to Allah they no longer love the things of this world. So when they say or do something it is only because they are copying the things the Prophet did and to make Allah happy.

Another way to understand it is that Allah would allow His Prophets to perform miracles, things which are normally impossible. Such as when Hazret Musa (peace be upon him) parted the sea, or when Hazret Isa (peace be upon him) cured the sick and brought the dead back to life. In the same way the Awliyah-Allah can also do such things, called 'Karamat'. We see an example of this in the Qur'an – the follower of Hazret Suleiman (peace be upon him) was able to bring the throne of the Queen of Sheba from hundreds of miles away in the blink of an eye. In the stories of the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Hazret Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was able to see a battlefield many hundreds of miles away and call out to the commander of the Muslims to beware of the enemy behind the mountain.

The other thing this Hadith tells us about the Awliyah-Allah is that when they ask Allah for something He accepts their Dua. If you had a close friend who you loved would you not help them when they asked for help, or give them something they asked you for? If someone was to treat them badly, to quarrel and fight with your friend would you not become that person's enemy? This explains to us why we should be very careful about treating the friends of Allah in a disrespectful manner.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also told us that when Allah loves someone, He tells the Archangel Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) to also love them. Hazret Jibra'il loves them and tells the Angels that live in the Heavens (may Allah be pleased with them all) to also love that person. The Angels begin to love that person and then love for that person is also put into the hearts of people on Earth. This explains why the Awliyah-Allah are loved and respected by so many people from different parts of the world, rich and poor, Muslims and even non-Muslims. It also tells us that if we love the friends of Allah we are lucky because Allah chose to put the love for his friends in our hearts.

In conclusion, there is no reason all of us cannot try and become a friend of Allah. But this is not quick or easy, it will not happen without hard work. The first thing we must do is make sure we do all the Fardh acts. Once we find it easy to do these, we should try and slowly increase

the Nawafil acts we do. In this way, if we work hard to get closer to Allah, Allah will help us, He will bring us close to Him.

### Questions

- Do you know any of the Awliyah-Allah
- How do people become Awliyah-Allah?
- Why do people ask the Awliyah-Allah to pray for them?

### Activities

- Draw a picture of a house, make each room a different good deed - how tall can you make your house?
- Do you know any of the Awliyah-Allah? When you next visit them try and spend time sitting with them, listening to what they have to say

# How To Stop Doing Bad Things

We do bad things when we follow what our Nafs wants and listen to the whisperings of Shaitan. Our Nafs is the part of our self which always wants to enjoy itself and it doesn't care if we do this in Halaal (permissible) or Haraam (impermissible) ways. The Shaitan is our enemy, the thing he wants more than anything is to make us disobey Allah and go to Hell.

All of us are born with a conscience, whatever religion we grow up following. This is called the 'Fitrat' in Islam, the human nature which Allah put in all of us. When we are about to do a bad deed, or disobey Allah, our conscience will tell us this is the wrong thing to do. But the Shaitan and our Nafs will try and convince us that we should do it anyway. The Prophet (peace be upon us) told us:

*“Ask your heart regarding piety. Piety is that which contents the soul and comforts the heart, and sin is that which causes doubts and disturbs the heart...” (Ahmad)*

If we don't listen to our conscience, and instead listen to Shaitan and our Nafs then our heart will grow hard, it will become darker, and we will get further from Allah. When we first start doing bad things our conscience will keep bothering us, we will feel guilty about what we have done. We might ask forgiveness from Allah and try and stop doing those bad things. But if we don't ask Allah to forgive us, or still keep on doing bad things, over time it will become easier for us to ignore our conscience and follow the advice of Shaitan and our Nafs. If this happens our heart will grow black and we will no longer feel bad when we do bad things. In fact we may even enjoy and feel proud of being bad. This means we have forgotten Allah.

The way to save ourselves, to fight against our Nafs and Shaitan, is to listen to our conscience. The way to strengthen our conscience is to do the things Allah has asked us to do and follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him). When we worship Allah, when we remember Allah, this helps us control our Nafs and to ignore the whisperings of Shaitan. In every Rakaat (unit) of the 5 daily prayers we read Surah Fatihah in which we ask Allah to guide us on the right path. If we read this with understanding, and are really asking Allah to guide us, praying the Salaat every day will help protect us from doing bad things.

We should also always remember that on our shoulders sit two Angels, on the right side the Angel writes down everything good we do, on the left side the Angel writes down all our bad deeds. However, we can see how kind Allah is in the way they write down our deeds. If we think about doing a good deed, even if we don't end up doing it this still gets written down as a good deed. If we also do the good deed it gets multiplied 10 – 700 times, or even more when it is recorded by the Angel on the right shoulder. If we think about doing a bad deed this doesn't get written down, since we haven't done it, we are just thinking about it. If we think about doing a bad deed but then stop ourselves from doing it because we remember Allah, this gets written down as a good deed since we were going to do something bad but stopped ourselves. If we end up doing the bad deed, this gets recorded as one bad deed by the Angel on the left.

But even more important than remembering that these two Angels are writing down everything we do is to remember that Allah is always watching us, He knows everything we do, even our thoughts and feelings. So whenever we do something if we remember that Allah knows and will judge us, this should stop us from doing bad things. Sometimes, even though we know that Allah is watching us we still do bad things because we think they aren't that bad, it is just a small sin. We should not think of any bad deed or sin as not important, because it might be important to Allah. But also, how can we say we love Allah if we do things we know



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He doesn't like, on purpose while He is watching us? One of the best types of Dhikr'Allah is to stop ourselves from doing a sin we were about to do because we remember that Allah is watching us and we don't want to make Him angry.

In conclusion, to stop doing bad things we must fight with and learn to ignore our two enemies (the Nafs and Shaitan), and learn to listen to our conscience. We can strengthen our conscience by following the commands of Allah and the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This will be easier if we remember that everything we do is being written down by the Angels on our shoulders, and that Allah is always watching us.

### Questions

- What two things do we need to defeat to stop doing bad things?
- What happens to us if we keep doing bad things?
- How are our good and bad deeds recorded?
- Who else is watching us all the time?

### Activities

- Use a mirror to reflect the light of a lamp. Paint some black spots on it – what happens as you paint more and more black spots on the mirror?
- Keep painting black spots on the mirror until it is all black – can you see any reflection of the lamp's light in the mirror?
- Now wash the mirror and polish it with a clean cloth – what can you see now?

# Istighfar – Asking Allah To Forgive Us

Istighfar means asking Allah to forgive our sins. One of the 99 names of Allah is Al-Ghaffar – The Ever-Forgiving. He tells us in the Qur'an that as long as we only worship Him, He forgives every other type of bad deed. In a hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Allah tells us that even if our sins were to reach the sky, even if our sins were enough to cover the whole Earth, as long as we keep turning back to Allah, He will forgive us.

Allah also tells us that forgiving our sins is something He loves to do. In a Hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us to imagine a man travelling in the desert with a camel carrying his water. He goes to sleep and when he wakes up the camel is gone. The man searches for his camel in the burning sun, getting thirstier and more tired until he is nearly dead. He goes to sleep again expecting to die in his sleep but when he wakes up his camel is standing by him. Imagine how happy he would be since he thought he was going to die but now he won't. Allah tells us that when someone asks Allah to forgive them, He is even happier than this man. All of this is to encourage us that no matter how bad we have been, or for how long, Allah is always waiting for us to turn back to Him and to ask Him to forgive us. We should not become hopeless, we should never think that Allah will not forgive us. This is one of the ways Shaitan tricks us into not doing Istighfar.

What should we do Istighfar for? For when we do not do the things Allah has told us to do, like pray Salaat. For when we lie or cheat or steal or argue or fight. For when we hurt other people feelings, especially our family. For when we do not properly thank Allah for everything that He has given us. So there is always something for which we should be doing Istighfar. This means we should ask Allah to forgive

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us every day. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was free from sins and guaranteed Paradise but he still did Istighfar 100 times every day.

But for our Istighfar to be accepted we have to be really sorry for what we have done. Allah will not forgive us if we are telling him we are sorry and that we won't sin again but we do not mean it; if we are just saying it but we know that we are not going to stop doing bad things. Allah knows every secret in our heart, every thought in our mind, we cannot lie to Him. When we do Istighfar we must feel ashamed of what we have done, scared that Allah will be angry with us and will punish us. We must promise to ourselves and to Allah that we will do our best to never sin again.

When we do Istighfar in this way then not only does Allah forgive us, He makes it as though we never did the sin in the first place. One of His other 99 names is Al-Afu – The Pardoner, The Eraser Of Sins. If we do Istighfar in this way the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that whenever we are in any difficulty or trouble, Allah will make it go away. Whenever we are sad, He will make us happy. Whenever we need something, Allah will give it to us from places we do not expect, and in ways we could not imagine.

But there are some sins which Allah will not forgive even if we do Istighfar in the proper way. These are bad things we have done to other people. Allah tells us that He won't forgive these sins, we have to first ask for forgiveness from the people we have hurt. If we don't do this then the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that on the Day of Judgment, in exchange for our sins against other people Allah will give them our good deeds. If we run out of good deeds then Allah will give their sins to us. This means that even if we spend our whole life worshipping Allah, if we are not careful of how we treat other people we will still go to Hell.

In conclusion, we should follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and try and do Istighfar every day. We should be very careful about hurting others, and when we do this to ask for their forgiveness so our good deeds don't go to waste on the Day of Judgment.

### Questions

- Is Allah angry with us if we ask Him to forgive us?
- What can we do Istighfar for?
- If we plan to do the same bad thing again, can we do Istighfar for it?
- Why should we be extra careful about hurting other people?

### Activities

- Try to remember when you did something really naughty, and were afraid someone would find out- how scared were you? How much did you wish you hadn't done it? Did you promise yourself you wouldn't do it again if no-one found out and you didn't get in trouble?
- Before you go to sleep, think of anything that happened during the day for which you should do Istighfar
- Think of anyone you have hurt, and ask them to forgive you – What did they say? How did it feel to do this?

# Controlling Our Anger

Anger is an emotion in every human being, we all get angry at certain times, at certain things. It can be a useful emotion and we should feel angry about things we see that are not right, such as if someone is being bullied, a crime is being committed, or people are getting killed in war. Our anger can make us want to help these people and try to stop bad things from happening.

However, anger is an emotion that can be hard to control, it can take control of us. Sometimes this happens for things we shouldn't get angry about in the first place. When this happens we can say and do things that hurt other people, and this can also make Allah angry with us.

So how can we control our anger? The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that when you feel yourself getting angry, say the Isti'adha:

*Audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem*

*I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Shaitan*

This will help because Shaitan likes it when we get angry, because when we are angry we argue and fight with other people, we are more likely to do bad things. Therefore, he is always trying to make us get angry about things we should not get angry about, and when we get angry to let it take control of us. By asking Allah to protect us from Shaitan we can stop ourselves from listening to his whispers.

After having read the Isti'adha, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us to control our anger by staying silent, by not saying anything when we are angry. If we are arguing with someone this will stop the argument from carrying on and will also stop us from saying nasty things. If doing this hasn't helped and we still feel angry, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us to sit down. Or if we are already sitting, to lie down. By changing our position we are making ourselves think about something else, and not

about the thing that is making us angry. If we still feel angry, we should go and do Wudhu. Anger is like fire in the way that fire burns everything it touches and is difficult to control, but water puts out fire.

Sometimes we think that becoming angry and making other people scared of us shows how strong we are. But the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that real strength is not about being able to wrestle, fight or scare other people. Real strength is being able to control our anger. Allah knows this is not an easy thing for us to do, which is why the person who tries to control their anger has a great reward. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that the person who controls their anger when there is nothing stopping them from doing whatever they want when they are angry, Allah will make them happy on the Day of Judgment.

For this reason we should remember and act upon the advice of the Prophet on how to control our anger. We should also pray to Allah to make us less angry, to make us only get angry about things we should get angry about, and to help us control ourselves when we do get angry.

### Questions

- Why should we try to control our anger?
- What are the different ways we can try to control our anger?
- What rewards are there for being able to do this?

### Activities

- Write a list of the things you get angry about – think about which of these you should get angry about
- Think of the last time you got angry with someone else – did you say something to hurt their feelings? How did you feel afterwards?
- Next time you feel angry try your best to stay quiet and not say anything, or leave the room

# Forgiving Other People

In Islamic law if someone commits a crime they are given a similar punishment to the crime they committed, e.g. a murderer is given the death penalty. However, Allah says in the Qur'an that if you forgive someone who commits a crime against you, Allah will reward you. The Qur'an also tells us to forgive people and ignore things about them you don't like or things that they do that annoy you. Allah asks us in the Qur'an, that wouldn't we like Allah to do the same for us?

In many places in the Qur'an Allah calls himself by His names which mean The Most Forgiving, The Most Merciful, The Kind, The One Who Pardons, the One Who Accepts Repentance. The Prophet (peace be upon him) taught us that if we are kind to others, Allah will be kind to us and if we forgive others, Allah will forgive us. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also described the Muslims as those who are not jealous of or hate each other, and if someone makes a mistake against them they don't remember it for a long time and take revenge, they forgive and forget.

We also have the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who Allah describes in the Qur'an as having the most excellent character, and being a mercy for all creation. When he went to Taif to spread the message of Islam, the leaders were so rude they didn't even listen to what he had to say and the people threw stones at him as he left until his shoes were filled with blood. Allah sent the Angel of the mountains, who told the Prophet that because of the way he had been treated, if he wanted the Angel could bring the mountains around Taif together destroying the whole city. But instead the Prophet (peace be upon him) chose to forgive them. When the Muslims conquered Makkah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) faced the same people who had called him names and made fun of him, who tried to kill him and tortured his followers, who had made the lives of the Muslims so unbearable that they left Makkah leaving behind

their homes and everything they had. Even they expected the Prophet to take revenge against them, but instead he forgave them.

In conclusion, we all want and need Allah to be forgiving towards us. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that no-one will enter Paradise because of their good deeds, not even him, but because of the mercy and kindness of Allah. But how can we expect Allah to forgive us if we don't forgive others; how can we expect Allah to be kind to us when we aren't kind to others? By trying to copy the forgiving and loving nature of the Prophet (peace be upon him) we will benefit the people around us, but also ourselves on the Day of Judgment.

### Questions

- Do we want Allah to forgive us for our bad deeds and mistakes?
- How will Allah reward us if we forgive other people?
- How did the Prophet (peace be upon him) behave towards the people who hurt him?

### Activities

- Imagine people treated you as badly as they treated the Prophet (peace be upon him) and imagine you could take revenge against them – think about what you would have done to them
- When someone does something to hurt you don't take revenge, try to forgive them instead because you want Allah to forgive you



# The Importance Of Good Manners

In the Qur'an Allah says that He loves those who do good things, who control their anger and forgive people. He also tells us to only say things that are good, and if we know something bad that someone has done, we shouldn't tell other people about it. Allah warns us not to be proud and not to call people bad names. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us we should love for others what we like for ourselves and that giving gifts will increase our love for each other. He told us a good Muslim is someone who does not hurt other Muslims with his hands or his tongue (someone who doesn't do or say bad things to people). He told us to be kind to those younger than us, to respect those older than us, and warned us that we will not enter Paradise if we cause trouble for our neighbours. He even told us that if there are three people in a place, two of them shouldn't talk to each other without including the third person because otherwise they will feel left out.

Allah told us in the Qur'an that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had the most excellent character. His companions (may Allah be pleased with them all) would try and copy everything he did and the way he did it, so their character would also become excellent. When we look at the character of the Prophet it teaches us what good manners include:

- Being polite, saying please and thank you, not swearing or saying bad things
- Always smiling and being in a good mood and not grumpy
- Helping others even if it means going out of our way, especially those who are poor and needy
- Not backbiting (talking about other people), lying, or talking about things we don't like about other people
- Forgiving others for their mistakes and not flattering others just to please them

- Giving and receiving gifts, inviting people to eat at our house, and going to their house when they invite us, being generous and kind to our guests
- Taking care of our personal hygiene (how clean we are) so people don't have a problem if they sit or stand near us (wearing clean clothes, taking regular showers, using perfume, brushing our teeth)
- Telling others to do good things and trying to stop them from doing bad deeds

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that out of all of Allah's slaves, the ones Allah loves the most are those with the best manners. He also told us that on the Day of Judgment nothing will be heavier on the scales of our deeds than good manners.

This means we should all try our best to improve our manners. We should try to treat everyone we meet in the best way. We should learn about the excellent character of our Prophet (peace be upon him) so we can copy it. Whenever we meet someone we should think how can we help this person, how can we make their life better, how would the Prophet (peace be upon him) have dealt with them?

Allah loves His creation more than a mother loves her own baby, so when we help His creation, Allah loves us more and we get closer to Him. This is why the Awliyah-Allah (friends of Allah) have the best manners, people go to them when they need something and they spend their lives helping others.

### Questions

- What are some examples of good manners?
- What are some examples of bad manners?
- What is the reward for having good manners?

### Activities

- Make a list of the good manners you have and make another list of your bad manners you would like to change
- Try and hear stories or read about the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) so you can learn how he treated people and try to copy him

# How To Treat Our Neighbours

Who is our neighbour? Is it the people living next door to us? Is it all the people who live on our street? Or is it everyone who lives in our area, or who goes to the same Mosque as us? It depends on where we live, in different places being a neighbour means different things. But we must remember, it is not only Muslims who are our neighbours, it is people who live close to us of all religions.

So how should we treat our neighbours? Allah tells us in the Qur'an to treat our neighbours kindly. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that whoever believes in Allah and the Day of Judgment should be generous to his neighbour. He also told us that you can't be a true Muslim unless you would like for your neighbour what you like for yourself. This shows how important it is to treat our neighbour well, as we treat our friends or relatives, and would want others to treat us.

But what about the person who doesn't treat their neighbour in this way? The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that someone whose neighbour does not feel safe from them is not a Muslim and will not enter Paradise. Once he was asked about a woman who fasted during the day and prayed extra prayers during night (Nawafil Salaat), but spoke in a bad way with her neighbours, hurting their feelings. He said there is no good in her and she will go to Hell. He even said that someone who goes to sleep having filled his stomach with food while knowing that his neighbour is hungry does not believe in him as the Messenger of Allah.

So what does this teach us about how we should treat our neighbours?

- We shouldn't argue or fight with them, even if they are not nice to us
- We should meet with and talk to them nearly every day, to find out how they are

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- We should invite them to eat at our house, we should send food we have made to their house, and if they invite us to their house to eat we should accept their invitation
- If they are unwell we should visit them in their homes or in the hospital
- If they need help we should help them, with our time and money
- If they have some good luck we should congratulate and be happy for them, not jealous
- If something bad happens to them we should feel sorry for them and pray for them, not feel happy
- If they commit a sin and we find out we shouldn't tell other people about it
- If they die we should go to their funeral

The reason why Islam tells us it is so important to be kind and generous to our neighbours is because if everyone did this the world we live in would be full of peace and happiness, everyone would take care of and help each other. This is how the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his companions lived in Madinah (may Allah be pleased with them all).

### Questions

- Who counts as your neighbour?
- How should we treat our neighbour?
- Why is it important to treat our neighbours well?

Activities

- Next time something you like is cooked in your house, take some of it for one of your neighbours
- Are any of your neighbours having problems or need help? Think about what you can do to help them, even if it is just to visit them and make Dua for them
- Invite one of your neighbours to your house to eat

# How Important Is It To Tell The Truth?

Allah tells us in the Qur'an to be afraid of Him and to tell the truth. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also told us that we should always tell the truth. He told us that speaking the truth will make us do good things, and doing good things will take us to Paradise. If we try to always speak the truth Allah will know us as a 'Sideeq' – a speaker of truth. The Prophet (peace be upon him) warned us against telling lies. He told us that lying will make us do bad things, and doing bad things will take us to Hell. If we keep telling lies Allah will know us as a liar.

As the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us, not being careful about speaking the truth will mean we are also not careful about the things we do. We will be more likely to cheat and steal. There are many different ways in which we can tell the truth and not tell lies:

- If someone asks us a question, especially about someone else
- If someone asks us if we can do something or know something
- If we are buying or selling something
- If we have to be a witness, saying what we saw or heard in court or to the police
- When talking about verses of the Qur'an and Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), especially for Islamic teachers

Allah cursed Jewish and Christian teachers who on purpose changed the Revelations their Prophet's brought them. They changed the words of Allah, and so made it difficult for their followers to worship Allah. The Prophet (peace be upon him) even cursed those who lie to make people laugh. So even when telling jokes we should tell the truth. This is because if we lie when telling jokes, we will become used to lying and will be more likely to lie even when not joking.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that a believer can be a coward or a miser (someone who doesn't like spending money, even on things they should) but not a liar. One of the ways you tell that someone is a hypocrite is that whenever they speak, they lie.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) once had a dream in which he saw a man lying on his back, with another man with an iron hook standing over him. He would put the hook into one cheek and tear off that side of his face, then he would put the hook in the other cheek and tear off the other side of his face. While he was doing that, the first side of his face would heal, and so he could keep ripping the man's cheeks off. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was told this is the punishment of a liar.

The reason why Islam says it is so important to tell the truth and not lie is that lying does not just affect one person. For example, if someone was applying for a job and lied that they could do something they really couldn't do to get the job, they wouldn't be able to do the job for which they are getting paid. This will mean the business they work for will lose money, but it will also mean that someone else who should have got the job will not have a job, and they may have needed it to feed their family, who will now stay hungry. If everyone was to lie no-one would want to spend time with each other or be friends, you wouldn't be able to even trust people in your own family, no one would be able to help each other.

However, there are three times when you are allowed to lie as a Muslim. The first is if you want to make someone happy. For example, you go to someone's house and they've made food for you and ask you if you like it. You can also lie in war, since telling the truth might make you lose. Lying is also allowed when trying to help two people who are arguing or fighting to become friends again.

In conclusion we should follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in always trying to tell the truth in everything we do and say, so that it becomes easy for us. This will save us from doing bad things, which would otherwise lead us to Hell.



### Questions

- What is the reward for always trying to tell the truth?
- What would happen if everyone told lies?
- Are we ever allowed to tell a lie?

### Activities

- Try not to tell any lies for a whole day, even ones you think aren't important or while joking – what was it like to do this?
- When someone next asks you something where telling the truth would hurt their feelings, make them happy instead

# How To Behave In The Mosque

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that when a Muslim is not in the Mosque they are like a fish out of water, they want to get back in as soon as possible, they cannot stay alive without it. He also told us that one of the ways to tell if someone is a hypocrite is that when they are in the Mosque they are like a bird in a cage, they feel trapped, they want to escape as soon as they can. A hypocrite is someone who pretends to be a Muslim, or may even think they are a Muslim but when life becomes hard, when they have to make sacrifices for their Islam, they aren't ready to do this and don't follow Allah's commands and the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This means they aren't real Muslims. So we should ask ourselves, when we come to the Mosque which group do we belong to? Do we feel like this is where we belong, are we comfortable, do we enjoy ourselves? Or do we feel uncomfortable, get distracted easily, and can't wait to leave?

How can we make sure we are in the first group and not the second? We can do this by thinking about what we are doing when we visit the Mosque. We all have people we admire, who we like, people we would love to spend time with. Imagine if they invited you to their house. You would have a bath and put on perfume, you would wear your best clothes, freshly ironed, and while you were there you would be on your best behaviour, listening carefully, not getting distracted. You would want to spend lots of time with them and not want to leave.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that when we visit the Mosque we are Allah's guest, Allah has called us to His house. He is the King of kings, the One who created us and gave us everything we have.

But how do we behave when we go to the Mosque, to Allah's house? We do not like going to the Mosque, we think it is boring, we prefer going shopping, we prefer going to the cinema, we prefer spending

time with our friends. When we do come to the Mosque we come as late as we can and we leave as early as we can; we rush and run out of the Mosque even if that means disturbing others. The time that we spend in the Mosque is nearly all spent thinking about worldly matters.

So what would you think about the guest that comes to your house as late as he can and while he is there he plays with his mobile phone and is clearly busy thinking about what he was doing that day and making plans for what he will be doing tomorrow, and ignoring you completely? He keeps looking at his watch and as soon as he can he runs out of your house. You know that if it was up to him he would not come to your house at all. Would you invite this person back to your house?

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that talking about worldly matters in the Mosque eats up good deeds like fire eats up fuel. In another Hadith he told us that when someone begins talking about worldly matters in the mosque the Angels say to him, "*O friend of Allah be quiet.*" If he talks again they say, "*Enemy of Allah be silent.*" If he talks again they say "*Allah's curse be upon you! Hold your tongue!*"

So how can we improve our behaviour? By spending a few minutes thinking about what we are doing when we visit the Mosque. Think about whose house we are going to. Think about how we would behave if we were visiting people we love and respect, and then think how much greater Allah is than anyone else. Think about how lucky we are for Allah to invite us to His house, to spend time with Him.

Allah showers us with blessings when we come to the Mosque, for every step we take to come to the Mosque a bad deed is erased and our level is made higher. As long as we stay in the Mosque the Angels pray for us, and our Salaat are 20 times more valuable than if we prayed them at home. On the Day of Judgment when there will be no shade from the burning Sun, one of the people Allah will give shade to is the person who loves going to the Mosque.

So the next time you come to the Mosque, think about if you are like the fish in water or the bird in the cage?

### Questions

- Why should we like going to the Mosque?
- How does this mean we should behave while we are there?
- What are the rewards for coming to the Mosque?
- What will happen to our good deeds if we talk about worldly matters in the Mosque?

### Activities

- Next time you go to the Mosque imagine you have gone to visit Allah and are in His house
- If you don't live too far from your local Mosque, instead of driving there try walking instead

# Assalamo-alaykum – The Greeting Of Peace

The Islamic way of saying ‘hello’ to someone (greeting them) is by saying ‘Assalamo-alaykum’. This can be translated as ‘peace be upon you’. Allah tells in the Qur’an that if someone gives us Salaam, we should reply to them in the same way, or an even better way. We know what returning the Salaam means, it is to say ‘Walaikomuslaam’ which means ‘peace be upon you too’. But what is the meaning of giving a better reply?

One day a man passed by the Prophet (peace be upon him) while he was sitting with some men, and said “*Assalamo-alaykum.*” The Prophet said, “*He will have 10 rewards.*” Another man passed by and said “*Assalamo-alaykum wa rahmatullah.*” The Prophet said, “*He will have 20 rewards.*” Another man passed and said “*Assalamo-alaykum wa rahmatullah wa barakaatuh*” (peace and mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you). The Prophet said, “*And he will have 30 rewards.*” (*Bukhari*)

When should we use this greeting? In Qur’an Allah tells us to give Salaam when we enter houses, and in the Hadith we are told to give Salaam when we arrive at gatherings and when we leave them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also told us that if we are with someone we have already given Salaam to and while walking we are separated by a tree or wall, when we meet again on the other side we should give Salaam again. This tells us we should not feel embarrassed of saying the Salaam to the same person, even if we only said it a little while ago.

Allah has hidden many blessings within giving and receiving the Salaam, not only for each person but also for the whole Muslim community (the Ummah). The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us it is the right of a Muslim on another Muslim that when they meet they should say Salaam to each other. He also told us that we will not enter Paradise

until we believe, and we will not believe until we love each other, and one way to increase our love for each other is to say Salaam to each other. In another Hadith he told us that when two Muslims meet and shake hands with each other, before they leave each other's company their sins are forgiven.

This is such a special greeting that on the Day of Judgment the Angels will use it to greet the Muslims who are entering Paradise, and in Paradise, Allah Himself will greet us in this way, as we told in Surah Yasin:

*“...and the greeting: ‘Peace!’ spoken by The Caring Lord.”*

*(Qur'an 36:58)*

### Questions

- What is the meaning of Assalamo-alaykum ?
- How do we say the Salaam in full?
- How should we reply when someone says this to us?
- What is the benefit of giving Salaam to each other?

### Activities

- Next time you give Salaam to someone, say it in full
- Try to give Salaam rather than waiting for someone else to give you Salaam first
- When you go into your house, even if no-one else is home, give Salaam

# Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Raheem – Starting With The Name Of Allah

The meaning of Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Raheem is:

*‘In the name of Allah, The Kind, The Caring.’*

This Dua contains three very special names of Allah. The first is Allah itself, which is the name of Allah which contains all His other names and some Islamic teachers say is the most powerful name of Allah, His ‘Ism-e-Azam’. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that if we make a Dua to Allah using His Ism-e-Azam, the Dua will always be accepted. The other two are Rahman and Raheem, which are almost the same but mean slightly different things.

Rahman is the mercy of Allah which surrounds all of His creation – He has not only created everything, He also supports it all of the time. This is the mercy of Allah which we see in this world, in which those who believe in Him and don’t believe in Him, who do good things and who do bad things are both given everything they need.

Raheem is the mercy of Allah which He sends on His creation according to their actions – the more you follow His instructions in the Qur’an and follow the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the more of His mercy you will receive. This is the mercy of Allah which we will see in the afterlife, where the Muslims will receive rewards for their good deeds and their bad deeds will be forgiven; but the non-Muslims will not receive this mercy because they didn’t believe in Allah or do what He told them to.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) told us to say the Bismillah before we eat or drink, come into or leave our house, go on a journey, do some work or an exam; in other words anything and

everything, no matter how big or small. This has many benefits for us. The first is that we will make Allah happy by doing what the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us to. Second, if we try and read the Bismillah before we do anything it will help to remind us of Allah, that Allah is always watching us, listening to us, and with us, and so if we are about to do something bad we can stop ourselves, which is actually counted as a good deed. Third, it will remind us that whatever we are doing, we need Allah's help because nothing happens without His help. When we remember this and say Allah's name before starting what we are about to do then Allah will help us, and with His help we will be able to do whatever we are trying to do.

### Questions

- What is the meaning of Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Raheem?
- What is the difference between the two names of Allah, Rahman and Raheem?
- When should we read Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Raheem?
- How will this help us?

### Activities

- Before you eat say Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Raheem in a loud voice, so everyone who hears you is reminded to say it as well
- Before you do your homework say Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Raheem
- For a whole day try reading Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Raheem before you do anything – at the end of the day think about if this made any difference, and if so, in what way?



# Isti'adha – Asking Allah For Protection

The last two Surahs of the Qur'an, Surah Falaq and Surah Naas are also known as the Al-Mu'awwidhatayn. Both of these Surahs are Duas in which we ask Allah for protection, so they are a form of Isti'adha (ask Allah for protection from things we cannot see). The translation of Surah Falaq is:

*Say: 'I seek refuge with the Lord of the daybreak,  
from the evil of what He has created,  
and from the evil of the ever-darkening night,  
and from the evil of witches that blow on knots,  
and from the evil of an envious person when he envies.'*

*(Qur'an 113)*

So in Surah Falaq we first ask for protection from the evil of the things Allah has created. Since Allah has created everything that exists, this means we are asking for protection from every evil and harmful thing. But this does not mean that Allah causes bad things to happen, He has made the universe follow His natural laws so if it rains too much and a flood happens which destroys your house, you cannot blame Allah for that. In the same way He has given animals instincts which tells us how they behave, so if you go near a wild animal it will try to hurt you or even eat you. Humans have been given free will so they can choose to disobey Allah and behave in a way that hurts other people, again that is not Allah's fault. But nothing happens without Allah allowing it to happen, He is the One who gives power to all things. That is why we ask Allah to protect us from the evil of His creation.

We then ask for protection from three things, evil that happens in the night, black-magic, and the evil-eye. But why do we need to ask protection from these things when we have already asked Allah for

protection from everything? This is to tell us that these three things are the most dangerous for us out of all of Allah's creation.

The first is the night, and the evil that happens in it. We know that more crimes are committed at night, people get into more arguments and fights, this is normally when people drink alcohol and take drugs. If you were in the wild you would look for a safe place to spend the night (like an empty cave) because you would be scared a wild animal might attack you.

The second is black-magic. The magic tricks we see magicians do on TV is not real magic, those are just tricks. Real black-magic exists, and can be used to make husbands and wives argue, to make people unwell, to make them forgetful or unable to do their work.

The third is the evil-eye. This is when someone sees something and feels jealous about it, and in their heart they feel that the person they feel jealous off shouldn't have what they have. It is more likely to happen if you like showing-off. This can make the thing they feel jealous off go wrong for you. If the evil-eye wasn't real, or couldn't hurt us, Allah wouldn't have mentioned it in the Qur'an and told us to ask Him to protect us from it.

So in Surah Falaq we are asking Allah to protect us from physical things that can hurt our bodies and minds. The translation of Surah Naas is:

*Say: 'I seek refuge with the Lord of the people,  
the King of the people,  
the God of the people,  
from the evil of the sneaking whisperer,  
who whispers in people's hearts and minds,  
from among the Jinn and people.'* (Qur'an 114)

So in Surah Naas we are asking for protection from only one thing, the whispering of Shaitan. A simpler Dua for doing this is to read:

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*Audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem*

*I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed Shaitan*

Shaitan is one of the Jinn, who were created long before humans, and his other name is Iblis. He used to worship Allah so much that he became quite close to Allah and used to live with the Angels. When Allah created Hazret Adam (peace be upon him) He told all the Angels to bow down to him, including Iblis. The Angels all bowed down but Iblis refused because he was too proud. He believed he was better than Hazret Adam, he was made from fire while Hazret Adam was made from clay. He argued with Allah and when Allah told him off instead of realising his mistake and asking Allah to forgive him, he blamed Allah for making him do the wrong thing. He said he would make it his mission to do the same for Hazret Adam and all of his children, until the Day of Judgment.

So the Shaitan is a much more dangerous enemy for us than the things we asked protection from in Surah Falaq. This is because if someone did something to us to hurt us, it would cause us pain and difficulty but it would not be counted as a bad deed for us because it is someone else who has done something bad. But when Shaitan whispers to us, if we do what he wants, we will commit sins. We will not be able to blame him for our bad deeds, he did not force us to sin.

Shaitan is the most powerful enemy we have, we cannot see him, we cannot hear him, most of the time we forget he is even there, and when he whispers to us we think it is our own thoughts and feelings. The only way we know these are the whisperings of Shaitan is because he will always tell us to do bad things and not do good deeds. He does not get tired, he does not rest, from when we are children until we die he will always try to make us disobey Allah. What he wants most of all is to make us leave Islam and die as a non-Muslim, so we would be sent to Hell for all eternity, just as he will.

So when we have such a powerful and dangerous enemy we should do whatever we can to protect ourselves. What better way to do

that then to ask Allah to protect us, who in this Surah describes Himself as our Lord, our King, our God?

Once these two Surahs were revealed, this is all the Prophet (peace be upon him) would read to ask Allah to protect him. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) would become unwell he would read these two Surahs, blow on his hands and rub them over his body. He would also read them every night before going to sleep and when he woke up each morning.

We should follow this example and also try to remember to read Audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem with Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Raheem before we do anything. If we can do this with understanding of what we are reading and why we are reading it, Allah will give us protection from everything that can hurt our bodies and our faith.

### Questions

- What is Isti'adha?
- What do we ask Allah to protect us from in Surah Falaq?
- What is the Evil eye?
- What do we ask Allah to protect us from in Surah Naas?
- Why is it so important to ask Allah to protect us from Shaitan?
- What short Dua can we read before we do anything to get this protection?

### Activities

- Try and learn Surah Falaq and its translation
- Try and learn Surah Naas and its translation
- For a whole day try reading Audhu billahi min ash-shaitanir rajeem before you do anything – at the end of the day think about if this made any difference, and if so, in what way?
- Next time you do something you are proud of, don't tell other people about it or do it in a way that they won't feel jealous

# Insh'Allah – Remembering Allah Whenever We Plan To Do Something

Whenever we plan to do something we should say Insh'Allah. This means 'if Allah wills', or 'Allah willing'. Allah tells us in the Qur'an to never say we will do something without saying this. Because when we say this we remind ourselves that we do not have the power to be able to do anything, everything that happens, happens because Allah allows it to. Every blink of our eye, every beat of our heart, every breath we take, every leaf that falls, every drop of rain, every gust of wind, the rising of the Sun, everything happens by the will of Allah.

If we understand this then we should also understand that we might really want something to happen but Allah hasn't willed for it to happen. For example, we might want to pass an exam or interview and work very hard for it but still fail; or we may want to go on holiday or Haj/Umrah and save up money for it but still not be able to go. We might want something to not happen but Allah has willed for it to happen. For example, we might not want our parents or children to become ill or die but it still may happen; or we may not want to lose something we really like but it happens anyway. When something like this happens, we can become very sad, angry, and worried; it makes us think why is Allah doing this to us?

We must remember that this life is a test. Sometimes, and for some people Allah tests them by making their life easy. He tests them to see if they thank Him. Other people he tests with difficulties; are they patient, do they still worship Him? This is why the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that everything that happens to a Muslim is good for him. If something happens that he likes, he can thank Allah (do Shukr). If something happens that he doesn't like, he can be patient (have Sabr).

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By doing this we will always remember Allah, He will be happy with us, and we will get closer to Him.

What this tells us is that even if it doesn't seem like it, everything that happens to us (even the things we don't like), are actually good for us as long as we can do Shukr and have Sabr. This makes sense when we remember what the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us, that Allah loves each and every one of us even more than a mother loves her baby. If this is true then how can we imagine that anything Allah allows to happen to us can be bad for us? It is just like a parent who has to hold their crying child and force open their mouth to give them bitter medicine; the child doesn't like it but their parent is doing what is best for them because they love them.

So whenever we plan to do something, we should say Insh'Allah. But we shouldn't just say it, we should think about what it means, that anything and everything that happens is only by the will of Allah. Allah is the One who knows everything, we do not know anything. So whatever we might want to happen or not happen, Allah knows better than us what is best for us. Whatever ends up happening, even if it is not what we wanted, it is what Allah wanted and it will be better for us. Therefore, we should be grateful and have patience. If we do this we will be happy even when we have difficult times in our life. Because of our Shukr and Sabr Allah will be pleased with us, and we will get closer to Him.

### Questions

- What is the meaning of Insh'Allah?
- Are we in control of what happens in our life?
- What is the purpose of this life?
- How much does Allah love us?
- What does this tell us about why things happen to us we might not like?
- What should we do when such things happen?

### Activities

- Think about the last time something happened that you didn't want to happen – write a list of ways in which it turned out to be good for you
- Think about the last time something didn't happen that you wanted to happen – write a list of ways in which it turned out to be good for you
- Think about the last time something happened that you wanted to happen – write a list of ways in which it turned out to be bad for you
- Think about the last time something didn't happen that you didn't want to happen – write a list of ways in which it turned out to be bad for you
- When you next think about something you are planning to do, remember to say Insh'Allah, and remind yourself that it will only happen if Allah wills it to



# Mash'Allah – Being Happy For Other People And Not Feeling Jealous

We say 'Mash'Allah' when we hear about someone having done something we like; they may have passed an exam or interview, or they may have gotten married or had a baby. We might also say it when we like someone's personal qualities, such as how beautiful or handsome they are, or how clever or strong they are. The translation of Mash'Allah is 'as Allah willed' – which means by saying this we are realising that whatever good we see in someone, it is from Allah.

So if we understand this it should stop us from feeling jealous of other people. We feel jealous when we hear about other people, how well they have done or something they have, and believe that we should have what they have. Sometimes we even believe they shouldn't have it. When we feel like this what we need to remember is that since Allah is the One who has given us what we have and given others what they have, when we feel jealous we are saying that Allah has made a mistake (Naudhabillah). We are saying that we know better than Allah about who should have something and who shouldn't.

This is what happened to Iblis when Allah commanded him to bow down to Hazret Adam (peace be upon him) but he refused. He thought that he was better than Hazret Adam, he was jealous of this high status Allah was giving to his Prophet (peace be upon him). Iblis should have accepted that Allah knew what he did not know, but his ego, his pride wouldn't let him obey Allah. So when we are jealous of others, when we believe we deserve what they have and they don't deserve it, we are following Shaitan's example.

By saying Mash'Allah when we see things in others that we like, we remind ourselves that Allah is the One who gave them what they have, and He knows better than we do who He should give things to. We should

be happy for them, and if it is something we want we can make Dua to Allah for Him to give it to us as well, if it will be better for us. We should remember that it may be a blessing of Allah that He has not given us what others have. For example, we might be poor but if we were rich we would spend that money in Haraam ways or not pay Zakaat and so make Allah angry. Allah knows better than we do what is good for us and what isn't. We should learn to be happy with everything Allah has given us, it is already more than we can be thankful for.

By saying Mash'Allah we also encourage the person we are saying it about to remember that it is through Allah's blessings that they have what they have. This should encourage them to be thankful to Allah (to do Shukr), instead of being proud. This is a good lesson for us also, when we have something we feel good about we should always remember that everything we have and we do is from Allah. This means we must not be proud, without the blessings of Allah upon us we would have nothing, we would be nothing. We should always be grateful to Allah and especially when something good happens we should say 'Alhumdolillah' – which means all praise and thanks belong to Allah.

In conclusion, we should try to remember to say Mash'Allah whenever we hear or see something of someone else's that we like, and by understanding its meaning, we will not feel jealous of them.

### Questions

- What is the meaning of Mash'Allah?
- Why should we not feel jealous of other people?
- How can saying Mash'Allah help us to be happy?

### Activities

- Think about something someone else has that you want – think about the ways it may be bad for you if Allah had given it to you
- The next time you praise someone, say Mash'Allah
- The next time someone praises you, say Alhumdolillah

# Jazak'Allah Khair – Thanking Others

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

*“Whoever says ‘Jazakallahu khayran’ to anyone who has done him a favour, he has thanked him in the best way.” (Abu Dawood)*

‘Jazak'Allah Khair’ can be translated as ‘may Allah reward you with goodness.’ We should not shorten this to just Jazak'Allah - since that means ‘may Allah Reward you...’ without saying with what. This is a better way of thanking someone than just saying “thank you.” Instead you are doing a Dua for Allah to reward them. This means this is also a form of Ibadah (worship) and Dhikr'Allah (remembering Allah).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also told us that if someone does you a favour, you should do a favour for them. If you cannot, you should say something nice about them, and by doing that you are thanking them. This tells us we should not only say ‘Jazak'Allah Khair’ but if we are able to, we should return someone’s favour by helping them, and if we can’t, we should say nice things about them for helping us.

Someone might say it is really only Allah who helps us, so shouldn’t we thank Him instead of other people? The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us:

*“One who does not thank people does not give thanks to Allah, either.” (Tirmidhi)*

As Muslims we believe that all good comes from Allah, but Allah can make this good come to us directly from himself, or through someone else. They can be the ‘Sabub’ - the means, by which good reaches us. The biggest example of this is the way in which Allah sent Prophets to teach people rather than just sending books of Revelation.

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So Allah wants us to thank the people by which we receive good, because Allah has chosen them for this job for a reason. The kind of person who is not thankful to the people through which he receives good, is also not going to be thankful to Allah.

### Questions

- What is the meaning of Jazak'Allah Khair?
- Why is it important to thank other people?
- Why don't we just thank Allah directly?

### Activities

- The next time someone does something for you, thank them by saying Jazak'Allah Khair
- Think about whether there is anything you can do for them in return

# Subhan'Allah – Praising Allah

The Tasbeeh is a special type of Dhikr'Allah (remembering Allah) which includes 'Subhan'Allah'. This is often translated as 'praise be to Allah', 'or glory be to Allah' but the meaning of saying Subhan'Allah is to understand that Allah is perfect, and there is nothing else like Him. We sometimes say Subhan'Allah when we see something of Allah's creation that amazes us, such as a beautiful animal (like a tiger or a peacock), or the natural world (like a sunset or a waterfall).

This Dhikr is mentioned in the Qur'an:

*Subhana llahi 'amma yasifun*

*'Glory be to Allah, He is far above what they imagine.'*

*(Qur'an 37:159)*

*Subhana llahi 'amma yushrikun*

*'Glory be to Allah, He is far above what they associate with Him.'*

*(Qur'an 52:43)*

Allah revealed these verses because the Jews, Christians and Pagans believed that Allah has a son or daughters. It is also telling the non-Muslims that the idols they worship cannot be Allah, because He is the One who is perfect and cannot be compared to anything in His creation, so how can He be something they made?

This Dhikr is also included in our Salaat when we bow down in the Ruku. This is a position in which we are being humble, we are realising we do not have the power to do anything, and in this position we say: *Subhaana rabbiyal azeem* (glory be to my Lord, The Greatest). When we fall down in Sajda we put the highest part of our body, our forehead, on the ground and realise how low and full of sins we are. While in this position we say *Subhaana rabbiyal a'ala* (glory be to my Lord, The Most High).

Subhan'Allah is also one of the three parts of the Tasbeeh of Hazret Fatima (may Allah be pleased with her), along with Alhumdolillah and Allah-u-Akbar. If we read these three (33, 33, and 34 times) after every Salaat, Allah will forgive all our small sins.

There are two very special Dhikr which contain Subhan'Allah, which we should try and read as much as we can. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was taken on the Isra w'al-Miraj by Hazret Jibra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) up to the seventh Heaven, he met Hazret Ibrahim (peace be upon him). He told the Prophet (peace be upon him) to tell his followers (his Ummah) that the soil of Paradise is fertile, the water is sweet, and plants or trees grow whenever they will read *Subhana-llahi, wal-hamdu lillahi, wa la ilaha illallahu, wallahu akbar, wa la hawla wa la quwwata illa billah* – which we read as the third Kalimah. This special Dhikr combines:

- The Tasbeeh (Subhan'Allah)
- The Tahmid (Alhamdulillah) – where we give all praise and thanks to Allah
- The Tahlil (La ilaha illallah) – where we say that there is no God other than Allah, who is the only One worthy of worship
- The Takbir (Allahu Akbar) – where we say that Allah is the greatest
- The Hawqala (Wa-la-hawla wa-la-Quwwata illa billah) – another type of Tasbeeh, where we say that all power and strength belongs to Allah, we are powerless, everything that happens is by His will

Regarding the second Dhikr, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that there are two Dhikr which are light on the tongue (which means they are easy to read), but will be heavy on our scales of deeds on the Day of Judgment because Allah loves them. These are Subhanallah wa bi-hamdihi, Subhanallah al-azim (glory be to Allah, who is due all praise, glory be to Allah, The Greatest).

There are many other Hadith regarding this Dhikr, especially the first half; *Subhanallah wa bi-hamdihi*. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us:

*“Whoever says this 100 times, a 1000 good deeds are recorded for him, or a 1000 bad deeds are wiped away.” (Muslim)*

He also told us:

*“Whoever says this a 100 times a day, his sins are wiped away, even if they are like the foam of the sea.” (Bukhari)*

In conclusion, we should try and read this special Dhikr every day, whether it is when we are looking at the beauty of Allah’s creation all around us, or remembering Allah in the Salaat and at other times.

### Questions

- What is the meaning of Subhan’Allah?
- What is Tasbeeh of Hazret Fatima?
- What is the third Kalimah?
- Which two phrases are light on the tongue, but heavy in the scales?



### Activities

- Next time you pray Salaat and read Subhaana rabbiyal a'ala while in Sajda, think about how small and insignificant you are compared to Allah, but how lucky you are that He has chosen you to worship Him
- Next time you pray Salaat, read Tasbeeh Fatima on your fingers remembering the daughter of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with her), how poor her family was, and how humble and pious she was
- Read a Tasbeeh of Subhanallah wa bi-hamdihi, Subhanallah al-azim while imagining your scale of deeds on the Day of Judgment becoming heavy, letting you enter Paradise

# The Importance Of Attending Funerals

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us to visit sick people and to follow the coffins of dead people because they remind us of the next life. There are very few things that are certain in this life but one of them is that we will all die. We make plans for the future, what we will do tomorrow, on the weekend, next month, next year. But we cannot be sure we will be alive at the end of the day or even take our next breath. You might become suddenly unwell, or you might have an accident, even if you are sitting inside your house. So even though we know we will die, no-one knows exactly when or where, or in what way it will happen. But when it does happen this life will be over and our time to be able to prepare for the afterlife will have run out.

So we should ask ourselves this question every day; if we die today are we ready to stand before Allah, will we enter Paradise? If the answer to that is 'no' then we need to change. One way of doing this, of reminding ourselves of death so we can prepare for it, is to attend the funeral of other people, whether we know them or not, and to visit the graveyard regularly. When we help to put the bodies of dead people into the ground and see the gravestones of people who have died before us, it will remind us that one day we will also be lying in the ground.

Taking part in funerals of other Muslims makes Allah happy, and He rewards both us and them. The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that if we take forty steps holding the coffin, forty of our big sins will be forgiven. He also told us that if anyone prays the funeral prayer they will get as much reward as a mountain, and if someone follows the coffin until it is buried they will get another mountain-worth of reward. For the person whose funeral it is, the Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that if 40 to 100 people pray their funeral prayer and ask Allah to forgive them, Allah will accept their prayers.

In conclusion, we should try and go to the funeral of others, to make Allah happy and get His reward, and to pray for the dead people. We should also visit graveyards to remind ourselves that we are all going to die, and because we don't know when this will be we should always stay ready to be judged by Allah.

### Questions

- When will we die?
- Why should we attend funerals?
- What rewards do we get for doing this?
- How does it help the dead person?

### Activities

- Imagine if you were to die today, do you think Allah would be pleased with you? Would you enter Paradise?
- The next time there is a funeral in your Mosque pray the funeral prayer while imagining Allah giving you the reward of an entire mountain worth of good deeds
- Visit a graveyard and look at how many gravestones there are, read what is written on them, look at how old these people were when they died, imagine how they used to walk the earth at one time but are now forgotten

# What Will Happen To Non-Muslims After They Die?‡

When someone dies as a non-Muslim they will never again see their family or friends. This is a blessing only for those who die as Muslims. When the Angel of Death, Hazret Izra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) comes to take their soul he changes the way he looks. He will have 12 eyes, each flashing like lightning and a voice like thunder. He will be black, as tall as a giant, his hair will reach his feet, and a horrible smell will be coming from him. His teeth will be long and sharp and fire will be coming out of his mouth and nose. In his hands he will hold a huge forked mace burning with the fire of Hell. When he will hit the non-Muslim, the mace will pierce his soul and then he will drag it out of his body, like when wet wool is pulled through a bush of thorns.

Once placed inside the grave it will talk to him, telling him how much it hates him. The walls of the grave will come together to squeeze him so much that his bones will crack. Poisonous snakes and scorpions will bite and sting him until the Day of Judgment.

When Hazret Israfil (may Allah be pleased with him) blows the trumpet they will climb out of their graves. The mountains will turn to dust, the rivers and seas will boil, the sky will be ripped apart. They will be so terrified they will want to crawl back into their graves. They will stand on this day for up to 50,000 years for their judgment.

The Angels will give people scrolls, for the non-Muslims this will be in their left hand. They will see that in their scrolls is a record of all

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‡ The descriptions in this section are from the Qur'an and Hadith literature regarding what will happen to a non-Muslim after death. These are purposefully graphic (they are meant to serve as the most severe warning against not accepting the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him)) and may be scary for little children.

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the bad things they ever did. Now they will understand there is no way to escape, they had thought none of this was going to happen, that they wouldn't be punished for not believing in Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him) and for all the bad things they did. They will cry and wish they had died and turned to dust. Their deeds will be weighed on scales in front of them, their mouths will be sealed shut and the parts of their body will speak and tell of the bad things they used to do with them.

Then the non-Muslim will be shown the Hellfire. Hell will still be 100 years away when it will see them and they will see it. It will be walking towards them on four legs, each tied with 70,000 chains, each chain held by 70,000 Angels. When Hell sees them it will become enraged, they will hear the dreadful sound of it breathing, it will shake with fury and scream with rage, almost bursting.

Over the Hellfire will be placed the Pul Sirat bridge with Paradise on the other side. For the non-Muslims this bridge will be thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword. Some will fall, others will be made to throw themselves into the fire, face first. If you were to drop a stone from the top of Hell it would take 70 years to reach the bottom. It has seven gates and seven levels. Its fire has burned so hot and for so long that it is now a black fire.

Within Hell itself there are many different types of punishment. There is Zaquum, a thorny plant they will have to eat but will stick in their throats. They will always be thirsty but all they will have to drink is boiling water and Ghisleen, which is a mixture of pus and blood. There is a mountain called Sa'ud, and people will be thrown from the top of this. There is an area called Zamharir which is as cold and freezing as the rest of Hell is hot and boiling. There will be many strange biting and stinging creatures which will look terrifying. Metal chains will be put through their bodies and they will have burning clothes.

The people suffering these punishments will try to ask Shaitan for help or to blame him. He will tell them that Allah made them a promise and he made them a promise, but while Allah told the truth, he lied. He did not force them to follow him so Shaitan will tell them not to blame

him but to blame themselves, he cannot help them and they cannot help him. Not finding any help they will become angry with each other, the weak ones will ask those who they followed to help them against the punishment of Allah. But the ones they followed will say they were on the wrong path themselves, how could they guide others?

The Angels guarding Hell will make fun of the people, reminding them they used to say Hell didn't even exist, and why don't they help each other now like they used to in the world? The people will beg for the Angels to pray to Allah to make their punishment less, even for one day. But the Angels will ask them why they didn't follow the Prophets who were sent to them, who taught them how to save themselves from the punishment of Allah? The people will turn to the leader of the Angels of Hell, Malik, and beg him to ask Allah to let them die. He will reply that they will always remain in Hell.

The people will cry, and when they run out of tears, blood will come out of their eyes. Having no-one else to turn to, they will pray directly to Allah, for Allah to forgive them. Allah will make them wait a 1000 years before He answers. Then He will tell them not to talk to Him, and the gates of Hell will be shut. When this happens all hope will be lost, the worst punishment, and the people of Hell will begin braying like donkeys.

As Allah says in the Qur'an:

*“Today We'll forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours; this is your destination – Hell. You have no helpers.”*

*(Qur'an 45:34)*

This is why the most important Dua we should make every day is for Allah to allow us to die as Muslims, because otherwise we will be of the losers, spending forever in Hell.

### Questions

- How will Hazret Izra'il take the life of a non-Muslim?
- What will happen in the grave?
- How long will the Day of Judgment last?
- What will happen to any good deeds they have done?
- What is the Pul-Sirat bridge?
- What types of punishment are there in Hell?
- Who will the non-Muslims ask for help from?
- What is the worst punishment?

### Activities

- Draw a picture of what the Angel of Death will look like when he comes to take the soul of a non-Muslim
- Draw a picture of a non-Muslim in the grave, being punished
- Draw a picture of what Hell will look like
- Draw a picture of people being punished in Hell

# What Will Happen To Good Muslims After They Die?

At the time of death Allah tells the Angel of Death, Hazret Izra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) to take the soul of his slave. The Angel of Death will come with 500 helpers, and each Angel carries flowers of Paradise containing beautiful colours and smells. Hazret Izra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) sits by his head and the other Angels sit around him and before him a window to Paradise is opened. He will be busy looking at the Angels and sights of Paradise and will not notice Hazret Izra'il (may Allah be pleased with him) taking out his soul from his body.

Once placed inside the grave, it will welcome him and tell him that it is pleased to meet him. Its walls will move far back to give him lots of space. The punishments of the grave will try to hurt him but his good deeds (such as his Salaat, charity, reading of the Qur'an, fasts, thankfulness to Allah) will protect him. A window to Paradise will be opened sending out a cool breeze and sweet smell. The person will sleep peacefully until awakened on the Day of Judgment.

When Hazret Israfil (may Allah be pleased with him) blows the trumpet they will peacefully come out of their graves. The Angels will give the people scrolls in which are written all the things they ever did, and it will be given to them in their right hand. This is a sign they have passed the test and will make them happier than they have ever been before. Within those scrolls they will see that even their bad deeds will have been forgiven, or changed into good deeds, and all of their good deeds will be weighed on the scales in front of them. The Day of Judgment will seem to last for just a few minutes or hours. The Pul Siraat bridge over the Hellfire, which you must cross to get the Paradise, will seem like a wide-open road across which they will pass like the wind.



About Paradise, Allah says in the Qur'an that no person knows what is kept hidden for them as a reward for what they used to do. The gates of Paradise will be opened and the Angels will greet them. From the Qur'an and Hadith we learn that Paradise has many levels, each of which is unimaginably big and the distance between one level to another is like from the earth to the stars. Depending on our good deeds in this life we will be in these different levels in Paradise.

The garden given to each believer would take a 100 years to explore. Within Paradise the trees are so huge that if a person was to ride their winged horses it would take 70 years to cross their shadow. There are rivers of milk, honey, wine and water, and the trees are full of fruit, the types and tastes of which we have never seen or tasted. Birds of Paradise will eat from these fruit and these birds will also be food for the people.

The houses and tents will be made of gold, silver, pearls, diamonds, rubies, emeralds and sapphires. The sand is made of saffron, and clothes are made from silk. Each person will have their husband or wife from this world and from Paradise itself. They will be so beautiful that if their beauty was revealed to this world it would fill it with light, and so sweet smelling that their smell would perfume the air. They will always be comfortable, nothing will trouble them, and no-one will get unwell, grow old or die. They will be able to enjoy the company of their family, their ancestors and descendants, and the Awliyah-Allah and Prophets since the time of Hazret Adam to our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon them all).

Allah will speak to the people of Paradise, asking them if they are happy with everything He has given them. They will reply that of course they are happy. Allah will ask them if He should give them something even better than what He has already given them. The people will wonder and ask Allah, what can there be that is better than what they have already been given? Allah will tell them that from now on He will always be happy with them. This blessing is so great that compared to it all the other

special things of Paradise are like nothing – this is the reason Allah created us.

Even in Paradise Allah will be hidden, but from time to time Allah will look at the people of Paradise with love and let them also see Him. This will be so amazing that when it happens the people will forget everything else and won't be able to look away. Then after a while Allah will again hide Himself from the people and they will go about their business in Paradise. But they will not be able to forget how amazing it was to actually see Allah, and will look forward to doing it again.

What can be more amazing than to be able to look upon Allah, for Him to be forever happy with us, to be able to spend time with the Prophets and Awliyah-Allah, and forever be with our families in peace and comfort? This is why we should make a Dua every day for Allah to make us die as Muslims.

### Questions

- How will Hazret Izra'il take the life of a Muslim?
- What will happen in the grave?
- How will they feel on the Day of Judgment?
- What will happen to any bad deeds they have done?
- What will their gardens in Paradise be like?
- What kind of rivers will there be?
- What will the houses be made of?
- What special rewards will Allah give?

### Activities

- Draw a picture of a Muslim in the grave, surrounding by his good deeds which are protecting him
- Draw a picture of a Muslim crossing over Hell safely on the Pul-Sirat bridge
- Draw a picture of the different things a Muslim will see in Paradise

## **Please donate generously to help build Jamia Masjid Rahmania Community and Education Centre**



Qadria Trust was established as a small Mosque for the local Sparkbrook community (Birmingham) in 2005 by Pir Mohammad Tayyab Ur-Rahman Qadri. Since then, as the size of the congregation grew the Mosque was expanded accordingly. Currently, Qadria Trust provides education to over 200 children employing over 20 staff, and during Jummah despite two Jamaats the Mosque is overflowing. Therefore work is currently underway to collect funds to build Masjid Rahmania, a new Mosque, community and education centre at the junction between Highgate and Stratford Road.

When the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) migrated from Makkah to Madinah, the first thing he did was build a Mosque. This Mosque was a place where not only the 5 daily prayers were performed in congregation, but it was a true community centre:

- It was a place of education, where the companions would learn at the feet of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and themselves teach after his passing.
- It was a place where the Prophet (peace be upon him) governed the new Muslim state, making decisions about treaties, meeting with foreign dignitaries.
- It was a court where people would come with their arguments and differences which would be resolved by the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him).
- It was a place of interfaith dialogue, Christian and Jewish leaders and their followers would visit the Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) and his companions.
- It was the place where the poorest members of the community would stay, would eat, would receive charity.
- It was also a place where recreation and leisure activities took place. There is the famous story of Hazret Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) watching the Ethiopian warriors performing their war dance over the shoulder of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and there are hadith about the companions performing archery inside the Mosque.

So what we learn is that the Mosque in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in constant use, by the young and the old, the rich and the poor, for religious, education and community purposes.

Given this is the model established by the Prophet (peace be upon him) of the functions a Mosque should fulfil, how do the Mosques we have today compare? Unfortunately most fulfil only one purpose, the congregational prayer, and apart from for Jumma they are mostly empty

even for that. It is also very clear there is a disconnect between the youth (our future generation) and the Mosque and therefore our religion, Islam.

There is no doubt this is a contributing reason why so many of our youth are involved in criminal and Haraam activities and why the population of Muslims in prison is disproportionately high. This is why it is so important to re-establish the Prophetic model of what a Mosque is meant to be; to create an organisation which serves as a hub for the community which helps to reconnect our next generation with the Mosque, with their religion, and with the wider community.

Masjid Rahmania is such a unique project, this will truly be not only a Mosque, but also an education and community centre. It will contain:

- Separate prayer halls for men and women
- Community centre, catering for:
  - Multi-functional conference rooms with state-of-the-art audio/visual capabilities, for weddings, funerals, special events, etc.
- Advice bureau, advising on:
  - Marriage counselling, divorce
- Education centre, providing:
  - Full time school and supplementary after-school classes for children
  - Library of Islamic literature
- Nursery
- Youth hub, including:
  - Sports and recreational activities
  - Mentoring services
- Women's centre
- Day centre for the elderly
- Food-bank and emergency shelter for the homeless
- Matrimonial and funeral facilities
- Retail outlets and apartments (to generate income for the centre)

This means the local Sparkbrook community and residents of Britain have a unique opportunity; to be part of the revival of the Prophetic model of what a Mosque is meant to be. As the Qur’anic verses and Hadith previously quoted tell us, by spending our God-given wealth on this most worthy project, Insh’Allah we will be investing in not only the future of Muslims in this country but also our own future, in this life and the next.

Methods to donate:

- Call donation hotline (Monday to Friday - 11am to 6pm):
  - 0844 344 4786
  - 07966 047284 / 07940 709106
- Post cheque:
  - Payable to ‘Qadria Trust (UK)’
  - 26 Alfred Street, Sparkbrook, Birmingham, B12 8JL
- Direct bank transfer:
  - Qadria Trust (UK) HSBC
  - Sort Code: 40-11-20
  - Account number: 11627457

Email us for further information:

- [qadriatrust@gmail.com](mailto:qadriatrust@gmail.com) / [qadria.trust@ymail.com](mailto:qadria.trust@ymail.com)

As parents of young children in today's secular world, how can we give them the same love for Allah and His Prophet that our parents gave to us, that will help them grow up to be good Muslims? This book is a guide for parents, to introduce your children to basic aspects of our faith. It will also help you delve deeper, so your children gain an understanding of the Divine Wisdom behind the tenants of our faith and the everyday things we say and do.

There are over 40 short chapters, including:

- Allah – the One, True God
- What did the Prophet (peace be upon him) look like?
- Qur'an – the final Revelation
- How should we spend our time?
- Controlling our anger
- How to treat our neighbours
- How important is it to tell the truth?
- Mash'Allah – being happy for other people and not feeling jealous
- What will happen to Muslims after they die?

Each chapter is written in easy to understand English, with questions and activities to help enhance reflection and understanding. Therefore, using this book to teach your children will help introduce them to Islam, Imaan, and Ihsaan.

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