

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

THE COMPANIONS OF IMAM HUSAYN (A.S.)

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Introduction

The topic for the Al-Asr Muharram Program this year is Tawalla as taught by the Companions of Imam Husayn (A.S.) (اصحاب الحسين). Lessons learned from the lives of some of these famous friends (وَلِي) of Imam Husayn (A.S.) will be considered and discussed in-depth.

Having understood the great jihad of these loyal men of Kerbala, students will then be able to comprehend what they are really saying when sending the following salutation in Ziyarat-e-Ashura:

السلامُ علي الحسين و علي بن الحسين

Peace be on Husayn (A.S.) and on Ali Ibne Husayn (A.S.),

و علي اولاد الحسين و علي اصحاب الحسين

And on the sons of Husayn (A.S.) and the companions of Husayn (A.S.).

With great dedication and insight, Al-Asr Muharram students have conducted a profound study of the Tafseer of Ziyarat-e-Ashura for the last two years. Thus, they have learnt and understood the concept of both Tawalla and Tabarra. However, the study of Ziyarat-e-Ashura is incomplete if one does not study the life of the companions of Imam Husayn (A.S.) - about whom the Imam has said: "I had the best companions."

This year we will take up the invitation issued in Ziyarat-e-Ashura itself:

بَرَأْتُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَ إِلَيْكُمْ مِنْهُمْ

I turn to All-h, and to you (Imam Husayn (A.S.)), away from them (dissociate myself from the enemies of Imam)

وَ أَتَقَرَّبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْكُمْ

and seek nearness to All-h and then to you (Imam Husayn (A.S.))

بِمُؤَلِّاتِكُمْ وَ مَوْلَاةِكُمْ

through love for you and your friends,

Insha All-h, we trust this booklet will prove useful to teachers and students alike - and that our Imam will be pleased with our dedicated effort to gain awareness of his mission in Kerbala.

May All-h reward our endeavour and grant us intercession - due to our love of the Aimmah - on the Day of Judgement (Ameen). To quote the Du'a from Ziyarat-e-Ashura:

فَاسْئَلُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي أَكْرَمَنِي بِمَعْرِفَتِكُمْ وَ مَعْرِفَةِ أَوْلِيَائِكُمْ

I pray to All-h - who has honoured me with awareness of you and awareness of your friends

وَرَزَقَنِي الْبِرَاءَةَ مِنْ أَعْدَائِكُمْ

and has enabled me to disassociate from your enemies -

أَنْ يَجْعَلَنِي مَعَكُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَ الْآخِرَةِ

(I pray) that He may place me with you (Oh Aba Abdillah) in this world and the Hereafter.

Al-Asr Muharram Committee

MUSLIM BIN AWSAJA

Source: Journey of Tears, Pages 25 – 26

Hazrat Muslim Bin Awsaja was a 'Sahaabi', a companion, of Imam Ali (A.S.). He was greatly respected by Imam Ali, Imam Hassan and Imam Husayn (A.S.). He was a leading citizen of Kufa and was among those who had written letters to Imam Husayn (A.S.) inviting him to go to Kufa. He was an old man, nearly eighty years of age.

When Ibne Ziyaad wanted to find out where Hazrat Muslim Ibne Aqeel was hiding in Kufa, he sent his spy to Muslim Bin Awsaja. The spy pretended to be a devout Shi'a and Hazrat Muslim Bin Awsaja believed him and took him to Hazrat Muslim. Hazrat Muslim Bin Awsaja never forgave himself for having accepted the story of the spy so easily.

After the murder of Hazrat Muslim Ibne Aqeel, Hazrat Muslim Bin Awsaja slipped out of Kufa. He left Kufa by foot and travelled towards Mecca in the hope of meeting Imam Husayn (A.S.) on the way. Some historians record that he met and joined Imam at the place called 'ZubAll-h' on the same day as Imam Husayn (A.S.) got there. From him Imam learnt details about how Hazrat Muslim bin Aqeel and Hazrat Hani bin Urwah had been murdered. Imam Husayn (A.S.) was grief stricken.

Muslim Bin Awsaja said to Imam Husayn (A.S.), "Mawla, I beg you to accept me in your party". Imam Husayn (A.S.) replied "O Muslim Bin Awsaja, whenever I see you, I am reminded of my father. You know that these people will not let me live. You are an old man. Go back to your family and give your children and grandchildren the honour of burying you when you die. Your age excuses you from jihad". When Muslim bin Awsaja insisted, Imam let him join his entourage.

On the day of Ashura, early in the morning, Muslim Bin Awsaja went to Hazrat Habeeb Ibne Mazahir, removed his turban and asked Habeeb Ibne Mazahir to tie the cloth of the turban tightly around his waist and abdomen saying, "Habeeb, I do not want those dogs of Yazid to see me stooping with old age". Habeeb Ibne Mazahir said, "But Muslim, you will not then have a turban on your head". Muslim replied, "When they kill me, and when I meet our Holy Prophet I want these, my white hair, to be my witness when I complain to our Prophet against Yazid and his people".

When Muslim Bin Awsaja rode out to fight, a soldier from Yazid's army teased him, "O old man! Go back to your bed and lie there!" Hazrat Muslim replied, "O dog! My bed is now the sword of Yazid. Let me show you the spirit of Islam." Saying so, he attacked the soldier and killed him with one stroke.

Umar bin Sa'ad sent twenty strong warriors to fight Muslim Bin Awsaja. Six were killed and 14 ran away. At last, thirsty and exhausted, Muslim Bin Awsaja stopped his horse, looked at the sky and appeared to be saying a prayer. Just then they fell upon him like hounds. Muslim Bin Awsaja fell to the ground with countless wounds on his frail body.

Habeeb Ibne Mazahir and Imam Husayn (A.S.) rushed to him. When they reached Muslim bin Awsaja, he looked at Imam Husayn (A.S.) and asked, "Mawla, How did I fight?" Imam Husayn (A.S.) replied "You fought like a true follower of Ali Murtadha." Hazrat Muslim took Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s hand in his hand, brought it near his lips, and as he kissed Imam's hand he breathed his last. There was a smile on his lips and pride on his face.

He was eager to defend Imam Husayn (A.S.) and do what was right. He was the one who spoke out on the night of Ashura and said he would never leave Imam, that he would use stones if he had no weapons to fight, but he would fight until he was killed.

PART 2 (10 minutes) –
TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

- a. From this story, what insight do you get about the political situation at that time? Was Kufa a safe place for Imam Husayn (A.S.) to come to?
- b. The Kufans had written many letters to Imam Husayn (A.S.) to come to their aid and promised him that they would help him get rid of Yazid. So Imam Husayn (A.S.) sent Muslim b. Aqeel to go to Kufa and report back to him about the people/ situation in Kufa. If Muslim b. Aqeel hadn't been killed, what would he have told Imam Husayn (A.S.) about coming to Kufa?
- c. Why did Yazid need to send spies disguised as pious Shi'a? Why couldn't he just send a soldier to threaten Muslim b. Awsaja with death?
- d. When Muslim b. Awsaja realized that he had been tricked by the man posing as a devout Shi'a – and that the man was really a spy who had used the information from Muslim b. Awsaja to have Muslim b. Aqeel killed what did he do? What would we have done in such a situation?
- e. Why did Muslim not want Yazid's army seeing him stooping as if he was an old man?
- f. How did Muslim react when he was teased/ bullied by Yazid's army?
- g. Why did Muslim ask Imam Husayn (A.S.) "Mawla, how did I fight?" And why did he die with a smile on his lips and pride on his face? What does that tell you about his intentions for jihad?

PART 3 (10 – 15 minutes) - NOTES FOR TEACHERS:

LESSONS WE LEARN FROM MUSLIM B. AWSAJA

1. Eagerness and enthusiasm for doing what is right. Muslim Bin Awsaja is the living example of the following verse of the Qur'an:

As for those who say, Our Lord is All-h, then they are firm on the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the garden which you were promised. (Al-Qur'an, 41: 30)

Aqa Mahdi Pooya, in his commentary for the above verse says:

The angels not only descend on the Prophets but also on those who believe and remain steadfast. It is reported on the authority of the Ahlul Bayt that the angels also descend on the true believers when they die in order to relieve the agony of death. Verse 30 confirms that they descend on the true believers from time to time with glad tidings. Authentic traditions confirm that angels descended on Imam Husayn (A.S.) and his comrades in the battle of Karbala because it was the highest manifestation of possible perseverance.

2. Juhd (Effort): Muslim b. Awsaja teaches us about Juhd (or effort), the same root word as Jihad (to strive, to work, to put effort, to struggle).

The Qur'an tells us that striving in All-h's cause is the only way to prosper:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ
*O ye who believe! Do your duties to All-h, seek the means of approach (wasilah) to Him, and **strive** with might and main in his cause: that ye may prosper. (Al-Qur'an, 5:35)*

Muslim b. Awsaja did his duty to All-h (went to look for Imam Husayn (A.S.) after he realized he had been spied on by Yazid), he did seek a wasilah to go near to All-h (ie. his wasilah was Imam Husayn (A.S.)) and he did strive with might in All-h's way (he did jihad even though he didn't have to due to old age). In return he got Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s praise and he died with a smile on his lips and pride that he had done his job to earn All-h's pleasure (he got prosperity or success – falah). All-h says he knows those who strive: (Al-Qur'an, 9:16)

Or do you think that you shall be abandoned, as though All-h did not know those among you who strive with might and main, and take none for friends and protectors except All-h, His Messenger, and the believers (al-mu'mineen)? But All-h is well- acquainted with (all) you do.

About those who do jihad (there are many ways of doing jihad – even though ladies are exempt from doing jihad with their life in wartime, they can still encourage their husband/children to do jihad or they can do jihad by helping our Imam with their property/ time/ expertise. The Qur'an explains that in the following verse: (Al-Qur'an, 4:95)

“About those who strive (work, make effort, do jihad/ juh) in All-h's way, the Qur'an says: Not equal are those believers who sit (at home) and receive no hurt, and those who strive and fight in the cause of All-h with their goods and their persons. All-h hath granted a grade higher to those who strive and fight with their goods and persons than to those who sit (at home). Unto all (in Faith) Hath All-h promised good: But those who strive and fight Hath He distinguished above those who sit (at home) by a special reward.”

There were many Kufans who, when they realized that if they join Imam Husayn (A.S.) they would die, didn't go to him. They wrote letters to him to come but when he came, they didn't try their hardest to help him. They made excuses. The above verse is about people like them. There will be many like that when our 12th Imam comes too.

HABEEB IBNE MAZAHIR

Source: Journey of Tears, Pages 27 - 29

Habeeb Ibne Mazahir was about the same age as Imam Husayn (A.S.). They were childhood friends. When Hazrat Ali moved the capital to Kufa, Habeeb also moved to Kufa. He stayed on in Kufa and became a well-known and respected citizen. He was a pious Shi'a. The first letter which Imam Husayn (A.S.) received inviting him to Kufa was signed by Habeeb Ibne Mazahir. After Hazrat Muslim and Hazrat Hani Bin Urwah were killed by Ibne Ziyaad, Kufa was sealed off. No one could get in or out of the city without the Governor's permission.

Ibne Ziyaad also started spreading the rumour that Imam Husayn (A.S.) had gone to Madina and that he was living there happily under the protection of Yazid. However, Imam Husayn (A.S.) managed to get the message out to the people of Kufa that he hadn't gone to Madina. He sent this message through Qais bin Musheer.

Qais was a brave man; when he was arrested at the check-point before entering Kufa, he swallowed the Imam's letter. The soldiers of Ibn Ziyad forced him to describe the letter's content as well as those to whom it was addressed. Qais refused. He was then given a choice by Ibn Ziyaad: Either go on the mimbar (pulpit) and curse Imam 'Ali (a.s.) or die. Qais told the soldiers he wanted to go on the mimbar. He sat on the mimbar and instead of cursing Imam Ali (as he had been asked), he announced to the people of Kufa that Imam Husayn (A.S.) had asked them to help him and then he announced which point in his journey the Imam had reached. Qais cleverly used this opportunity to convey the message of the Imam to the people of Kufa. He knowingly chose that option even though he knew that if he did so, he would surely be killed. Thus, even though Qais was killed for making this announcement from the pulpit, the people of Kufa knew that the Imam was near their city.

Imam Husayn (A.S.) had reached Kerbala. Everyday Sayeda Zaynab saw soldiers coming to join the camp of Umar-e-Sa'ad, the Commander of Yazid's Army. On 4th Muharram she came to Imam Husayn (A.S.) and said "Ya Akhee, why are all these soldiers coming?" Imam replied "My dear sister, they are gathering to kill me". Sayeda Zaynab said, "Brother, you have so few men with you, while they are in thousands". Sayeda Zaynab had tears in her eyes as she added, "Do you not have anyone ready to come to your help?" Imam Husayn (A.S.) said "Falsehood can buy you many supporters, truth has few friends".

That very day Imam Husayn (A.S.) wrote a letter to Habeeb Ibne Mazahir, his childhood friend, telling him how Yazid's vultures were gathering to kill him. The letter was carried by a messenger who entered Kufa in the dark by climbing over the city walls. The messenger reached Habeeb's house as Habeeb, his wife and his young son were sitting down for breakfast. Habeeb read the letter, kissed it and tears began to flow down his cheeks. His wife asked him what was wrong. Habeeb said "Who would ever have thought that people would be so thirsty for the blood of the grandson of the Holy Prophet, whose name they utter in every Adhaan and in every Salaah?"

Habeeb instructed his servant to take his horse to a farm outside the city and wait for him there. If anyone should ask, the servant should say that he was taking the horse for grazing.

At Asr, when most people were in the mosque Habeeb slipped out of Kufa. He mounted his horse and galloped towards Kerbala. Habeeb Ibne Mazahir reached Kerbala late in the evening. Imam Husayn (A.S.) greeted Habeeb with great affection. When Sayeda Zaynab heard that Habeeb had come she asked Janaab-e-Fizza to convey her greetings to Habeeb. When Habeeb received the message he began to sob saying, "How fortunate are the companions of Imam Husayn (A.S.) that the daughter of Fatimah Zahra should honour them with greetings".

On the fateful day of Ashura, between Zuhr and Asr time, Habeeb Ibne Mazahir rode into the battlefield. He fought bravely. Finally he was over-powered, he fell to the ground. Imam Husayn (A.S.) rushed to him. Habeeb looked at Imam and said "O the grand-son of the Holy Prophet, please forgive this humble servant for not being able to give more than his unworthy life for you and Islam". Imam took Habeeb in his arms and cried, "O my friend! O my friend!" Habeeb died resting his head on Imam's shoulder. He was very loyal.

Love and dedication to a friend exists even when they are far apart, even if there is distance between them. There was a special bond between Imam Husayn (A.S.) and Habeeb, a bond that existed from childhood and lasted until they were both quite old.

Imam Husayn (A.S.) said about him after he dies: "May All-h have mercy on you, O Habeeb, for surely you were an excellent person."

PART 2 (10 minutes) –
TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

- a. What was the situation at that time? Why was Ibne Ziyaad spreading rumours that Imam Husayn (A.S.) had gone to Madina and was living there happily?
- b. Did Imam Husayn (A.S.) have many followers or few? Why?
- c. Discuss the bravery of Qais.
- d. What did Imam Husayn (A.S.) mean when he said: "Falsehood can buy you many supporters, truth has few friends"?
- e. When Habeeb reached the camp of Imam Husayn (A.S.), why did Sayeda Zaynab send Lady Fizza to convey her salaams to him?
- f. Why did Habeeb find it an honour to be sent greetings by the daughter of Fatimah Zahra (AS)?
- g. How old was Habeeb in Kerbala? (Hint: They were childhood friends and so similar age as Imam Husayn (A.S.)).
- h. Why did Habeeb ask Imam's forgiveness by saying: "O the grand-son of the Holy Prophet, please forgive this humble servant for not being able to give more than his unworthy life for you and Islam." (What does this teach us about our duty when our 12th Imam reappears?)
- i. What does Habeeb teach us about friendship?

PART 3 (10 – 15 minutes) - NOTES FOR TEACHERS:
LESSONS WE LEARN FROM HABEEB

1. **Friendship and Loyalty:** Habeeb was Imam Husayn (A.S.)’s childhood friend. When it was Imam’s time of need, Habeeb came to his aid without hesitating. Loyalty is very important in a friend. Talk about friendship from the point-of-view of Islam. According to the Ahlul Bayt:

Prophet Muhammad was asked “What person can be the best friend?” He said: “The one who helps you remember All-h and reminds you when you forget All-h.”

Imam Ali (A.S.) says:

“Poor is the one who does not have any friend.”

“Live amongst people in such a way that when you die, they weep over you and when you are alive, they wish to be in your company (friendship).”

“In time of distress, a person can distinguish between a friend and an enemy.”

“Do not be friends with a foolish person, for they will harm you whilst intending to do good to you.”

“It is better to listen to the advice of a wise enemy than a foolish friend.”

“If a friend is jealous of you, then they are not a true friend.”

Imam As-Sadiq says: “Be careful to have truthful friends and try to get truthful friends, for they are your support when you have good times (ease) and your advisor when you have hard times (misfortune).”

Note to Teachers: Refer to text on Importance of friends (Appendix) and share with students.

2. **The Greeting of Salaam:** Why it was such a big deal for Habeeb when Sayeda Zaynab sent him salaams? Salaam has the following meanings:

- a. Salaam is the name of All-h and it means peace or tranquility. So when we say Salaam Alaykum to someone, we mean “May the peace [of All-h] be on you.” So the greeting of salaam is a form of Du’a whereby you are wishing peace on another person.
- b. Salaam also means protection. When you greet someone with salaam, you are promising them that you will protect and honour and safeguard them and that you will not hurt them in any way. So salaam is a promise of safety.

When a Muslim greets another Muslim, the one who greets first gets 99 rewards and the one who answers the greeting gets one reward. This greeting increases brotherhood/ sisterhood in Islam. It is makruh to say Salaam Alaykum to a non-Muslim (according to Ayatullah Sistani). And when a non-Muslim greets you with Salaam Alaykum, you should reply “Alayka.”

“And when those who believe in Our communications come to you, say: Peace be on you...”

وَإِذَا جَاءَكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا فَقُلْ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ (Al-Qur’an, 6:54)

Keeping the above in mind, imagine when you say salaam to the 12th Imam (when you leave your house in the morning) and he replies you with “Alaykum Salaam” – he is sending you a greeting, a Du’a for peace and a promise of protection. Can anyone harm you then?

ZUHAIR IBNE QAIN & SAEED IBNE ABDULLAH

Source: Journey of Tears, Pages 32 – 33

In the Holy Qur'an, All-h has time and again emphasized the requirement of every Muslim to say his prayers. In Surah Al-Ma'oon All-h says "Woe unto those who do not say their prayers regularly, and pray only to be seen by others!" (Al-Qur'an, 107: 4 – 6)

Let us see how Dhuhr prayers were said in Kerbala. When the time for Dhuhr prayers came, most of the companions of Imam Husayn (A.S.) lay dead. They had been killed in the three battles which had taken place since sunrise. Now there were only about fifteen companions left in addition to the members of the family who numbered about eighteen. These 33 stood up to say Dhuhr prayers and Imam Husayn (A.S.) stood in front of them to lead the prayers.

Just then the enemy began to shoot arrows. This made it very difficult for Imam Husayn (A.S.) to lead prayers. Imam told his companions that he would lead "Namaaz-e-Khauf" (Prayer of Fear, prayed when one is in danger), which meant that some would join in the prayers and half way they would read salaam and terminate their prayers, and then others would come in. This would give everyone a chance to say prayers in jama'at behind the Imam. The problem, however, was how to protect the Imam from the arrows. Two companions stepped forward and begged Imam to let them stand in front of him and act as a shield. They insisted upon this and the Imam finally agreed.

These two brave men were Zuhair Ibne Qain and Saeed Ibne Abdullah. They performed their prayers first and then when Imam began Jama'at prayers they stood up in front of him. Every time an arrow was shot at Imam they put forward their own bodies and this way stopped the arrows from hitting Imam.

Let us imagine the scene: Imam Husayn (A.S.) is leading the prayers. Zuhair and Saeed are standing in front of him. The natural human instinct is that when people see anything dangerous flying towards them, they move to avoid it. Here are two men who not only do not move, but actually try to catch the arrows with their bodies – so the arrows would hit them instead of Imam. By the time the prayers had finished, 38 arrows had hit Zuhair Ibne Qain and 52 arrows had hit Saeed Ibne Abdullah. It was by sheer will to serve their Imam and Islam that they kept themselves alive and standing. When the Imam recited the last salaam "Assalaamu 'Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahu wa Barakaatuh," these two great heroes of Kerbala fell.

When Imam Husayn (A.S.) went up to them and said "My friends, you have given your lives for something most beloved to All-h, the salaah!" Imam then raised his hands and prayed, "O All-h! I am proud to commend to You the souls of my two companions who gave their lives for salaah. Please All-h, grant them Your Rahmah (mercy)." Every one present called out "Ameen!" and it is said that "Ameen" could be heard from the angels in the sky.

Zuhair had a lot of courage. He was the one who said that even if he was killed a thousand times, each time being brought back to life and then killed again, he would not go away from the camp of Imam Husayn (A.S.).

Zuhair also had a very virtuous wife who encouraged him to go and fight for Imam Husayn (A.S.). She told him not to be worried about her. She was an example of a woman who encourages the members of her family to do good, although it means hardship for herself.

PART 2 (10 minutes) –
TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

- a. Imam Husayn (A.S.) and his entire camp had stayed up the whole night of the 9th of Muharram to offer prayers and worship All-h. That morning, Ali Akbar was asked to recite Adhaan. Ali Akbar had a beautiful voice. It made everyone in Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s camp cry when they heard his Adhaan because they knew it would be the last time they would hear his Adhaan. Every man, young or old, knew that they would not leave Kerbala alive. Between that morning Adhaan and the afternoon Dhuhr prayer, only 33 men remained in the camp of the Imam. Yet, tired, thirsty, hungry, battle-worn, Imam halted the battle to say his prayers. Do we halt our shopping and our T.V. and our Video Games to say salaah on time?
- b. Human beings and Animals are created with instincts that make them want to protect themselves. It is very difficult to overcome that instinct. Ask a friend to raise a fist and pretend to hit your eye. Even though you know they are pretending, it is almost impossible for you not to move back or at least blink your eyes. Yet, Zuhair and Saeed stood there and deliberately took arrows to their body. Why?
- c. What is the role of women in jihad?

PART 3 (10 – 15 minutes) - NOTES FOR TEACHERS:

LESSONS WE LEARN FROM ZUHAIR & SAEED

1. Bravery and Lack of Fear:

Luqman Hakim's advice to his son, according to the Qur'an: (31:17)

“O my son! Keep up prayer and enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and bear patiently that which befalls you; surely these acts require courage;”

Fear is a test – overcoming the fear through patience and reliance on All-h – brings mercy and blessing from All-h. The complete test of fear described in the verse below was given to the Camp of Imam Husayn (A.S.) on the day of Ashura. Yet they bore it with patience. That is why the sacrifices of Kerbala are known as the Dhib-hun Adheem (the Supreme Sacrifice).

*And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of **fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits**; and give good news to the patient, who, when a misfortune befalls them, say:*

Surely we are All-h's and to Him we shall surely return. Those are they on whom are blessings and mercy from their Lord, and those are the followers of the right course. (2:155 – 157)

Have you not turned your vision to those who were told to hold back their hands (from fighting) but to establish regular prayers and spend in regular charity? When (at length) the order for fighting was given to them, behold! A section of them feared men as - or even more than - they should have feared All-h. They said: "Our Lord! Why have You ordered us to fight? Won't You give us respite to our (natural) term, near (enough)?" Say: "Short is the enjoyment of this world: the Hereafter is the best for those who do right: Never will ye be dealt with unjustly in the very least! (Al-Qur'an, 4:77)

2. Salaat of Fear (what it is and how to say it, how it came about):

Salatul Khauf: The Qur'an says in 4:101 - 103

*When you travel through the earth, there is no blame on you if ye shorten your prayers, for fear the Unbelievers May attack you: For the Unbelievers are unto you open enemies. And when you are among them and keep up the prayer for them, let a party of them stand up with you, and let them take their arms; then when they have prostrated themselves let them go to your rear, and let another party who have not prayed come forward and pray with you, and let them take their precautions and their arms; (for) those who disbelieve desire that you may be careless of your arms and your luggage, so that they may then turn upon you with a sudden united attack...Then when you have finished the prayer, remember All-h standing and sitting and reclining; but when you are secure (from danger) keep up prayer; surely prayer is a **timed ordinance (kitabān mawqūtan)** for the believers.*

In his commentary of the above three verses, Aqa Mahdi Pooya says:

Verse 102 lays down the method of offering congregational *salat* when an attack by the enemy is imminent. Even in such moments of danger, prayer can not be put off. So pre-eminently important the duty of offering *salat* is in the code of Islam that it must be offered in every circumstance and at the appointed hours. The religion of a faithful is continually present with him. It brings the individual (his self) into closer touch with his Lord, and his self escapes from enslavement to freedom. On the 10th of Muharram in 61 Hijra, Imam Husayn (A.S.) translated the ordinance of this verse into action.

At Hdaybiyah the Muslims were fighting against the advance troopers of the infidels, commanded by Khalid bin Walid. The Holy Prophet asked Bilal to recite *azan* for *zuhr* prayers. When the *salat* was completed Khalid regretted very much to have missed the golden opportunity of attacking the Muslims while they were praying, and decided not to do it again next time. Through this verse All-h asked the Holy Prophet to adopt the method mentioned in it in future under such circumstances.

3. Importance of Salaat (Below is Sermon #198 of Nahjul Balagha by Imam Ali)

Pledge yourself with prayer and remain steady on it; offer prayer as much as possible and seek nearness (of All-h) through it, because it is, (imposed) *upon the believers as (a) timed ordinance*

(Qur'an 4:103). Have you not heard the reply of the people of Hell when they were asked: *What hath brought you into the hell? They shall say: We were not of those who offered the regular prayers* (to All-h)! (Qur'an, 74:42-43). Certainly, prayer drops out sins like the dropping of leaves (of trees), and removes them as ropes are removed from the necks of cattle. The Prophet (S) likened it to a hot bath situated at the door of a person who bathes in it five times a day. Will then any dirt remain on him?

Its obligation is recognised by those believers for whom the world and all its acquirements are not really important. All-h says in the Qur'an:

Men whom neither merchandise nor any sale diverts from the remembrance of All-h and constancy in prayer and paying the poor-rate; ... (Qur'an. 24:37)

Even after receiving assurance of Paradise, the Prophet (S) used to exert himself for prayers because of All-h's command and because All-h deserved it.

And enjoin prayer on thy followers, and adhere thou steadily unto it ... (Qur'an, 20:132).

Prayers are wajib and those who do not pray on purpose are doing a great sin (ghunah kabirah). The Prophet (S) has said: *"The thing that turns a Muslim into Kafir is to omit prayer intentionally or to offer prayer considering it insignificant and unimportant."* (Wasa'il ul-Shia Vol. 3 page 29)

Obligatory Prayers: Obligatory Prayers are six in number, as follows:

1. Five daily prayers that are 17 rakats in all. Morning, two; Noon, four; Afternoon, four; Evening, Three; and Night, four.
2. Prayers of Ayāt: It is an obligatory prayer of two rakats, that has to be offered in case of a natural phenomenon like lunar or solar eclipse or a natural calamity like earthquake or any other natural event that causes fear in general.
3. Prayer of Tawāf (Circumambulating the Kāba): Anyone performing the Tawāf of Ka'ba is obliged to perform two rakat prayers at the Maqām al-Ibrahīm (the standing place of Prophet Ibrahīm).
4. The Prayers that become obligatory on account of vow, oath or promise or if one accepts compensation for offering prayers of a deceased person.
5. The prayers missed by the deceased father (and also the deceased mother on the basis of precaution) are obligatory on the eldest son.
6. The Prayer of Mayyit (Burial Prayer). It is obligatory to bathe and shroud the dead body of every Muslim and to perform the burial prayer before burying him. The Prayer of Mayyit is obligatory for all deceased Muslim children aged six or above.

BURAIR HAMDANI

Source: Journey of Tears, Pages 35 – 37

After the death of Uthmaan, people prevailed upon Imam Ali (A.S.) to accept Khilaafat (leadership of the Ummah). Uthmaan was killed on 18th Dhul Hijjah, 35 H. and the people pledged allegiance (bay'at) to Imam Ali in the same month, in the 25th of Dhul Hijjah, 35 A.H.

The first thing Imam Ali (A.S.) did after becoming the Khalifah was to dismiss all the corrupt governors and other officials. Muawiya, who was the Governor of Syria, did not accept the dismissal and responded by gathering together a Syrian army of 50,000 soldiers to fight Imam.

Imam Ali (A.S.) marched from Kufa with an army of 20,000. The battle took place North of Kufa at a place called Siffin on the banks of the River Furaat (Euphrates). Muawiya's forces reached Siffin before Imam Ali (A.S.)'s forces. The Syrians occupied the river and prevented Imam Ali's forces from using the water. First Imam Ali (A.S.) sent an emissary asking Muawiya to remove his forces from this side of the river so that the Imam's army can get water. When Muawiya refused; the Imam's forces attacked them and took control of the river. Then the Great Imam announced that the water of this river is free for both sides, saying, "Every living being is entitled to water." Immediately Imam's army made a way for Muawiya and his soldiers to come to the river and take as much water as they needed for themselves and their horses and camels.

From Asr (midday) until Maghrib (sunset), Muawiya's soldiers were at the river bank drinking water, watering their animals and filling their mashk (leather water bottles). When Imam Ali's officers complained to him, Imam Ali (A.S.) replied: "To deprive any human or animal of water is a sin which All-h will never forgive".

In this same battle of Siffin, both Yazid and Imam Husayn (A.S.) were also present. Yazid saw Imam Ali (A.S.)'s treatment of his father's army. When the Muharram, 60 H. came, Yazid sent a secret order to Ibne Ziyaad to force Imam Husayn (A.S.) away from the River Furaat and then block Imam Husayn (A.S.), his family and his companions from getting water. Ibne Ziyaad gave orders to Umar Sa'ad to do so. On the 3rd Muharram, Umar Ibne Sa'ad asked Imam Husayn (A.S.) to move his camp away from River Furaat. Imam Husayn (A.S.) and his camp were blocked from getting any water, while 25 years earlier, his father had allowed Yazid's father and the army of 50,000 freedom to go to the river and take as much water as they had wanted.

The children in Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s camp were soon crying out "Al-atash! al atash!" (the thirst, the thirst). Burair Hamdani was a companion of Imam Husayn (A.S.) who was present at Kerbala and heard the cries of the children. On the night before Ashura, he could no longer stand the cries of "Al-atash, Al-atash." In the dark of the night, he made his way to the River Furat. He filled his mashk and secured the cap. He too was very thirsty but he did not even think of drinking water when he was at the river bank.

On his way back, he was spotted by two of Yazid's guards posted there to make sure that no water reached Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s camp. They tried to stop him. He attacked and killed them both. He brought the mashk to Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s camp. He called Bibi Fizza and asked her to take the mashk to the children. They were more than fifty children in Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s camp. They were all very thirsty. When they heard that water had come, they rushed. They put their cheeks on the mashk to cool themselves. In this rush the cap flew open and the water spilled. The children looked with pain and disappointment as the water disappeared into the desert sand. Burair was desolate. He raised his hands to the sky and cried, "Oh All-h! I had hoped that your humble servant would earn the Du'a of the children of Imam tonight through bringing the water. Oh! how very unfortunate I am." Imam consoled Burair: "My friend, you have earned the Du'a of Fatima's son for your brave effort!"

Burair was a very strong supporter of the Ahlul Bayt. He was one of those who had memorized the entire Qur'an. He would spend a lot of time on learning and reciting the Qur'an.

PART 2 (10 minutes) –
TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

- a. Compare Imam Ali (A.S.)'s conduct in the Battle of Siffeen with Yazid's conduct in the Battle of Kerbala in regards to how to treat your enemy.
- b. Why did Burair risk his life to get water for the children of Imam Husayn (A.S.)?
- c. Why was Burair so sad when all the water spilled?
- d. Why did Imam Husayn (A.S.) say that Burair had earned his Du'a even though Burair's actions did not result in quenching the thirst of the children (he did not fulfil what he set out to do)?

PART 3 (10 – 15 minutes) - NOTES FOR TEACHERS:
LESSONS WE LEARN FROM BURAIR HAMDANI

1. The justice our Imams showed to their enemies: The father of Imam Husayn (A.S.) (Source: <http://www.al-islam.org/restatement/69.htm>)

During the times of the Prophet, whenever Ali met an enemy in battle, he offered him three options. They were: **A.** Accept Islam; or, **B.** Do not fight against Muhammad who is the Apostle of God, and withdraw from the battle; **C.** If the first two options are not acceptable to you, then you be the first one to strike at me.

We all know the story of the battle of Uhud when Imam Ali walked away from his enemy because the enemy spat in his face just as the Imam was about to strike him. On being asked why, he replied that he did not want to kill for anger – he was doing battle for All-h's sake only.

The last battle that Ali had to fight, was the battle of Nahrwan, fought in 658 AD. In that battle, a Khariji warrior found himself under the edge of Ali's sword. "Expecting to be cut into two halves with the Dhulfiqar, he froze with fear. His sword and shield fell from his hands because he was

so frightened. As soon as his sword and shield fell from his hand, he was surprised to see Imam Ali walk away from him and turn to fight with someone else instead. Not believing his own eyes he shouted: "Ali! Are you not going to kill me?" "No," answered Ali. "Why not," the Khariji asked, "it will mean one enemy less for you." Then the following exchange took place between them:

Ali: I cannot kill you now because you have lost your sword and shield, and you have nothing with which to defend yourself.

Khariji: I understand, and this is just what I had heard about you that you do not kill an unarmed enemy. But I have also heard something else, and would like to know if that is true.

Ali: What is it that you have heard and wish to verify now?

Khariji: I have heard that you do not turn down the request even of an enemy if it is not unreasonable. If this is true, then I would like you to give me your sword now that I have lost my own.

The request was not very reasonable, especially considering its time and place but Ali did not hesitate. He seized the blade of his sword, and held out the hilt to the enemy. The enemy took it:

Khariji: You are now unarmed, Ali. Tell me who will save you from me now?

Ali: God. God will save me. My trust is in Him, and not in the sword or the shield.

Ali's answer surprised and impressed the Khariji so much that he exclaimed: "You have conquered me, O mysterious man! From this moment, I will be your slave. I shall fight on your side against your enemies, and I shall kill them."

The Khariji's offer ought to have pleased Ali, and he ought to have welcomed him in his own ranks, but he said: "Do not fight for me or against me. Fight only for Justice and Truth. If you believe that Justice and Truth are on my side, then by all means, fight on my side."

2. Loving the Ahlul Bayt: Burair Risks his life due to love of Ahlul Bayt - There are many ahadith that tell us that loving the Ahlul Bayt is wajib and what that love means for us whilst our 12th Imam is in occultation.

All-h says in Hadith Al-Qudsi: "*O Muhammad! Have love for him (al-Mahdi) for surely I love him and I love anyone who loves him.*" (Biharul Anwar, Vol 36, pg. 223, sec 40, no, 21)

The Prophet (S) has said: "*A person who would like to meet All-h in a state of perfect faith and in the best form of submission should love Al-Hujjah Sahib al-Zaman al-Muntadhar.*" (Biharul Anwar, vol. 36, pg. 296).

There is a beautiful narration in Chapter 2 of the book, Greater Sins (By Ayatullah Dastaghaib Shirazi) that illustrates that when we truly love the Ahlul Bayt, then they intercede on our behalf:

There was a poet by the name of Sayyid Himyari who died in 173 A.H. He truly loved Imam Ali (a.s.) and has composed a Qasida (panegyric) on each and every quality of Imam Ali. Whenever there was a Majlis (gathering) in the honour of *Ahl ul-Bayt* (a.s.) he always insisted upon reciting one of his poems. The following is what happened around the time of his death:

Sayyid was very handsome and fair. At the time of his death he was surrounded by people. Among them were also those who were opposed to the Shias. The condition of the Sayyid deteriorated and all of a sudden a black spot appeared on his face. The stain spread on his face and his complete face turned charcoal black. The opponents were pleased to see his discomfort. The pain caused the Sayyid to lose his consciousness. When he regained his senses he turned towards Najaf al-Ashraf and pleaded: “O Amir ul-Mu’minin ‘Ali (a.s.). O the centre of the hope for helpless people. Do you deal with your *devotees* in this way?” He repeated this phrase twice more. No sooner did he complete his entreaty that a spot of whiteness became visible on his face. It spread upon his face and soon his face became radiant once again like a full moon. Sayyid was filled with joy, and recited the following couplets extemporaneously.

“Who said ‘Ali (a.s.) could not save his followers from difficulties lied. I swear upon my Creator that I have entered Paradise with my sins all forgiven. I give this good news to those who are devoted to ‘Ali (a.s.) till death. And after him revere his 11 descendants who are the Imams.” After reciting these couplets he confessed to the Oneness of All-h (S.W.T.) and the Prophethood of the P. Muhammad (S) and the *Wilāyat* of Imam Ali (A.S.). Then he closed his eyes and died.

Loving our Imams, however, means a whole lot more than just saying you love them. Imam Baqir (a.s.) asked Jabir: “*Is it enough for our Shi’a to just express friendship with the Ahlul Bayt? By All-h! No one is our true follower unless they fear All-h and obey Him. Our Shi’a are known for their humbleness and frequent remembrance of All-h, fasting, praying, helping the orphans, the needy, the ones in debt and needy neighbours; reading the Qur’an and talking properly with people. They have always been trustworthy with their tribe (community)....*” (Source: Mishkat ul-Anwar fi GHurar il-Akhbar, Page 156, saying 290).

3. Sincere Intention (An-Niyyah bil Ikhlas) – Imam Husayn (A.S.) does Du’a for Burair because his intention was to quench the thirst of the Children of Kerbala even though he didn’t manage to do that in the end. Intention is very important in Islam. We should always have sincere intentions (khulus). Our intention should be always to please All-h – just as Imam Ali’s intention was, which is why he walked away when his enemy spat at him.

Prophet Muhammad (s) said: “*Certainly there is a reality of every truth and a servant cannot reach the reality of Ikhlas unless he doesn’t like people to praise him for the actions he has done (only) for the sake of God*” (Source: Al-Majlisi, *Bihar al-Anwar*, vol. 72, p.304, hadith # 51)

So for actions to be sincere, you have to:

A. Do them only for All-h; **B.** Keep them secret because All-h loves good deeds done in secret; **C.** Not feel proud of doing the good action (think your sins are great even if they are small and think your good deeds as few even if they are many).

JOHN BIN HUWAI

Source: Journey of Tears, Pages 30 - 31

Among those who were martyred at Kerbala were sixteen slaves or freed slaves. Most of them were from Abyssinia, the present day Ethiopia. Some of them belonged to Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s family and others to the companions of Imam who remained with him.

On the night before Ashura, Imam and the companions freed all their slaves and urged them to go away and seek their safety, but these sixteen would not leave. Amongst them was an Abyssinian called John bin Huwai.

Imam Ali (A.S.) had given John to Abu Dharr Ghiffari. Abu Dharr freed him but John stayed on with Abu Dharr as a companion. When Abu Dharr was exiled from Madina John went back to Imam Ali, who invited him to stay on as his companion. In the company of Imam Ali, he learnt the Tafseer of Qur'an and the traditions (hadith) of the Holy Prophet. He also knew the Holy Qur'an by heart. When Imam Ali was martyred, John stayed with Imam Hassan and after Imam Hassan he moved in with Imam Husayn (A.S.). When Imam Husayn (A.S.) left Madina, John insisted on going with him.

In Kerbala, John would always be seen at the side of Imam Husayn (A.S.). He was an old man, dark with grey curly hair. Because of his profound knowledge and pleasant manners he was greatly respected by all.

John spent the whole night of Ashura sharpening his sword. On the following day, he helped in defending against the first two attacks from Yazid's army. At mid-day, after the Dhuhr prayers, John came to the Imam and stood silently with his arms folded. It was his habit never to speak in the presence of Imam until spoken to.

Imam Husayn (A.S.) looked at John and said, "John, I know you have come for my permission to go to the battle-field. You have been a good and trusted friend. I will not deny you martyrdom for Islam. Go! May All-h be with you." John smiled happily. He faced the enemy and recited a poem which said "I am a soul willing to die for All-h and have a sword thirsty for the blood of the enemies of All-h. Before I die I shall fight the enemies of All-h with my sword and my tongue, and thus shall I serve the grand-son of the Holy Prophet."

John fought courageously, all the time reciting this poem. He received several mortal blows but his recitation of the poem continued. John fell from his horse. He still continued to fight with his tongue by reciting the poem. And then a few horse men moved to where he lay. John, the Abyssinian, was silenced by their swords.

When John was set free and told he could go, but he refused. He told Imam to pray that he would be granted Heaven, and that his body would give out a good scent and that his face would become bright, and he would be from the honoured ones. His du'a was answered. After his martyrdom, a pleasant scent came from his dead body.

PART 2 (10 minutes) –
TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

- a. Why did the slaves refuse to leave when they were freed?
- b. What did John do when he became the companion of Imam Ali?
- c. Why did John not speak to the Imam? What does this tell you about his akhlaq? What does this teach you about how we should behave with those who are our elders in either age or knowledge/wisdom?
- d. When John was reciting his poetry, what message was he trying to send to the army of Yazid?
- e. What was the miracle that happened with John after his death? And why was he granted this miracle?

PART 3 (10 – 15 minutes) - NOTES FOR TEACHERS:

LESSONS WE LEARN FROM JOHN

1. Faith in the Hereafter: John's entire purpose in life was to collect the provisions for the hereafter. He went to Imam Ali to learn Qu'ran and Hadith. He tried his best to perfect his manners (which is a trait of a true Shi'a). He refused to leave on Ashura and wanted to die for the Imam. He was a freed slave, an Abyssinian who was dark-skinned. In Arabia, at that time, they used to look down upon people like that because they thought such people were below them. However, John proved with his knowledge and his akhlaq that he could command respect – that the best person is not the rich or the good-looking, but the one with the most piety:

*Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet: Women and sons; Heaped-up hoards of gold and silver; horses branded (for blood and excellence); and (wealth of) cattle and well-tilled land. Such are the possessions of this world's life; but in nearness to All-h is the **best** of the goals (To return to). (Al-Qur'an, 3:14)*

Therefore let those fight in the way of All-h, who sell this world's life for the hereafter; and whoever fights in the way of All-h, then be he slain or be he victorious, We shall grant him a mighty reward. (4:74)

Imam Sajjad said: *“O children of Adam! You shall be prosperous as long as you have an inner guide, and worry about your own reckoning, and you have fear and piety. You will die and you will be resurrected and will be questioned about your deeds in God's court. So prepare an answer.”* (Source: Mishkat ul-Anwar fi GHurar il-Akhbar, Page 298, saying 591)

2. Amr Bil Ma'aruf and Nahi anil Munkar: John's akhlaq was a form of Amr Bil Ma'aruf. So was his poem was a form of Amr Bil Ma'aruf – He was telling the enemies of the Ahlul Bayt about the path he had chosen (“I am a soul willing to die for All-h...”). He did this

even when he had been hurt and had fallen down. About Amr Bil Ma'aruf (inviting others towards good). The Qur'an says:

"You are the best of people, evolved for mankind, enjoining the right, forbidding what is wrong and believing in All-h." (3:110)

"Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong; they are the ones to attain prosperity." (3:104)

The Holy Prophet (S) has said: *"The world is like a ship and mankind its passengers. The welfare of all depends upon the safe conduct of each. If anyone is found making a hole on the side of a ship, he must be stopped."*

Imam Al-Baqir (A) said: *"Amr bil ma'roof and nahi 'anil munkar are the most important obligations because upon them depend the performance of all other obligations. If amr bil ma'roof and nahi 'anil munkar are done the earth will become a safe place, enemies will be subdued and all other affairs discharged satisfactorily"*

The Holy Prophet (S) says: *"He who does amr bil ma'roof and nahi 'anil munkar is the vicegerent (khalifa) of All-h, His Prophet and His Book on this earth."*

The Mujtahid are all agreed on an individual's duties with regard to Amr bil ma'roof and Nahi 'anil munkar and the difficulties one often confronts. Amr bil ma'roof and nahi 'anil munkar are wajib-e-Kifaa'i. If one person does it, it is not a must on the others. If no one does it all are equally accountable, regardless of their financial or social status. The person doing Amr Bil Ma'aruf and Nahi Anil Munkar has to make sure of the following:

- (a) He himself is aware of what is good and what is bad from the Islamic point of view;
- (b) He believes that the person to whom he wishes to do Amr bil ma'roof and Nahi 'anil munkar will listen and follow the advice. If he is satisfied that the person will not under any circumstances listen to the advice, it is then not wajib upon him to do Amr bil ma'roof and Nahi 'anil munkar to that person;
- (c) He is satisfied that by his undertaking to do Amr bil ma'roof and Nahi 'anil munkar no personal or financial suffering will be caused to someone.

Ways of doing Amr bil ma'roof and Nahi 'anil munkar:

- (a) By tongue. By talking to the person and persuading him, using the politest possible language.
- (b) By conduct. If talking produces no result, a gradual withdrawal of friendship and companionship should be resorted to.
- (c) The next stage should be to report the matter to 'alam-e-shar'a (the mujtahid whose muqallid you are or his duly appointed "wakil" authorised to decide jurisprudential matters).

(References: <http://www.al-islam.org/organizations/aalimnetwork/msg00304.html>)

HUR BIN YAZID AT-TAMIMI AL-YARBU'I

Source: Journey of Tears, Pages 22 – 24

Hazrat Hur bin Yazid at-Tamimi al-Yarbu'i was a career officer in the Kufan army. When Husayn bin Numayr, the commander at al-Qadisiya, learnt that Imam Husayn (A.S.) and his group were getting very close to Kufa, he sent Hur with 1,000 soldiers to block the Imam's arrival in Kufa.

Hur believed that Imam was being prevented from entering Kufa because his presence might jeopardize the stability of the city. As a professional soldier he did not very much concern himself with what he considered to be political issues. His duty, he felt, was to execute the order of his superiors. However, lurking somewhere in that stout military heart was an Islamic conscience.

Hazrat Hur and his soldiers met Imam Husayn (A.S.) and his companions at a place a few miles outside Kufa. It was midday when the two parties met.

Hur and his people had been travelling since morning and were very thirsty. He requested Imam Husayn (A.S.) for water for his army. Imam Husayn (A.S.) asked Hazrat Abbas, Hazrat Ali Akbar, Hazrat Qasim and the others to give Hur and his men water and also to give water to their horses. This must have been a poignant scene for it must have reminded Imam Husayn (A.S.) when his father did the same at the Battle of Siffin. Water bottles were brought out of the saddle bags and the youths of Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s camp began pouring water for Yazid's army so they could quench their thirst.

Dhuhr prayers were led by Imam Husayn (A.S.) as Hur and his soldiers joined the prayers. After the prayers, Hur told Imam Husayn (A.S.) that his orders were to stop Imam Husayn (A.S.) from going to Kufa unless he agreed to give "Bay-at"- promise/ pledge of allegiance- to Yazid. Imam Husayn (A.S.) said that he would never give Bay-at to Yazid since Yazid was an unjust ruler who wanted to destroy Islam. Imam said he was going to Kufa because he had been invited by the people there.

Imam produced two sacks of letters and petitions from the people of Kufa begging him to go there. Hur said that as his orders were not to let Imam go to Kufa and as a soldier who had to obey the orders of his commander, there was nothing that he could do except carry out the orders and stop the Imam.

Imam Husayn (A.S.) could have fought Hur and his soldiers and forced his way into Kufa, but he did not wish to start any battles.

He told Hur that he would take another route and go away from Kufa. Hur said that his orders were to follow Imam Husayn (A.S.) wherever Imam went. And so, followed by Hur and his 1000 soldiers, Imam Husayn (A.S.) and his companions rode in the direction away from Kufa.

On the 2nd Muharram, they reached a place from where the horse of Imam Husayn (A.S.) refused to move. Imam inquired about the name of the place. He was told it was called Nainawah or Shatt al-Furaat. He asked what else it was called and an old man told him that it was also called "Karbin wa Bala" (Grief and Sorrow) or Kerbala for short. Imam Husayn (A.S.) knew he had reached the place he was told about by his grandfather, Rasulullah. He stopped there and purchased land. He put up his tents. Hur and his men also stopped there and pitched their tents some distance away. Hur sent a message to Umar bin Sa'ad that Imam Husayn (A.S.) had stopped in Kerbala.

The following day, Umar bin Sa'ad came to Kerbala with 4000 soldiers. Umar b. Sa'ad was the commander of Yazid's Army. He had several meetings with Imam Husayn (A.S.). Umar bin Sa'ad, in his meetings with the Imam, was looking for a way out for himself so that he does not get involved in the killing of Imam Husayn (A.S.). Based on the discussions with the Imam, he wrote to Ibn Ziyaad that Imam Husayn (A.S.) had agreed to: **A.** return back to Medina or, **B.** leave the Muslim countries, or **C.** go to Yazid and negotiate with him directly. This third suggestion was added by Umar bin Sa'ad himself, so as not to make Ibn Ziyaad angry. In truth, the Imam never agreed to go and negotiate with Yazid directly. Initially, Ibn Ziyaad liked the idea but Shimr talked him out of this and so, Ibn Ziyaad wrote a very stern letter to Umar bin Sa'ad ordering him to either complete the task or hand over the command to Shimr. Shimr brought Ibne Ziyaad's letter to Kerbala on the eve of Ashura (9th Muharram).

In the meantime, the water was stopped from reaching Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s tents from the 7th of Muharram. By the eve of Ashura, the 9th night of Muharram, the children were very thirsty.

On the night of Ashura, Hur was very restless. He could hear the children in Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s camp cry because of thirst. He began to think "What have I done? Why did I put the son of Fatimah in this position? Will All-h ever forgive me?" He could not sleep the whole night because he felt he was to blame for putting Imam Husayn (A.S.) in this situation – and it was his fault that all the children in Imam's camp were now thirsty and crying "Al Atash!"

Within him there was a struggle between his duty as a soldier and his duty as a Muslim and a good human being. Just before dawn he made up his mind. He decided to choose Imam Husayn (A.S.) (although Yazid had promised all his soldiers many, many rewards for staying loyal to him).

Hur, his son and his slave rode over to Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s camp. Hur threw himself at Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s feet, pleading for his forgiveness. Imam Husayn (A.S.) took Hur in his arms and said, "Hur, I forgive you. I assure you that my grandfather, the Holy Prophet also forgives you".

Hur then asked Imam Husayn (A.S.) for permission to go and fight the enemies of Islam. Imam Husayn (A.S.) said "Hur, you are my guest. How can I let you die for me?" Hur begged the Imam to let him go. Imam gave his permission. Hur went to the battlefield and fought valiantly. At last, he fell and was killed. His son and his slave were also killed.

When Hur decided to go from Yazid's side to Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s side, it made others in Yazid's army want to follow his example too. Nearly thirty other soldiers from Yazid's army

also decided to join Imam Husayn (A.S.), although they knew joining the Imam meant they would die for sure. But they also knew joining Imam Husayn (A.S.) meant death for the sake of All-h's pleasure.

When Imam Husayn (A.S.) reached the body of Hur, he prayed to All-h: "Oh All-h! I entrust to you this brave man who has given his life for Islam".

PART 2 (10 minutes) –
TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION: QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

- a. Why did the people of Kufa write so many letters to Imam Husayn (A.S.) to come to them?
- b. Hur and his army was sent to stop Imam Husayn (A.S.) from coming to Kufa. Why did Yazid not want Imam Husayn (A.S.) to go to Kufa? What was he afraid of?
- c. What does Bay-at mean? What does the symbol of an a'lam remind you of?
- d. Why was it so important for Yazid to get Imam Husayn (A.S.)'s Bay-at that he was ready to force, threaten and kill the Imam for it? The whole of Kufa had already given Bay-at to Yazid (whether by force or willingly), so what difference did it make to Yazid whether Imam gave his Bay-at or not?
- e. Why couldn't Hur sleep that night? What was bothering him?
- f. What was different between the soldiers of Yazid who heard the cries of the children of Imam Husayn (A.S.) and decided to join Imam just as Hur had done Vs. those who heard the cries but it did not affect them?
- g. Hur means "Free" – Imam told Hur that his mother had certainly named him well – for: "Antal Huru fid-dunya wal akhirah" (You are free in this world and in the hereafter). What did Imam mean he said this? What kind of freedom was Imam

PART 3 (10 – 15 minutes) - NOTES FOR TEACHERS:

LESSONS WE LEARN FROM HUR:

1. Freedom: Are human beings free? What does freedom mean?

According to the famous story of the rich man who was listening to Music in his home and his slave came to throw trash, when spotted by our Imam and asked "Is your master a free man or a slave?" – In Islam, freedom is being free from worldly wants, free of being a slave to your own desires and needs and wants. Being free to love God as God deserves to be loved.

Imam Sadiq said: "*A believer (mu'min) can taste the sweetness of God's love if he abstains from the world...*" (Mishkat al-Anwar fi Ghurar al-Akhbar, Page 304, Hadith # 605).

Imam Al-Baqir said: "*When you wish to know whether there is any good in you, look at your heart. There is some good in you if you love those who obey God. God will then love you. But there is no good in you if you are the enemy of those who obey God, and love those who sin. Then God will be your enemy. Every person is with whom they love.*" (Ibid. Hadith # 604)

Ask yourself: Who am I with? Who was Hur with? Who were Yazid's soldiers with?

The Qur'an states that "O mankind! You are the ones who stand in need of All-h, and All-h is He Who is the Self-sufficient, the Praised One." (35:15)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

In addition, All-h does not need our fasting and prayers and our hassanaat; when we do good deeds, it benefits us and us alone:

And if any strive (with might and main), they do so for their own souls: for All-h is free of all needs from all creation. (Al-Qur'an, 29:6)

2. Using Intelligence as your Guide:

Hur had to choose between Truth and Falsehood. He used his aql to understand that it was wrong to fight against the grandson of the Holy Prophet (s). He was not tempted by the rewards offered by Yazid, nor was he afraid of death. He made the right choice according to his intelligence and knowledge and did not allow Yazid's army to influence him. The Qur'an says:

We said: Go forth from this (state) all; so surely there will come to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, no fear shall come upon them, nor shall they grieve. (2:38)

Imam Ali says: "The intellect is a sharp sword. Use it to fight with your selfish desires." (Source: Mishkat ul-Anwar fi Ghurar il-Akhbar, Page 618, Saying #1476)

Imam Ali narrated that Jibraeel descended upon Prophet Adam and said: "O Adam! I have been asked to let you choose ONLY ONE of three things." Adam asked what they were and Jibraeel replied: "They are intelligence (aql), shame (haya'a) or religion (deen)." Adam replied: "I choose the aql." Jibraeel asked haya'a and deen to leave and aql to go to Adam, but both haya'a and deen refused to leave. They said: "We have been asked to go with aql wherever it goes." (Source: Ibid. Page 616, Saying #1468).

Imam Redha said: "Your intellect (aql) is your friend and your ignorance (jahl) is your enemy." (Source: Ibid. Page 622, Saying # 1488)

3. An-Nafs al-Ammarah and An-Nafs Al-Lawammah (The Conscience) as your Guide:

Inside of us, we all have two forces (nafs). It is All-h's mercy that He has given us intelligence and understanding and also the Nafs Al-Lawammah (that makes us feel guilty when we do a bad deed). Listening to this Nafs Al-Lawammah strengthens our souls and helps us stay away from sin. If we make a habit of listening to our Nafs Al-Lawammah and ignoring Nafs Al-Ammarah (which whispers to you/ invites you to do evil/ tempts you break All-h's rules), then

Ammarah will fall silent and no longer tempt you. At this stage, All-h becomes your guardian and He “takes you from darkness to light” (2:257) (i.e. All-h then guides you at all times).

All-h mentions in the Qur’an that “lack of hearing” (i.e. being narrow-minded, hearing only that which you want to hear, inability to accept the truth into our heart) is a sign of punishment of All-h (when you only listen to your Nafs Al-Ammarah and stop listening to your Nafs Al-Lawwammah, then Lawwammah becomes silent and you no longer feel guilty when you sin. At this stage, you “take yourself out from the light to the darkness.”

Prophet Muhammad (S) explains: “Whenever a person commits a sin, a black spot will form on his heart which will not be removed unless the person asks for All-h’s forgiveness and repents. If he continues to commit sins, that black spot will continue to grow. This is the “stain” which All-h mentions in the Qur’an (83:14): ‘By no means! But on their hearts is a stain of the ill which they do!’” (Ibid. Page 634, Saying # 1511)

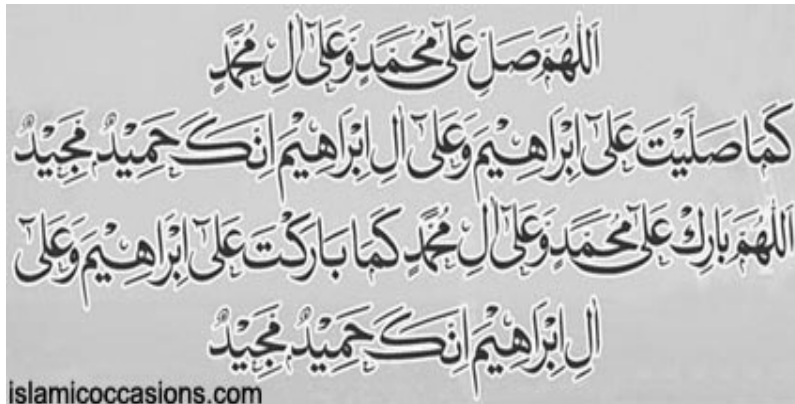
For those who strengthen their Lawammah and let All-h be their Guardian and the Ahlul Bayt be their Guide, they finally reach another stage of Nafs (the nafs that has completely surrendered to All-h) called “Mutmainnah.” All-h tells this Nafs:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً فَادْخُلِي فِي
عِبَادِي وَادْخُلِي جَنَّتِي

O soul that art at rest! Return to your Lord, well-pleased (with him), well-pleasing (Him), So enter among My servants, And enter into My garden. (89: 27 – 30)

This ayah finds its best application in case of Imam Husayn (A.S.) on the day of Ashura. Our Ahlul Bayt are the ones who have surrendered to such an extent that they have reached this stage of Nafs – pleasing All-h and being pleased with him. Loving All-h and being loved by them. Their surrender to All-h is described perfectly in the Qur’an: (6: 162)

“Say: ‘Surely, my Salaat (prayer), my sacrifice, my life, and my death are for All-h, the Lord of the Worlds.’”



Appendix:

Friendship and Friends in Islam

Importance of Friends:

Human beings are social creatures and need friends. To care for someone and be cared for brings great happiness to the heart of a human being. It changes attitude towards life and makes things brighter and more pleasant.

Those who have worthy friends, are never lonely and friendless in the world, since in joy and sorrow, their true friends help and support them. Naturally, a human being feels happy at the companionship of friends, and is sad at being lonely and having no worthy companions.

Imam Ali ibn-e Abi Talib (AS) considers real friends as the treasures of this world and the hereafter, and he says:

“Find friends for yourself from among your co-religionist brethren, since they are the treasures of this world and also the next world.

In another remark, the Imam considers virtuous friends as the equivalent of the noblest parts of the body, and he says: *He who loses his pure-hearted friend whose friendship he has sought for the sake of Allah, resembles as if he has lost the noblest part of his body.*

Imam Ali (AS) has said: *The happiness of this and the next world lie in two things: firstly, keeping secrets; and secondly, friendship with the good. And the miseries of this and the next world are summed up in two things: firstly, divulging secrets; and secondly, friendship with wicked persons.* (al-Ikhtisas)

The point to which the leaders of Islam pay great attention in connection with friendship, is that, it may be considered worthy only if it is fostered for the sake of God, and a reliable friend is the one whose friendship is based on spirituality.

A friendship that is made for the sake of wealth, position, beauty and such things, will disappear automatically when those factors come to an end. No material thing can act as the basis of a lasting friendship or produce happiness.

Choosing Friends:

Another point to which Islam attaches much importance, is the choice of a friend. From the viewpoint of Islamic leaders, one should not make friends with each and every individual, since there are some persons whose friendship is harmful and dangerous.

Without any doubt, every friend affects the material and spiritual affairs of his own companion, and each of them unconsciously influences the ideas, morals and conduct of the other.

Experience has shown, too, that many friendships have changed the destiny of individuals and their course of life. Friends influence each other's ways, faith and religion.

The Prophet of Islam (S) has said: *The way of each person accords with the faith and religion of his friend and companion.* (Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. 4)

Don't judge anyone's goodness or badness until you see his friend, since a person is recognized by his likes and companions, and is related to his friends. (Mustadrak-ul-Wasa'il, vol. 2)

The Holy Prophet of Islam (S) says: *The happiest person is he who associates and befriends noble people.* (Amali Saduq)

Influence of a friend:

Some people are so confident of their own purity and nobility; they imagine that they will not be subject to any harm in their association with wicked persons. They consider their personality as strong enough not to be influenced by vices. However, they forget that cotton wool gets aflame by proximity with fire, and glass breaks when it comes in contact with stones. Unfortunately, corruption and impurity can very quickly affect the human spirit, and easily make it catch fire like gunpowder, and burn the entire world with their flame.

He who is proud of his own excellence and doesn't fear to have contact with the mean persons, is like an individual who builds his house on the course of a torrent, hoping that the force of the torrent cannot affect his house.

An old Arabic saying compares a bad companion with a blacksmith. If he does not burn you with his fire, his smoke will at least hurt your eyes.

Supposing you are so dignified and noble that you aren't influenced by the wicked persons you associate with. What will people say about you? Will they not consider you as one of them when you associate with them?

A learned woman said to her children: "As our body is nourished by food to gain strength, so also our spirit acquires virtue or vice by association with good or bad friends."

It would be impossible not to be affected deeply in our character by association with those around us, since man is by nature, an imitator, and everyone is more or less influenced by the conduct, manners and ideas of friends and companions.

Friendship on the Day of Judgment:

Corrupt friends will abandon one another on the Day of Resurrection - as the Qur'an says: *...friends on that day will be foes, one to another, - except for the Righteous...* (43:67)

The danger of having corrupt friends isn't confined to the worldly life. The Qur'an also says: *On the day, when the unjust shall bite his hands saying: "Would that I had taken the path with the messenger. Woe to me! Would that I had not taken so-and so- as my friend! He led me astray from the reminder after it had come to me. Shaytan was ever unto man a betrayer.* (25: 27-29)

Choosing the right friends:

Association with biased and selfish people produces great losses since the effect of their character leads to the obscurity and limitation of thought, and to the death of the spirit of manliness and noble qualities. If association with them continues for a long time, the heart becomes heavy and hardened, moral powers are weakened, and will-power, sense of progress and excelling are destroyed in man.

On the contrary, friendship and contact with those who are wiser, more experienced than us, are very valuable since their association breathes a new spirit into us, teaches us better way of life, and reforms our views about the attitude towards others. It appears as if they make us share their wisdom, knowledge and experience.

“I asked a piece of clay if it was musk or perfume that intoxicated me with its fine fragrance. It said: “I used to be worthless clay, but kept the company of a flower a while; the perfection of my companion affected me, otherwise, I am still the clay that I was.”

The Sixth Imam, Ja'far as-Sadiq (A.S.) says: *My father, while advising me, said: “O my son! He, who associates with the wicked persons, will not remain safe from their injury. And he who steps into unsuitable places will become defamed; and he who cannot control his tongue, will become repentant.* (al-Khessal, vol. 1, p. 80)

Hadith on Friendship:

Prophet Muhammad (S) stated, "The believer is like a mirror to other believers (in truthfulness)." Like a mirror, your friend gives you an honest image. He forgives your mistakes, but does not hide or exaggerate your strengths and weaknesses.

Prophet Muhammad (S) was further asked, "Who is the best among people?" Prophet Muhammad (S) replied, "He who, when you look at him, you remember All-h (SWT)". Such a friend reflects qualities of love, mercy, honesty, service, patience, optimism, professionalism, and the entire lifestyle taught by Islam.

Imam Ali (A.S.) Says: "Keep away from friendship of liar surely he will show you as near what is far from you and will show as far what is near you."

Imam Ali (A.S.): "O' Kumayl! Say what is just in any condition. Be friends with the righteous and avoid the evil doers, stay away from the hypocrites and do not accompany the treacherous."

Imam Sajjad (A.S.): "Beware of the companionship of the sinful, and helping of the unjust."

Imam Ali (A.S.): "If a friend envies you, then he is not a true friend."

Imam Ali (A.S.) Says: "He who is deserted by friends and relatives will often find help and sympathy from strangers."

Imam Hassan (A.S.) says: "Befriend people in the same manner you would like them to befriend you."

Imam Ali (A.S.) Says: "Verily, there are three (types of) friends for a Muslim,

- The friend who says: I am with you whether you are alive or dead', and this is his deed.
- The friend who says: I am with you unto the threshold of your grave and then I will leave you', and this is his children.
- The friend who says: I will be with you until when you die', and this is his wealth which will belong to the inheritors when he dies."

Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.) Says: "Be the friend of him who may grace you, not of one whom you are better than." (i.e. make friends with ones who are higher than you so that you progress.)

Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.) Says: "My most beloved brother is he who (makes me aware of) my faults."

Imam Hassan Askari (A.S.) Says: "Those who advise their friend secretly are respecting them, and those who advise them openly are humiliating them."

Imam Jafar Sadiq (A.S.) has narrated from his father Imam Muhammad Baqir (A.S.) who said his father Imam Sajjad (A.S.) stated: "O' my son! Beware of five (groups) and do not seek companionship (friendship) with them, do not speak with them, and do not make friends with them on (the) way."

Then, Imam Muhammad Baqir (A.S.) asked his father who they were and might he introduces them to him. Imam Sajjad (A.S.) responded:

- "Beware of and do not associate with the one who tells lies. He is as a mirage which makes near for you what is far, and makes far to you what is near."
- "Beware of and do not associate with an immoral person, because he will sell you at the price of a morsel or less than that."
- "Beware of and do not associate with a miser because he will deprive you of his wealth when you are seriously in need of it."
- "Beware of and do not associate with a fool, because he wants to be of avail to you but he harms you."
- "Beware of and do not associate with the one who disregards his kinfolds, because I found him (such a person) cursed in the Book All-h, Almighty and Glorious, in three occurrences." They are: (Sura Al-Baqarah, 2:27; Sura Ar-Rad, 13:25; and Sura Muhammad, 47:22).

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