

TAREEKH SYLLABUS - CLASS 6

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CLASS 6 - LESSON 1

THE FIRST REVELATION

The Holy Prophet (S) used to spend a lot of his time in the cave of Mount Hira, which is a mountain overlooking the Holy Ka'ba, some three miles north of Makka.

It was his habit to sometimes spend a few days continuously in the cave in prayers, and his wife Bibi Khadija (A) would bring him some food and water.

One night when he was in the cave of Mount Hira, he heard a voice calling his name and suddenly there was a dazzling light in the cave. The Holy Prophet (S) sat at his place calmly and saw that a man was approaching him. The person was none other than Angel Jibrael (A) in human form.

Jibrael (A) came very close to the Holy Prophet (S) and asked him to read what was written in a silken scroll that he had in his hands. The Holy Prophet (S) read the words which were the first revelation from Allah, and which later became the first five verses of Surah al-Alaq. These were:

[In the Name of Allah the Beneficent, the Most Merciful.

Read! In the Name of your Lord Who created (everything in the Universe). He created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Honourable. (He) Who taught (to write) with the pen. (He) taught man what he knew not.

Alaq, 96:1-5]

When the Holy Prophet (S) had finished reciting, the angel announced, "O Muhammad! there is no doubt that you are the Apostle of Allah and I am his angel Jibrael." After saying this, the angel disappeared.

This event told the Holy Prophet (S) that it was now time to start his mission. At this time he was 40 years old. The date was 27th of Rajab, 610 A.D. Also at this time, Allah blessed the Holy Prophet (S) with such a memory that, whatever he heard only once from Jibrael (A), remained in his heart forever.

The Holy Prophet (S) then left the cave to return home, where he would begin his mission to preach the Unity of Allah and to invite all mankind to the path of worshipping only One God.

CLASS 6 - LESSON 2

THE FIRST PEOPLE TO BECOME MUSLIMS

When the Holy Prophet (S) returned from the cave in Mount Hira after the first revelation, he immediately went home.

The Holy Prophet (S) lived with his wife Bibi Khadija (A) and his young cousin Imam Ali (A). Abu Talib could not afford to support his four sons due to his poor financial state. As a result, his son Ja'far was looked after by his brother Abbas, and his son Ali (A) was brought up by the Holy Prophet (S).

In addition, when Imam Ali (A) was born, the Holy Prophet (S) had just lost his own son and Abu Talib's wife Fatima binte Asad promised him that as soon as her child was a little older, she would turn it over to him. Imam Ali (A) was 9 years old when he came to live with Bibi Khadija (A) and the Holy Prophet (S).

When he reached his home, the Holy Prophet (S) informed his wife about what had happened, and she immediately believed in his mission and became a Muslim. The next person the Holy Prophet (S) spoke to was Imam Ali (A), who was only 12 years old at the time. Imam Ali (A) also accepted Islam on hearing the experiences of the Holy Prophet (S).

Thus Bibi Khadija (A) was the first woman to become a Muslim, and Imam Ali (A) the first man. The third person to become a Muslim was Zaid bin Harith, who was the Holy Prophet's (S) freed slave and adopted son.

The Holy Prophet (S) received further revelations from Allah and he gradually began to spread the religion of Islam. For the first three years of his mission, he did not make a general invitation to everybody, but selected certain special people who he saw were ready to embrace the religion of Allah.

As a result of his limited activity only 30 people became Muslims in these first three years.

The Quraish and their leader Abu Sufyan knew what was going on, but they were not bothered by the Holy Prophet's (S) activities at this time. They thought that this new religion would soon die out just like when Waraqah and Umayyah returned to idol worship after having become Christians for a short time after reading the Injeel.

During the three years, the Quraish did not harm the Holy Prophet (S), and continued to respect him. In return, he did not openly criticise their idols and remained busy in keeping in contact with his small group of Muslims.

The attitude of the Quraish remained relaxed until the day when the Holy Prophet (S) began to preach the religion of Islam openly on the command of Allah.

CLASS 6 - LESSON 3

THE INVITATION OF ZUL ASHIRA

Three years after his mission had started, the Holy Prophet (S) received the following revelation from Allah : ***And warn your nearest relatives... Shu'ara, 26:214]***

When this command came, the Holy Prophet (S) called Imam Ali (A) and instructed him to arrange a meal and to invite the sons of Abdul Muttalib so that he could deliver to them the words of Allah. Following the invitation, some forty men from the children of Abdul Muttalib gathered near the mountain of Safa. Amongst them were the Holy Prophet's (S) uncles Abu Talib, Abbas, Hamza and Abu Lahab.

The Holy Prophet (S) commanded Imam Ali (A) to serve the food to the guests. Imam Ali (A) kept the food - which was hardly enough to feed even one man - in front of the assembled guests. The Holy Prophet (S) blessed the food with the Name of Allah and asked the people to eat. Everyone of the forty guests had his fill and yet the food remained the same. After the feast was over, the Holy Prophet (S) wished to speak to the assembly, but Abu Lahab said to the people that the Holy Prophet (S) had displayed great magic and so the people all left.

The next day, the Holy Prophet (S) asked Imam Ali (A) to make the same preparations as before, but again the same thing happened. On the third day, the Holy Prophet (S) again invited the same group for a meal. This time, he stood up immediately the eating was over and said to the gathering:

"O sons of Abdul Muttalib! I swear by Allah, besides Whom there is no god, that I have been sent by Him as His Messenger. O my relatives! One day you will die as if you were going to sleep and some time later you will be brought back to life to be judged according to your deeds. The good people will live in Heaven, while those who are evil-doers will be put in Hell forever. No human being has ever brought a better thing for his people than that which I have brought for you. My Lord has ordered me to invite you towards Him. Which one of you will support me so that he may become my brother and successor after me?"

When the speech of the Holy Prophet (S) reached this point, the entire assembly remained silent. Suddenly Imam Ali (A), who was only 15 years old, stood up and said, "O Prophet of Allah! I am prepared to support you." The Holy Prophet (S) asked him to sit down, and repeated the question three times. Each time, however, none but Imam Ali (A) stood up to support him. After the third time the Holy Prophet (S) hugged Imam Ali (A) and holding his hand up high, he said, "People! This young man is my brother and successor amongst you. Listen to his words and follow him."

At this stage, the meeting came to an end and some of those present turned to Abu Talib and teased him saying, "Muhammad has directed you to follow your own son and to take orders from him and has declared him to be your elder."

However, the words of the Holy Prophet (S) proved to be true and many times in his life he repeated the same words about this special position of Imam Ali (A).

CLASS 6 - LESSON 4

THE PERSECUTION OF MUSLIMS

After introducing Islam to his relatives, the Holy Prophet (S) began to tell all the people of Makka about his mission. He called all the tribes to the mountain of Safa, and then said to them, "If I tell you that an enemy is hiding behind this mountain ready to attack you all, would you believe me?" All of them replied, "Yes, because we have never heard you tell a lie." Then the Holy Prophet (S) said, "Save yourself from the punishment of Hell fire. Believe that there is no god but Allah, and you will be successful in your life." When they heard this message, there was confusion amongst the people and Abu Lahab said loudly, "You have wasted our time with all this nonsense."

The people of Makka forgot that they themselves used to call the Holy Prophet (S) "as-Sadiq", which means "the Truthful one". Instead they began to call him a liar and a mad man. They began to make life difficult for him by spreading thorns on his path and getting children to throw stones at him. Sometimes they would throw rubbish on him as he passed under their windows.

All these acts had no effect on the Holy Prophet (S), and he did not give up preaching belief in One God in place of the countless gods worshipped by the Makkans. When the number of Muslims began to slowly increase, the chiefs of some tribes became worried, and they came to Abu Talib, the uncle and guardian of the Holy Prophet (S), and asked him to stop his nephew from preaching his religion.

They offered to give the Holy Prophet (S) money, power or anything he wanted, as long as he would give up talking against their gods. When Abu Talib told the Holy Prophet (S) about their message, he said, "By Allah, even if these people put the sun in my one hand and the moon in the other, I would not give up what I have been commanded by Allah to do."

The Bani Umayyah, who were the enemies of Bani Hashim, began to harass the Holy Prophet (S) all the time. The main trouble makers included Abu Sufyan, Abu Jahl, and Utba bin Rabee'. Although they could not attack him openly because of the power and influence of Abu Talib, they took every opportunity to create difficulties for him.

Once, when the Holy Prophet (S) was offering prayers next to the Holy Ka'ba, Abu Jahl got some members of Quraish to throw the intestines of a goat on his shoulders while he was in Sajdah. After the Holy Prophet (S) had finished his prayers, he prayed to Allah to curse each one of them. History tells us that all the people who had taken part in this act, including Abu Jahl and Utba bin Rabee', were killed in the battle of Badr, which was the very first battle of Islam.

The Makkans then turned their attention to the new Muslims. Some Muslims came from powerful tribes, so they were safe from trouble. However, many Muslims were poor or slaves, and these began to face the most terrible cruelties at the hands of the Makkans.

Abu Zar Ghiffari was one of the early Muslims. When he declared that he had accepted

Islam, the Quraish beat him up so badly that he was half dead. When the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S), Abbas, passed by and saw what they were doing, he reminded the Quraish that Abu Zar was from the tribe of Bani Ghiffar who used to live next to the route of the trade caravans. If they learnt that a member of their tribe had been tortured by the Quraish, they would not let the trade caravans pass safely. On hearing this, the greedy Quraish left Abu Zar alone.

Bilal Habashi was the Mu'azzin (prayer caller) of the Holy Prophet (S). He was the slave of Umayya bin Khilaf. When Bilal accepted Islam, his cruel master was very angry and began to torture him mercilessly. He would make Bilal lie bare-backed on the hot sands of the desert and place a large stone on his chest so that he could not escape the burning sand. At other times he would tie a rope around his neck and get him dragged around the hills of Makka. Despite these cruelties, Bilal continued to say "Ahad, Ahad", which means that "Allah is One". Finally, the Holy Prophet's (S) uncle Abbas bought him and then freed him.

Lubeena Khatun was the slave maid of Umar bin Khattab, who later was made Caliph of the Muslims. When Lubeena became a Muslim, he would beat her so much that he himself would get tired.

Ammar bin Yasir and his parents Yasir and Sumayya were amongst the first Muslims. The unbelievers tried to make them change their minds but they refused. The three of them were taken to the desert and beaten and tortured. This was repeated many times until at one time, Yasir died. When his pregnant wife Sumayya complained to Abu Jahl about this inhuman treatment he took his spear and thrust it into her heart.

Then they turned to Ammar and beat him so terribly that he was about to die. They threatened to kill him unless he declared that he was no longer a Muslim. To save his life, Ammar had to agree. Later, the Holy Prophet (S) approved his action saying that as long as Ammar had the faith in his heart, it did not matter what he was forced to say. Despite the tortures suffered by the Muslims, none of them changed their faith and their numbers increased day by day.

CLASS 6 - LESSON 5

THE HIJRAT TO ABYSSINIA

The unbelievers of Makka had made life very difficult for the Muslims. The Holy Prophet (S) was worried and concerned about the condition of the Muslims, so he advised a group of his followers to migrate to Abyssinia (Ethiopia), which was ruled by a kind Christian king whose name was Negus.

This was the first Hijrat in Islam and 10 people took part in it. It happened in the fifth year of Prophethood. A second, larger group of Muslims also migrated soon afterwards, under the leadership of Ja'far bin Abu Talib, the brother of Imam Ali (A). The Muslims were welcomed with much kindness in Abyssinia and found the life there very pleasant and comfortable.

When the chiefs of Makka found out that the Muslims had migrated and were living peacefully in Abyssinia, they became worried that the Muslims might turn Negus, the king of Abyssinia, towards Islam. They decided to send some gifts to the king and his ministers, and try to convince him to send the Muslims back to Makka. They sent two men after the Muslims.

When the two men reached Abyssinia, they first met the ministers and gave them expensive gifts. They convinced the greedy ministers to support their mission by backing them in the court of the king. On the following day, they met Negus, and after presenting him with gifts, they said: "A group of our young men have gone against the beliefs of our forefathers and have invented a new religion. These people have now run to your country. I request you to hand them over to us so that we can take them back to Arabia."

As soon as this speech was over, the ministers loudly declared their support for this request. However, Negus took no notice of them and asked whether the Muslim refugees had killed anyone, or stolen anybody's property or had committed any crimes in Makka. They replied that their only crime was inventing a new religion.

The king then announced, "I cannot hand over the people who are living under my protection without a proper investigation."

He sent a message to the Muslims that their leader should come to the court. Ja'far bin Abu Talib came to present the case for the Muslims. The king turned to Ja'far and asked, "Why have you given up the beliefs of your forefathers and started a new religion?"

Ja'far replied, "We used to be ignorant people who worshipped idols. We ate dead bodies and committed bad deeds. We had no respect for our neighbours and fought amongst ourselves. The weak and helpless were bullied by the strong. We spent a long time in this manner, until a person from amongst us, who had a faultless character, invited us to worship One God.

He taught us to respect other people's property, to behave well with our relatives, to respect our neighbours and women and to avoid lying. He ordered us to offer prayers, to fast and to pay religious tax on our wealth. We have believed in him and worship

Allah. However, the Quraish have behaved very cruelly towards us. We resisted them for some time, but now we have come to live here to save our beliefs. The fame of your kindness has brought us to your country and we have perfect faith in your justice."

The king was very impressed with the sincere speech of Ja'far, and he asked him to recite something from the Heavenly Book of the Muslims. Ja'far recited and explained some verses from Surah Maryam of the Holy Qur'an.

When the king and bishops heard the words of Allah about the virtues of Bibi Maryam (A) and Prophet Isa (A), tears came to their eyes as they recognised the truth. King Negus declared that he would never surrender the Muslims to the Quraish and asked them to leave his court.

One of the Makkans, who was a very cunning man, decided to try another approach. He knew that the Christians believed that Prophet Isa (A) was the son of God.

The next day he went to the king and said that the Muslims had special beliefs about Prophet Isa (A) that were totally different to the basic belief of the Christians, and so they were a danger to the official religion of Abyssinia.

King Negus again called Ja'far and asked him what the Muslims thought about Isa (A). Ja'far replied, "Our belief regarding Isa (A) is that which has been taught to us by the Holy Prophet (S). He was the servant and Prophet of Allah, and the Spirit of Allah with which He blessed Bibi Maryam (A)."

The king was pleased with this answer, and he praised the beliefs of the Muslims and allowed them full freedom to practise their religion in his country.

He returned the presents of the Quraish back to them and said, "God has not taken any bribe from me while giving me authority over the people. It is not right that I should gather wealth by means of your bribes." The two men had no choice but to return to Makka, having totally failed in their attempt to bring back the Muslims.

The Muslims continued to live in Abyssinia peacefully for a long time and only returned after the Holy Prophet (S) had migrated to Madina.

CLASS 6 - LESSON 6

THE BOYCOTT OF BANI HASHIM

The chiefs of Quraish were very disturbed to see that the religion of Islam was gaining strength in spite of all their efforts. By now, well respected people like Hamza, the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S), and some powerful men of Quraish had become Muslims. The chiefs could not bear to stand by and watch Islam advancing in this manner and so they held a meeting to plan a way to stop it.

They decided to boycott all the Muslims and in this way stop their activities. An agreement was drafted and hung on the walls of the Holy Ka'ba, and the community of Quraish was told to act according to it. The agreement stated that:

1. All trade and business with the supporters of Muhammad shall be banned.
2. Any association with them is strictly prohibited.
3. Nobody is allowed to marry their daughters or sons to those of the Muslims.
4. All those who oppose Muhammad should be supported in all circumstances.

This agreement was signed by all the chiefs of the Quraish and was put into action straight away. Abu Talib, the uncle of the Holy Prophet (S), pledged the support of the entire Bani Hashim clan to his nephew. He also advised all the Muslims to move out of Makka into a valley in the mountains. Thus, the Muslims moved out of their homes into the place known as the "Valley of Abu Talib", and set up small houses and tents.

To protect themselves from a sudden attack from the Quraish, some men were posted as guards. The Muslims were forced to remain in the valley for three years. During this time they suffered terrible hardships. Food was in very short supply, and many had to survive on a single date or less per day. The Bani Hashim were only allowed out of the valley during the special months of Rajab and Zilhaj when fighting was not allowed. During these times they came to Makka to buy food and other necessities. However some Makkans, like Abu Lahab, made things more difficult for them by encouraging the shopkeepers to raise the price of food so that the Bani Hashim could not afford to buy very much.

Throughout their difficult times, the Muslims did not lose heart and remained strongly attached to Islam and the Holy Prophet (S). Finally some of the Makkans began to regret their shameful action against the Muslims, who after all were their relatives. They became ashamed for having signed the agreement and began to look for a solution to the problem. They called a meeting of the Quraish proposing to end the boycott and allow the Muslims to return home.

Although Abu Jahl was not in favour of allowing them back, he was outvoted by the rest and had to remain quiet. The chiefs decided to tear down the agreement. When they brought it down from the Holy Ka'ba, they noticed that the entire sheet had been eaten away by termites and only the words "In the Name of our Lord" remained.

After being informed of the developments by his uncle, the Holy Prophet (S) decided to leave the valley and the Muslims returned to their homes in Makka once again.

The patience and reliance on Allah in the face of hardships by these early Muslims is a great lesson to us all.

CLASS 6 - LESSON 7

THE DEATH OF ABU TALIB (A) AND BIBI KHADIJA (A)

After the boycott on the Muslims had been lifted they returned to their previous lives in Makka. After three difficult years, they looked forward to improving their condition. However, certain events occurred that year that left the Holy Prophet (S) extremely sad and the Muslims shared in his sorrow. In that year the Holy Prophet (S) lost first his uncle Abu Talib (A), and then his wife Bibi Khadija (A) one month later. His sorrow and grief knew no bounds and he named this year "Aamul Huzn", the Year of Grief.

Abu Talib (A) had been the supporter and defender of the Holy Prophet (S) since the death of his father, Abdul Muttalib. He treated him better than his own sons. In order to protect the Holy Prophet (S) from being murdered by his enemies, Abu Talib (A) used to make one of his sons, usually Imam Ali (A), sleep in the bed of the Holy Prophet (S).

Abu Talib (A) believed so much in the excellence of the Holy Prophet (S) that he used to request the blessings of Allah by using his nephew's name. Once, when the Quraish were faced with a terrible drought, they came to Abu Talib (A), begging him to pray for rain. Abu Talib (A) held the hand of the Holy Prophet (S), who was then only a young boy, and raised his head to the skies, saying, "O Lord, send down rain for the sake of this young boy, and favour us with your blessings". This prayer was hardly over when rain began to fall heavily.

As the Holy Prophet (S) grew older, Abu Talib (A) involved him in his trade caravans, giving him experience in dealing with people. When he was 25 years old, it was Abu Talib (A) who arranged for a proposal of marriage to be sent to Bibi Khadija (A).

During the marriage ceremony, he declared the superiority of his nephew compared to all other youth and recited the marriage formula himself.

When the Holy Prophet (S) declared his mission, Abu Talib (A) stood faithfully by his side, never stepping back from the defence of his nephew.

Although Abu Talib (A) began to lose his position amongst the Quraish because of his support for the Holy Prophet (S), he did not for one moment think of asking him to hold back the message of Islam.

The actions of Abu Talib (A) throughout his life confirm that he was a Muslim and believed in the religion of Allah. Some people have said that he was an unbeliever, but the following fact is enough to prove that this is not true.

A Muslim woman cannot remain married to an unbeliever. It is a fact of history that Fatima binte Asad was one of the first women to accept Islam. She was also the wife of Abu Talib (A), and remained his wife till he died. If he had not been a Muslim, it would have been unlawful for her to remain his wife.

It was no wonder that the Holy Prophet (S) missed his uncle so much. Abu Talib (A) had been his guardian for 50 years.

In the same year, the Holy Prophet (S) lost his dear wife Bibi Khadija (A), the mother of his beloved daughter, Fatima Zahra (A). Bibi Khadija (A) had been the richest woman in Arabia when she married the Holy Prophet (S). She was 40 years old when the marriage took place. When the Holy Prophet (S) declared his Prophethood 15 years later, she was the first woman to believe in him and accept Islam.

Thereafter, she gave her entire wealth for the sake of Islam. The Holy Prophet (S) used her wealth to spread the religion and to buy the freedom of many slaves who had become Muslims. The Holy Prophet (S) always used to remember her saying that she believed in his message when everyone around him was calling him a liar. The double tragedy was a bitter blow to the Holy Prophet (S), at a time when he needed the encouragement and support of his loved ones.

CLASS 6 - LESSON 8

THE ASCENSION (MI'RAJ) OF THE HOLY PROPHET (S)

Mi'raj is a very important event in the history of Islam. It is the occasion when Allah raised his beloved Prophet (S) to the heavens and showed him the marvels of His creations. This great honour had never been given to any of Allah's other Prophets (A). The Holy Qur'an says:

[Glory be to Him Who made His servant go by night from Masjidul Haraam to Masjidul Aqsa, whose surroundings We have blessed, so that We might show him some of Our signs. He alone hears all and sees all.

Bani Israa'il 17:1]

The great journey began from the house of Umme Hani, a sister of Imam Ali (A). The Holy Prophet (S) was resting there when he was awakened from his sleep by Angel Jibraeel (A). He was asked to mount on a winged animal called Buraaq. He then went from Makka to the mosque of al-Aqsa in Baytul Muqaddas (now known as Jerusalem). On the way he stopped at the mountain of Sinai and offered 2 raka'at prayers there, because it is the mountain on which Allah spoke with Prophet Musa (A).

On the second part of his journey, the Holy Prophet (S) rose from Masjidul Aqsa through the seven heavens with Jibraeel (A). Here he met the Prophets Isa, Musa, Nuh and Adam (A). He also saw the places of blessing and pleasure (Heaven) and the places of torture and suffering (Hell).

After this he came to the place known as Sidratul Muntaha where Jibraeel (A) left him. From here the Holy Prophet (S) was alone in the presence of Almighty Allah. He received from Allah all the rules of Islam including the new order to all Muslims to perform the five daily prayers. He then returned the same way he had come, first to Baytul Muqaddas, and then to Makka.

On the way to Makka the Holy Prophet (S) met a trading caravan of the Quraish who had lost a camel and were making a search for it. He drank some water from one of their containers and then continued onwards to Makka. He reached the house of Umme Hani at the time of daybreak.

On the next day the Holy Prophet (S) talked about his experiences to a large group of people in Makka. Many were amazed and believed his account but there were some who did not believe him. They asked him to describe the mosque at Baytul Muqaddas as proof of his truthfulness. When the Holy Prophet (S) gave the detailed description of the mosque, some people who had been to the place confirmed that it was true.

The Holy Prophet (S) then told the disbelieving Quraish that he had met one of their trade caravans at Tanim, and they had been looking for a lost camel.

He also told them that the caravan was being led by a brown camel and that the group would soon enter Makka. It was not long before a caravan, as described by the Holy Prophet (S), entered Makka. The leader of the caravan, Abu Sufyan, confirmed everything that the Holy Prophet (S) had said. Now the people had no doubt that the Holy Prophet (S) had indeed made the miraculous journey, and word spread like wild fire around Makka about the events of Mi'raj. The leaders of the Quraish were very upset at the whole issue, especially because a lot of people became Muslims as a result of it.

It is important to understand that the journey was an actual physical one and not a spiritual dream as claimed by Ayesha, one of the wives of the Holy Prophet (S). She stated that he was asleep in her house the whole night. This report is untrue, because at the time of Mi'raj, Ayesha was not yet married to the Holy Prophet (S), and only became his wife one year after the Hijrat to Madina. Muawiya, the son of Abu Sufyan, also claimed that the Mi'raj was a "true dream". He made up his story because he was an enemy of the Holy Prophet (S). He was not born at the time and did not convert to Islam until 9 years after Hijrat so he could not know all the facts about the Mi'raj. The time taken for the entire Mi'raj was one third of the night or slightly less. The reason why the Holy Prophet (S) was taken to Baytul Muqaddas, which was a centre for Jews and Christians was to show that Islam was a continuation of the message of Prophets Ibrahim, Musa and Isa (A). It also showed that the religion was universal and not confined to Makka and Madina only.

Amongst the things that were revealed to the Holy Prophet (S) during his time in the heavens were:

1. The appointment of Imam Ali (A) as the leader after him. This gives us an idea of the importance of planning beforehand for leadership.
2. Five times daily prayers. The Wajib Salaat as we know them today only became compulsory for the Muslims after the event of Mi'raj.
3. The Holy Prophet (S) was also taught some Du'as and special prayers.

It is a measure of the closeness of the Holy Prophet (S) to Allah that he was given an opportunity to see and hear wonderful things, the like of which have never been seen or heard before.

CLASS 6 - LESSON 9

THE JOURNEY TO TA'IF

After the death of Abu Talib, the Holy Prophet (S) was faced with increasing difficulties and problems in Makka. Without his uncle's protection, his life was in constant danger, and there was not much opportunity to spread Islam.

He decided to try to preach Islam outside Makka. In those days the town of Ta'if was a busy and important centre of trade. The Holy Prophet (S) went to Ta'if alone and contacted the tribe of Bani Saqeef with a view to invite them to Islam.

After arriving in Ta'if, he met the chief and elders of that tribe and explained to them the belief in One God and asked them for their support. However, his words did not have any effect on them and they rejected his message. The Holy Prophet (S) realised that the people of the town could become a threat to him because he was alone and away from his home town. He therefore took a promise from the Bani Saqeef that they would not talk about his presence in Ta'if.

The elders of Bani Saqeef did not keep their promise to the Holy Prophet (S) and instead asked the loafers and hooligans of the town to harass him. The Holy Prophet (S) found himself suddenly surrounded by a mob who began to insult him. When they began to throw stones, he was forced to retreat and take refuge in a garden.

The garden belonged to two wealthy people of the Quraish. The Holy Prophet (S) had sweat on his face and parts of his body were hurt from the cruel attack. He sank down under a tree for some rest, and began the following prayer: "O Lord! I present my weakness and lack of strength before You. You are the kind Nourisher and the Helper of the weak. To whom are You abandoning me?"

Although the owners were idol worshippers and enemies of Islam, they were moved by the condition of the Holy Prophet (S) and felt sorry for him. They told a Christian slave to take a plate of grapes to him.

When the Christian presented the grapes to the Holy Prophet (S), he took one and ate it, saying, "In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful". The Christian was very surprised to hear these words and remarked that he had not heard the Arabs pray to anyone but Laat and Uzza, the great idols.

The Holy Prophet (S) asked him about his birth place and his religion. He replied that he came from Naynivah and was a Christian.

On hearing his answer, the Holy Prophet (S) stated, "That is the place where my brother Yunus (Jonas) son of Mata (Matthew) lived". The Christian was very surprised to hear these names. He asked, "How do you know Yunus son of Mata? Nobody in this country has heard of them". The Holy Prophet (S) then said, "Yunus was a Prophet of Allah like myself".

The words of the Holy Prophet (S) had a great effect on the slave and he immediately bowed and kissed the hands of the Holy Prophet (S) and expressed his faith in him.

When he returned to his masters, they asked him what the conversation was all about. He replied, "The person who is sitting in your garden is the chief of all humanity. He has told me things that only a Prophet can know." This reply annoyed them very much but all they said to him was that his own religion was better than Islam.

The Holy Prophet (S) left Ta'if disappointed that he had not been successful in bringing these stubborn and ignorant people to the right path. He decided to return to Makka. However, he could not enter Makka in safety because his life was in danger. He therefore sent word to Mu'tam bin Adi, a powerful Makkan, for help. Mu'tam was an idol worshipper but agreed to provide security for him, due to his respect for his family. He sent a message to the Holy Prophet (S) to enter Makka and come straight to his house.

On the next day Mu'tam told his sons to arm themselves and escort the Holy Prophet (S) to the Holy Ka'ba.

When Abu Sufyan and others who wanted to harm him saw that he had the protection of Mu'tam, they were disappointed, but did not harm him. After performing Tawaaf, the Holy Prophet (S) went to his own home.

Soon afterwards, the Holy Prophet (S) migrated to Madina. In the later years, the Holy Prophet (S) was to take over Ta'if and defeat the Bani Saqeef. However, he never forgot the services of Mu'tam in his time of need, and when news of Mu'tam's death reached Madina, the Holy Prophet (S) remembered him for his goodness.

The journey of the Holy Prophet (S) to Ta'if in difficult circumstances shows us how committed he was to his duty to spread the religion of Islam.

CLASS 6 - LESSON 10

THE PLEDGES OF 'AQABAH

During the Haj season, tribes from all over Arabia came to Makka to perform their pilgrimage. Although their worship was not anything like the Haj that Islam has taught us, they regarded the Holy Ka'ba as an important building. The Holy Prophet (S) took advantage of this time of the year by meeting the visitors and introducing the teachings of Islam to them.

The people of Madina, which was called Yathrib in those days, also used to come to Makka every year. The two main tribes in Madina were the Aws and the Khazraj. They were great enemies of each other and many battles had been fought between them.

In the eleventh year after the beginning of the Holy Prophet's (S) mission, he met 6 people from the tribe of Khazraj in Makka during the Haj season. When he spoke to them about Islam, they were very interested because they had heard from the Jews of Madina, that one day there would be a Prophet who would come from Arabia. The Jews knew this because it was written in their Holy Book, the Tawrat, which had been revealed to Prophet Musa (A). The people of Khazraj believed that this was the very same Prophet and so they became Muslims. On their return to Madina they made efforts to teach people about Islam and soon many people wanted to know more about this new religion.

In the following year, 12 people came to Makka to meet the Holy Prophet (S). The meeting took place at 'Aqabah and resulted in the first Islamic agreement. After embracing Islam, they took a pledge not to associate anyone with Allah, not to steal and not to bury their daughters alive. They promised not to slander one another and to perform good deeds."

The Holy Prophet (S) promised them that if they acted according to the pledge they would be rewarded with Paradise by Allah. This agreement is called the "First Pledge of 'Aqabah". The 12 people returned to Madina, their hearts filled with faith. They wrote back to the Holy Prophet (S) asking him to send someone to Madina who could teach them more about Islam.

The Holy Prophet (S) sent Mus'ab bin Umayr and Ibne Umme Maqtoom to teach them.

The missionaries did their work so well that there was a great change in thinking in Madina. The people eagerly awaited the Haj season so that they could meet the Holy Prophet (S) and personally declare their readiness to help Islam.

The next year a Haj caravan consisting of 500 people, mainly from the tribe of Khazraj, left Madina for Makka. It included 73 Muslims, two of whom were women. The rest of the people were those who wanted to find out more about the religion before becoming Muslims. They met the Holy Prophet (S) on the 13th of Zilhaj at 'Aqabah. During the meeting, the Holy Prophet (S) addressed them and recited verses from the Holy Qur'an. The words of the Holy Prophet (S) made a great impression on all the listeners and they all were ready to express their faith in Islam at his hands. Everyone swore the oath of allegiance (Bay'at) at the hands of the Holy Prophet (S). This event is known as "the Second Pledge of 'Aqabah."

The Holy Prophet (S) then promised the people that he would soon come to Madina himself. Once the ceremony was over, the people left for their homes.

A point to note is the fact that so many people of Madina had accepted Islam after only a few years of being introduced to the religion, while in 13 years of preaching only a few Makkans had become Muslims. There can be two reasons for this:

1. The people of Madina had heard about an Arabian Prophet from the neighbouring Jewish tribes. The Jews claimed that when that Prophet would appear he would preach Judaism. In any case, the Aws and Khazraj tribes were more prepared to believe the Holy Prophet (S) when he claimed to have been appointed by Allah.
2. The people of Aws and Khazraj were tired of the endless quarrels between their tribes, who had been at war on and off for over 120 years. They looked forward to the arrival of an authority who would bring peace to their region.

The time was now ripe for the Holy Prophet (S) to leave his home in Makka. Life in that city was becoming more and more difficult for the Muslims, who faced endless persecution at the hands of the Quraish.

CLASS 6 - LESSON 11

THE HIJRAT TO MADINA - PART 1

When the Quraish realised that the Muslims now had the support of the people of Madina, they were very disturbed. In order to crush the spirit of the Muslims, they increased their efforts at persecuting and harassing them.

The companions of the Holy Prophet (S) complained to him about the harsh treatment they were receiving at the hands of the unbelievers. He asked them to give him a little time to make a decision. After a few days, he advised all the Muslims to migrate to Madina secretly, and await his arrival there.

When the order to migrate was given, the Muslims left Makka one by one, giving excuses for their departure. Because they were afraid of the reaction of the Quraish, they kept their destination secret. As a result, most of them had to leave their possessions and wealth behind.

The Quraish suddenly realised that the Muslims were all leaving Makka. They managed to detain a few, but by that time the majority had already escaped and were on their way to Madina. In Makka there only remained the Holy Prophet (S) and his family, Imam Ali (A) and a few old and ill Muslims. Final arrangements were being made for these last few Muslims also to leave.

The Quraish were enraged at this mass escape. They knew that the Muslims would now become a danger to them. At the meeting assembly of Daar-un-Nadwa, where all important decisions were made, the Quraish decided that the only action that would stop the spread of Islam would be the murder of the Holy Prophet (S). This idea was popular and the only problem was the revenge that the Bani Hashim, the family of the Holy Prophet (S), would take on the killer. Finally, Abu Jahl suggested that instead of sending a single man to kill the Holy Prophet (S), they should send one young man from each tribe. That way, the Bani Hashim would find it impossible to lay the blame on any one person.

This plan was approved and 40 young men were selected to carry out the cowardly deed.

On the same night that the Quraish planned to kill the Holy Prophet (S), he was commanded by Allah to leave Makka for Madina. The angel Jibraeel (A) informed the Holy Prophet (S) of the wicked intentions of the Quraish. The Holy Prophet (S) said to Imam Ali (A),

"Sleep in my bed tonight and cover yourself with the green sheet that I use when I sleep."

He then instructed Imam Ali (A) to follow him to Madina after he had returned the property that certain people of Makka had left with the Holy Prophet (S).

Imam Ali (A) was quite content to obey the orders he had been given because he knew that his actions would mean the safety of the Holy Prophet (S).

He used to say in later years that in spite of the deadly danger, he slept peacefully the whole night.

As night approached, the house of the Holy Prophet (S) was encircled by the 40 men of Quraish. They decided to wait till the morning before carrying out their assignment.

When half the night was over, the Holy Prophet (S) left his house to begin his journey. As he came out of the house he threw some sand towards the men who were waiting to kill him and recited the following verse:

And We have set before them a barrier and behind them a barrier and We covered them over so that they do not see.

Ya Sin, 36 : 9

The Holy Prophet (S) continued on his way without raising the suspicions of the men who waited for him. In the morning the men burst into his house and made for the bed making a great noise as each tried to be first to strike a blow. On hearing the commotion, Imam Ali (A) calmly raised his head from the pillow and threw the green sheet aside.

The sight of Imam Ali (A) stopped the would-be killers in their tracks.
"Where is Muhammad?", they demanded.

Imam Ali (A) replied,
"Did you hand him to me, so that I may deliver him back to you? Anyway, he is not in the house at present."

The Quraish were frustrated at their failure but they left Imam Ali (A) unharmed because they had no quarrel with him. They left the house, regretting their decision to wait till the morning.

Meanwhile the Holy Prophet (S) was undergoing further adventures on his journey to Madina, knowing that he was safe from the enemy because he had the protection of Allah. In the Holy Qur'an, Allah says:

Remember how the unbelievers plotted against you. They wanted to take you captive or kill you or banish you. They devised plans - but Allah too made a plan, and Allah is the best planner.

Anfaal, 8 : 30

CLASS 6 - LESSON 12

THE HIJRAT TO MADINA - PART 2

While Imam Ali (A) lay on his bed, the Holy Prophet (S) began his journey out of Makka. Before he had left the city, he met Abu Bakr on the way and took him along with him. The Holy Prophet (S) knew that the Quraish would waste no time in pursuing him once they learnt of his departure, so he took refuge in the cave of Thaur, which was to the south of Makka on the way to Madina.

The sacrifice of Imam Ali (A), when he took the place of the Holy Prophet (S) on the night of migration, pleased Allah so much that He revealed the following verse:

*And among men there is one who sells his soul to seek the pleasure of Allah;
and truly Allah is affectionate to His (such) servants.*

Baqarah, 2 : 207

When the Quraish found out that the Holy Prophet (S) had left Makka, they sent men to block all routes leading to Madina. They also hired some men who could trace the location of travellers by their footprints. It was declared that whoever gave correct information about the hiding-place of the Holy Prophet (S) would be rewarded with 100 camels.

One of the best trackers of the Quraish, a man named Abu Karz, traced the footprints of the Holy Prophet (S) to the cave of Thaur. However, when some men came near the mouth of the cave, they saw that its entrance was blocked by a spider's web and some wild pigeons had laid eggs in a nest at the entrance.

The men knew that the spider and pigeons would not have made their homes there if there had been anyone in the cave. Also, if the web had been there from before, it would have been damaged if someone had entered the cave. They therefore returned without looking inside. By this miracle Allah protected His beloved messenger.

The Holy Prophet (S) remained in the cave for three days and nights. On one of these nights Imam Ali (A) came to visit him. The Holy Prophet (S) told him to arrange for camels for Abu Bakr and himself.

He also directed him to announce in Makka the following day that if anybody had left something in trust with the Holy Prophet (S), or had loaned him anything, he should claim it from Imam Ali (A).

He further instructed Imam Ali (A) to make arrangements for the Fawaatim (The three Fatimas - Fatima az-Zahra (A), Fatima binte Asad and Fatima binte Zubayr), as well as any other members of Bani Hashim who wished to leave Makka. Imam Ali (A) was to escort these people personally to Madina.

On the fourth day Imam Ali (A) sent three camels to the cave along with a reliable guide named 'Urayqit. The Holy Prophet (S) and Abu Bakr then left with the guide for Madina, travelling along the coastal route so as to avoid the Quraish riders.

It is from this night that Muslims mark the beginning of the Islamic Era or the Hijra calendar. This is because the migration marked the beginning of centralisation of Muslims in Madina and the setting up of the first Muslim state.

The journey to Madina was a distance of some 400 kilometres and they travelled mostly at night and rested during daytime. Despite their care, they were spotted by a man who went immediately to the Quraish and reported what he had seen.

In order to claim the reward alone for their capture, a man called Saraqah convinced the Quraish that the man had seen some other people and that it would be a waste of time to follow them. He then went to his house, armed himself and rode a swift horse to the spot where the Holy Prophet's (S) party had been last seen.

Saraqah was a strong man and his approach made Abu Bakr very worried. However the Holy Prophet (S) told him the same thing he had said to him when they had nearly been discovered in the cave of Thaur:

...Do not be afraid, Allah is with us...

Tawba, 9 : 40(Part)

In the meantime, the Holy Prophet (S) prayed to Allah to be protected from the mischief of Saraqah. Suddenly, the man was thrown violently from his horse. He realised at once that it was not an accident but rather a warning due to his bad intentions.

He therefore turned to the Holy Prophet (S) and asked for his forgiveness and offered to help him in any way he could. The Holy Prophet (S) told him to return to Makka and stop people from pursuing them. Saraqah then returned to Makka, telling whoever he met on the way that there was no trace of the Holy Prophet (S) on that route.

On the 12th of Rabiul Awwal the Holy Prophet (S) arrived at Quba, just outside Madina. Here he awaited the arrival of his cousin Imam Ali (A).

CLASS 6 - LESSON 13

THE HIJRAT TO MADINA - PART 3

The village of Quba was the centre of the tribe of Bani Awf. The Holy Prophet (S) stopped at this place and stayed at the house of the chief of the tribe. At Quba, a large number of Muslims were waiting to escort him into Madina, which was not very far away.

The Holy Prophet (S) stayed there for a few days while he waited for the arrival of Imam Ali (A). During this time, he laid the foundation of a mosque for the Bani Awf. This was the first mosque of Islam.

Meanwhile in Makka, Imam Ali (A) declared to the people that whoever had left any belongings in trust with the Holy Prophet (S) should come and claim it back. He stayed in Makka for three days until everything had been returned to its rightful owner. Then he gathered the women of the household of the Holy Prophet (S) and any Muslims who still remained in Makka and prepared to leave. The group left for Madina at night.

The spies of the Quraish came to know about the migration of this last group of Muslims and pursued them. They caught up with Imam Ali (A) at a place called Zajnaan. The Quraish insisted that the Muslims should return to Makka and hot words were exchanged between the two groups.

The women were getting very nervous at the presence of the Quraish and finally Imam Ali (A) realised that he had no alternative but to defend the Muslims by force. He therefore turned to the Quraish and said,

"Whoever wishes that his body be cut into pieces and his blood to be shed should step forward".

Seeing the look in the eyes of Imam Ali (A) the Quraish changed their attitude and let them go.

Imam Ali (A) managed to guide his group into Quba three days after the arrival of the Holy Prophet (S). His feet were swollen and bleeding, a sight which brought tears to the eyes of the Holy Prophet (S).

One day after the arrival of Imam Ali (A), the Holy Prophet (S) proceeded to Madina. Both the Muhajirs (the Muslims who had migrated from Makka) and the Ansar (the Muslims of Madina) lined the streets of Madina eagerly awaiting the first appearance of the Holy Prophet (S). When his camel came down at a place called Thaniyatul Wida and set its foot on the land of Madina, he came into view of the waiting people. They greeted him warmly and began singing in joy:

"The moon rose for us from Thaniyatul Wida. It is our duty to be thankful for this blessing till the day when even one person, who prays to Allah and worships Him, is left on the face of the earth".

CLASS 6 - LESSON 14

THE HIJRAT TO MADINA - PART 4

The arrival of the Holy Prophet (S) in Madina was a cause for great celebration among the Muslims. As his camel entered Madina, the chiefs of various tribes hurried forward to hold the reins of the animal, each insisting that the Holy Prophet (S) be his guest and stay at his house.

The Holy Prophet (S) took care of this delicate problem by saying,
"Let the camel walk. I shall stop wherever it kneels down."
Everybody looked eagerly to see where the camel would finally stop.

The camel stopped and bent its knees in a large piece of land which belonged to two orphan boys, Sahl and Suhayl. The land was used for drying dates and agriculture. The nearest house was that of Abu Ayyub Ansari. His mother grabbed the opportunity and quickly took the possessions of the Holy Prophet (S) to her house.

The competition for who should take the Holy Prophet (S) for a meal began, but the Holy Prophet (S) cut short all the arguments by asking,
"Where are my belongings?"

When he was told that Abu Ayyub's mother had taken them, he went towards that house. Abu Ayyub was delighted to have the honour of being the host of the Holy Prophet (S), who stayed with him for about seven months, until his house next to the mosque was ready.

The Holy Prophet (S) wished to build a mosque over the plot where his camel had stopped. The orphans whose property it was wanted to make the land a present to him but he refused the offer, and paid the price of the plot, which was 10 dinars in gold.

After the purchase, the ground was cleared of the trees and a mosque, 54 yards in width by 60 yards in length, was built over it with clay and mud. The roof was made with palm-wood and covered with palm branches and leaves. To one side, apartments were built for the Holy Prophet (S) and his family and on the other side rooms were provided for about 70 of the poorer people of Madina who had no house of their own. These rooms were called "Suffa".

The construction work was shared equally between the Muhajir (those who had migrated from Makka) and the Ansar (the local people of Madina).

The Holy Prophet (S) also shared in the work although Ammar bin Yasir, an early convert and faithful companion, seldom allowed him to do anything and used to do the Holy Prophet's (S) share himself.

Ammar was the first person to begin work on the foundation of the mosque. One day the Holy Prophet (S) affectionately dusted his body clear of mud and told him,
"O Ammar you will be killed by a group of oppressors while you will be inviting them to truth."

This prophecy was well known, and 38 years later, Ammar was killed fighting on the side of Imam Ali (A) against Muawiya in the Battle of Siffin. At that time many of Muawiya's men realised that they were on the wrong side and left him.

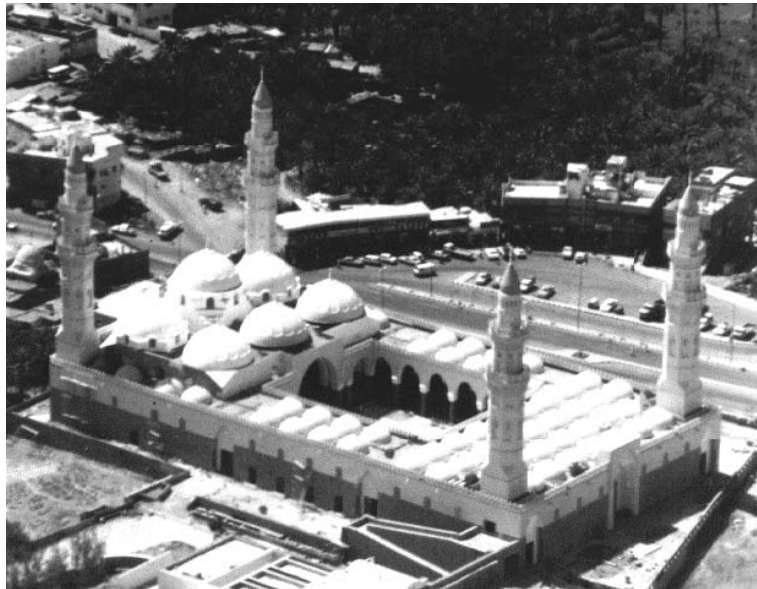
Although the mosque was very simple in structure, it was the best in the whole history of Islam. It became the centre of Muslim activity in Madina. The daily and Friday prayers were held there. From this mosque the Holy Prophet (S) taught people about the religion of Allah and thousands became Muslims.

The mosque was called Masjidun Nabawi and still stands in Madina today, although it is very much larger.

Before the migration of the Holy Prophet (S), Madina was called Yathrib, but after his arrival it became known as Madinatun Nabi (The City of the Prophet) or Madina for short.

The Muslim Hijra Calendar began from that year. Today, it is over 1400 years since those early days of the arrival of the Holy Prophet (S) in Madina.

May Allah give us the strength to remain firm on the path of religion as taught by our Holy Prophet Muhammad Mustafa - peace be upon him and his family.



Masjide Quba – Madina

CLASS 6 - LESSON 15

PROPHET IBRAHIM (A) - PART 1

Prophet Ibrahim (A) is one of the greatest Prophets of Allah. The Holy Qur'an says:

Ibrahim was certainly a model of faith for the people, obedient to Allah and upright, and was not an idolater but grateful to Him for His favours; so He chose him and guided him on the right path, and gave him what is good in this world, and in the hereafter he will be amongst the righteous ones.

Naml, 16 : 120 - 122

Prophet Ibrahim (A) was born in Syria at the time when Namrud was the king. Namrud was a proud man and forced the people to believe in him as their god. Since the people were idolaters, who already worshipped idols of wood and stone, they willingly accepted him as their god. After some time, Allah decided to send Prophet Ibrahim (A) to these people so they may be guided.

A short while before Prophet Ibrahim (A) was born, Namrud was told by his astrologers that a special child would soon be born, who would stand against him and tell the people to stop worshipping idols. After that warning, Namrud ordered that all new born babies should be examined carefully to see if they showed any signs or miracles.

Prophet Ibrahim's (A) mother had shown no signs of pregnancy when she carried him, so she knew that her baby was special. To protect him from Namrud's men, she hid the baby in a cave and returned to the town. Allah caused milk to flow from the fingers of Prophet Ibrahim (A) and thus provided him with a source of food.

Prophet Ibrahim (A) grew up outside the town for 13 years before his mother brought him to her home secretly. His father, Taraq, had already died, so he was adopted by Azar, his father's brother.

Azar was a famous sculptor who used to make idols out of stone. His sons used to sell these idols to the people. Azar gave Prophet Ibrahim (A) the same job as his sons.

Even in his young age, Prophet Ibrahim (A) already believed in Allah and he hated idols. On the first day of his job, he tied a rope around some idols and dragged them through the dirt to the market-place.

He then called to the people,

"Come and buy these lifeless idols who can neither benefit nor harm anybody."

The people looked at the dirty idols and were angry at the disrespect that Prophet Ibrahim (A) had shown to their gods. They complained to Azar and Prophet Ibrahim (A) was not allowed to sell any more idols.

As time passed, Prophet Ibrahim (A) tried to show the people the error of their ways. He first approached his uncle, who was like a father to him, and advised him to worship Allah and abandon the idols. The Holy Qur'an records his conversation with Azar in the following verses:

"O my father! Do not worship Shaitan, who was disobedient to Allah. O my father! I am afraid that the punishment of Allah might touch you so that you would be Shaitan's companion." He (Azar) said, "Do you turn against my gods, O Ibrahim? If you do not go away I will stone you. Get away from me for a long while." He (Ibrahim) said, "Peace be on you, I will pray to my Lord to forgive you. He is most gracious to me.

Maryam, 19 : 44 - 47

Although he was unsuccessful with Azar, Prophet Ibrahim (A) did not lose hope and began preaching to the people. He used to tell them,

"Can your idols hear you? Can they ever help you or harm you?"

They would say,

"We worship them because our forefathers worshipped them."

Prophet Ibrahim (A) would then teach them that only Allah, the Creator of the heavens and earth, should be worshipped.

Although the people could not answer Prophet Ibrahim's (A) arguments against their idols, they were stubborn and only a few people listened to him and began worshipping Allah. Prophet Ibrahim (A) then decided to show the people how useless their idols were by destroying them. He got his chance during the annual festival, which was held outside the town.

On the day of the festival, when all the people, young and old, had left the town, Prophet Ibrahim (A) was alone. He went to the main temple where all the important idols were kept. He took an axe and broke all the idols except the largest one. The idols, which had been kept neat and tidy, now lay in pieces on the ground. Before he left the temple, Prophet Ibrahim (A) put the axe in the hands of the largest, unbroken, idol.

The Holy Qur'an says:

When he (Ibrahim) said to his father and his people, "What are these images to which you turn (in devotion)?" They said, "We found our fathers (ancestors) worshipping them." He (Ibrahim) said, "Indeed you and your fathers were in a clear error." They said, "Have you really brought us the truth or are you only a joker?" He said, "No! Your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who has created them. And I am a witness to this (Truth). And, by God! I will plan against your idols when your backs are turned!" So he broke them into pieces, except the chief of them, so they could return to it."

Anbiya, 21 : 52 - 58

CLASS 6 - LESSON 16

PROPHET IBRAHIM (A) - PART 2

Prophet Ibrahim (A) had broken all the idols except the largest one in the main temple while the people were celebrating their festival outside the town. When they returned and found what had happened to their gods, they were shocked and said,

"Who has done this cruel thing to our lords?"

One of them said,

"It must be Ibrahim. He has always hated idol worship."

Prophet Ibrahim (A) was brought to court to face trial for damaging the idols. When he was asked whether he was guilty he replied,

"It must have been done by the biggest idol. Ask him about it."

But the people said,

"Our idols do not talk or answer questions."

Now Prophet Ibrahim (A) took the opportunity to make the people understand how useless their idols were. He said,

"Shame on you! How can you worship pieces of wood and stone. They do not know anything and can neither harm nor benefit you."

However, nobody was willing to listen to his words and he was declared guilty. The people began to shout,

"Burn him alive! Let him be with his Lord."

Namrud decided to burn Prophet Ibrahim (A) alive to please his idols. He ordered that wood be collected to make a huge bonfire. So much wood was brought that when the fire was lit, no one could get close enough to throw Prophet Ibrahim (A) into it.

Namrud decided to build a large catapult and Prophet Ibrahim (A) was thrown into the fire using this catapult. When Prophet Ibrahim (A) was flying in the air towards the fire, the angel Jibraeel (A) came to ask him if he needed his help. Prophet Ibrahim (A) replied,

"No I need help from Allah only."

The Holy Qur'an says:

They said, "Burn him to ashes if you want to help your gods." We (Allah) said, "O Fire, be cold and peaceful for Ibrahim."

Anbiya, 21 : 68,69

When Prophet Ibrahim (A) landed in the fire he prayed to Allah to protect him. By Allah's command, the fire became cool and harmless. Namrud and his followers were amazed to see Prophet Ibrahim (A) sitting calmly and comfortably in the middle of the burning fire. Many who saw this miracle realised the truth of his teachings but others, especially Namrud, remained proud and stubborn.

After a while, Prophet Ibrahim (A) came out of the fire and met Namrud who told him,
"You are creating confusion in my community by inviting them to worship another lord besides me. Tell me Who is your Lord?"

The Holy Qur'an says:

Have you thought about the one (Namrud) who argued with Ibrahim about his Lord, because Allah had given him the kingdom? Ibrahim said to him, "My Lord is He Who gives life and causes death." He (Namrud) said, "I (also) give life and cause death." (Then) Ibrahim said, "Allah makes the sun rise from the east, (why don't) you bring it from the west." Thus the unbeliever was baffled and Allah does not guide unjust people.

Baqarah, 2 : 258

Prophet Ibrahim (A) told Namrud that Allah is the One who gives and takes away life. Namrud said,

"I can also do that. If I call two prisoners who are going to be hanged, and let one go free and kill the other, I have given one life and the other death."

Prophet Ibrahim (A) replied,

"No, you are only right if you bring the dead one back to life. Anyway, my Lord makes the sun rise in the east. If you are so powerful, make it rise from the west."

Namrud could not reply to this argument and was defeated. However, he remained stubborn and did not accept the religion of Prophet Ibrahim (A).

Namrud knew that he could not harm Prophet Ibrahim (A), because he was under the protection of Allah. So he ordered Prophet Ibrahim (A) to leave his kingdom and stopped everybody from following his religion.

Prophet Ibrahim (A) thus left his homeland with his family and sheep. He took with him his wife Sarah, and his cousin Prophet Lut (A) and left for Palestine.

CLASS 6 - LESSON 17

PROPHET IBRAHIM (A) - PART 3

Prophet Ibrahim (A) had been told to leave the country by the king, Namrud. He took his family and left for Baytul Muqaddas in Palestine. His wife Sarah was a beautiful woman, so to guard her from the eyes of the people, he would put her in a box whenever they came to a town. When they were travelling in the middle of the desert, he would let her out.

After some time, they arrived in a new country, which was ruled by an Arab king. The guard at the border wanted to check the box in which Sarah lay hidden. Prophet Ibrahim (A) told the guard,

"You may suppose that the box is full of gold and silver and I will pay the tax for that, but do not open the box."

However, the guard insisted that he had to see what Prophet Ibrahim (A) was carrying and so he opened the box. When he saw Sarah, he took Prophet Ibrahim (A) to the king.

When they came before the king, he was attracted to the beauty of Sarah and he reached out to touch her. Prophet Ibrahim (A) prayed to Allah to protect the honour and dignity of his wife. At his prayer, the king's hand turned into a solid block of wood.

The king begged Prophet Ibrahim (A) to pray to Allah to give him his hand back, saying that he would not look at Sarah again. Prophet Ibrahim (A) prayed and the king's hand became normal again.

After talking for a while with Prophet Ibrahim (A), the king looked up at Sarah and could not resist making the same mistake as before. As he tried to touch her, his hand dried up like a piece of wood.

He turned to Prophet Ibrahim (A), once more begging for Allah's forgiveness and asking for his hand back. Prophet Ibrahim (A) told him that he would pray for him one last time. He said,

"O my Lord, if this man is truly sorry, then change his hand to its original form."

Through this prayer, the king was cured. He was impressed with the power of Prophet Ibrahim (A), and accepted his faith. He treated Prophet Ibrahim (A) with great respect and presented him with a maid called Hajira, to serve Sarah, and allowed them to go wherever they wanted.

On his way to Baytul Muqaddas, Prophet Ibrahim (A) came across a group of people who worshipped the stars. These people were called the Magi. He decided to guide them towards Allah. To teach them the error of their ways, he used a very polite way of approach. Prophet Ibrahim (A) introduced himself as a star-worshipper also and then sat down at night to worship with them.

The Holy Qur'an says:

We showed Ibrahim the kingdom of the heavens and the earth to strengthen his faith. When it became dark, he saw a star and said, "This is my Lord." But when it set, he said, "I do not love those who fade away." When he saw the moon rising, he said, "This is my Lord." And when it set he said, "Had my Lord not guided me I would certainly have gone astray." Then when he saw the sun rising he said, "This is my Lord, this is the greatest one" And then when it (also) set, he said, "O my people, I am not part of what you associate with God

An'aam, 6 : 77 - 79

Prophet Ibrahim (A) got the people's attention by claiming that the star, then the moon, and finally, the sun, were his gods. But as each of these set, he turned away from them saying,

"I am sick of these ever-changing creations. I believe in Allah, Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. I do not belong to those who believe in partners to Allah or the idol-worshippers."

Although Prophet Ibrahim (A) used this polite way of teaching and proved how useless their worship was, the Magi continued to argue with him. He said,

"Why do you argue with me about Allah when He has guided me to the right path?"

The people refused to believe his words and threatened to harm him and told him to be afraid of the revenge of the stars. Finally Prophet Ibrahim (A) left these foolish people and continued on his way to Baytul Muqaddas.

Prophet Ibrahim (A) and Sarah could not have any children and this made him very sad. Sarah then suggested that he marry her maid Hajira, and perhaps Allah would give them a child.

Prophet Ibrahim (A) and Hajira were married and Allah blessed them with a son, Prophet Isma'il (A).

Five years later, Sarah also gave birth to a son, Prophet Ishaq (A).

Prophet Ibrahim (A) is called the father of the Prophets (A) because from his son Prophet Isma'il came the Arab Prophets (A), including the Holy Prophet (S), and from his son Prophet Ishaq came the Jewish Prophets (A), including Prophet Isa (A).

The title of Prophet Ibrahim (A) was "Khalilullah", which means "Friend of Allah". When the time came for his death, he told the angel who had come to take his soul,

"Ask Allah, Does a friend take the life of his friend?"

He meant that Allah should not order Prophet Ibrahim's (A) death because he was His friend. The angel of death, Israa'il (A), could not answer this question, so he returned to Allah, Who commanded him to go back to Prophet Ibrahim (A) and say,

"O Ibrahim, does a friend refuse an invitation to meet his friend?"

CLASS 6 - LESSON 18

PROPHET ISMA'IL (A)

When Prophet Isma'il (A) was born, his father Prophet Ibrahim (A) was 86 years old. The new-born son was the apple of his father's eye and when Sarah watched the two of them, she was sad that she could not have a child. After a time, she could not bear to see Hajira and her son and she asked Prophet Ibrahim (A) to take them away to another place. On the command of Allah, Prophet Ibrahim (A) brought Hajira and Prophet Isma'il (A) to Makka. In this desert he left his wife and baby in the care of Allah and returned to his home in Palestine. According to the Holy Qur'an, he prayed:

O our Lord! I have left part of my family in a valley where nothing grows, close to Your Holy House. Our Lord! This is so they can set up prayer. So make the hearts of the people kind towards them and provide them with fruits so that they may be grateful.

Ibrahim, 14 : 37

Although Hajira was alone in the desert, she had learnt from her husband to trust in Allah and be patient. When she became hungry and thirsty and could no longer feed her baby, she tried to look for water, searching between the hills of Safa and Marwah, but she was unsuccessful. Finally, she returned to her baby, disappointed. Suddenly, she saw that a stream of water was flowing out from where Prophet Isma'il (A) had struck the ground with his foot. She was very happy and drank her fill.

Meanwhile, the water had attracted a flock of birds. The people of the tribe of Jarham, who lived nearby, were following the birds in search of water. When they saw Hajira and Prophet Isma'il (A) alone in the desert, they invited them to come and live with their tribe.

Hajira and Prophet Isma'il (A) began to live with the tribe of Jarham. Sometimes, Prophet Ibrahim (A) used to visit them. On one of his visits when Prophet Isma'il (A) was 13 years old, Prophet Ibrahim (A) dreamt that he was sacrificing his son. It was the 8th of Zilhaj, also known as Yawme Tarwiyah (The Day of the First Dream). Prophet Ibrahim (A) often received Allah's commands in his dreams, but because he was being asked to actually kill his son, he wondered whether it was real.

On the next day he saw the same dream and was now sure that it was a true command. Thus, the 9th of Zilhaj is known as Yawme Arafat (The Day of Sure Knowledge). The Holy Qur'an says:

And when (Isma'il) became Baaligh, he (Ibrahim) said, "O my son! I saw in a dream that I am sacrificing you. What is your view?" He (Isma'il) said, "O father! Do as you have been commanded. If Allah wills, you will find me from the patient ones."

Saffat, 37 : 102

Prophet Ibrahim (A) took a rope and a knife, and led his son into the desert. On the way, Shaitan appeared in the form of an old man, and tried to convince Prophet Ibrahim (A) that he was making a terrible mistake in killing his son. Three times Shaitan came, and each time Prophet Ibrahim (A) made him go away by throwing seven small stones at him.

When they reached Mina, Prophet Ibrahim (A) laid his son on the ground and took the knife. Prophet Isma'il (A) saw how distressed his father was at having to kill him, so he said,

"O my father! Tie my hands and legs so that I do not struggle. Put a blindfold over your eyes so that you do not have to see me die and tighten your cloak so that my mother does not see my blood splattered on your clothes. Make your knife sharp so that you can do your job quickly. That way I will feel no pain."

Prophet Ibrahim (A) did as his son requested, and then cut the throat of his son. But when he removed the blindfold, he was surprised to see his son standing safe besides him and that he had slaughtered a male sheep instead. The Holy Qur'an says:

And We called out to him, "O Ibrahim, Indeed you have proved your dream true. This is how We pay back people who do good. Indeed this was a clear trial, and We ransomed him with a Great Sacrifice. And We gave (this blessing) to one from the later times." Peace be upon Ibrahim.

Saffat, 37 : 104 - 109

Thus Allah told Prophet Ibrahim (A) that He was rewarding him for his faith by saving Prophet Isma'il (A). Instead of his son, the blessing of sacrifice in the Way of Allah would be given to a person in the future.

This person was none other than Imam Husain (A), who sacrificed himself, his family members and his friends on the plains of Kerbala for the sake of Islam.

After his son had been saved, Prophet Ibrahim (A) left for Palestine to return to Sarah. Allah made the actions of Prophet Ibrahim (A) and his family Wajib for all Muslims. Thus, when we go for Haj, we walk between Safa and Marwah just as Hajira did. We also go to Mina and offer an animal for sacrifice and stone the Shaitans.

On one of his visits, Prophet Ibrahim (A) was ordered by Allah to rebuild the Holy Ka`ba, which had broken down. The Holy Qur'an says:

And Ibrahim raised the foundations of the House (Holy Ka'aba) with Isma'il, (praying), "O our Lord! accept this from us. You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

Baqarah, 2 : 127

The two of them built the Holy Ka`ba together. Prophet Isma'il (A) carried the stones and Prophet Ibrahim (A) paved them in place. The angel Jibraeel (A) guided them at every step and showed them where to put the Holy Black Stone (Hajare Aswad). It still remains in the same place today. After the building was ready, they performed the Haj. Prophet Isma'il (A) settled in Makka and lived there all his life. Our Holy Prophet Muhammad (S) is from his descendants.

CLASS 6 - LESSON 19

PROPHET AYYUB (A)

Prophet Ayyub (A) was the grandson of Prophet Ishaq (A) son of Prophet Ibrahim (A) and his wife was the granddaughter of Prophet Yusuf (A). Allah gave him many blessings. He was a wealthy man with large flocks of sheep and a lot of land. He had many children and was well respected by his people.

Prophet Ayyub (A) was generous with his wealth and took care of orphans and used to provide food for the poor. He was mindful of the needs of all and especially his relatives, whom he always treated kindly. For all his bounties, Prophet Ayyub (A) remained ever grateful to Allah .

On seeing the devotion of Prophet Ayyub (A) to Allah, Shaitan decided to try to lead him astray. Since he was dealing with a Prophet, Shaitan requested Allah for power over Prophet Ayyub's (A) affairs and said,

"O Allah, while Ayyub enjoys your blessings he remains grateful to you. But give me control over his affairs and I will make him turn away from you."

Allah was fully aware of the patience and steadfastness of Prophet Ayyub (A), but as a trial for His Prophet and as a lesson for mankind, he granted Shaitan's request.

Shaitan came down to earth and caused the destruction of all Prophet Ayyub's (A) animals and property and worse of all, he killed his children as well. However, Prophet Ayyub (A) turned to Allah with even greater intensity than before.

When Shaitan saw his plot defeated, he caused Prophet Ayyub (A) to lose his health and be got with a severe disease. Seeing the troubles befalling Prophet Ayyub (A), his people began saying that he must had done something awful to incur the punishment of Allah and they began to avoid him. Finally he was exiled from his community and had to leave the town.

Prophet Ayyub (A) began to live in the wilderness and passed his time praying to Allah. His only companion was his wife Rahma, who supported them by doing odd-jobs in people's houses.

Several years passed and Shaitan watched helplessly as Prophet Ayyub (A) remained steadfast in his devotion and prayers to Allah . Finally, he decided that he would try Prophet Ayyub's (A) patience through his wife.

One day Shaitan came in the form of a human being to Rahma and told her that he knew of a way to cure her husband of his terrible disease. He told her to take a sheep and slaughter it in his name instead of the Name of Allah . He claimed that its meat would immediately cure Prophet Ayyub (A).

When she came back and suggested this treatment to her husband, he instantly realised what had happened. He said to her,

"Has the enemy of my Lord misled you? Pity on you! How many years did we enjoy a life of happiness due to the Mercy of Allah ?"

She replied,

"Eighty years."

He said,

"And how long have we been under this trial?"

She said,

"For seven years."

Then Prophet Ayyub (A) told her angrily,

*"Why should we not bear all this for the same period of time as we lived happily?
By God! if I am relieved of my afflictions I will flog you with a hundred lashes for
your evil suggestion."*

He then told her to go away and leave him alone.

Finally, Prophet Ayyub (A) turned to Allah and complained about Shaitan's repeated efforts to make him forsake his beliefs.

The Holy Qur'an says:

*(Remember) Ayyub when he called to his Lord, "I am afflicted with distress and
You are the Most Compassionate of all." So We heard his cry and relieved him
of the misery he was in.*

Anbiya, 21 : 83, 84(Part)

Allah accepted the prayers of Prophet Ayyub (A) and cured him of all his troubles.

The Holy Qur'an says:

*(And We said to him) "Stamp your foot on the ground. This stream is for you to
wash with, (and) a cool and (refreshing) drink." And we gave him his family and
more like them; a mercy from Us and a reminder for those with understanding.
And it was said to him, "Take in your hand a bunch of (thin) sticks (like fibre) and
strike (your wife) with it, so as not to break your oath." Verily, We found him
steadfast, an excellent servant. Verily, he turned to Us often.*

Saad, 38 : 42 - 44

Prophet Ayyub (A) struck the ground with his foot and a stream of water came out. When he washed himself with the water he saw that his sickness disappeared and he returned to normal. His wife Rahma was worried about him, but when she returned she was amazed to see him restored to his former health.

Prophet Ayyub (A) was happy at seeing his wife but after a time, he remembered his vow to punish her.

But Allah revealed to him that he should strike her with a soft lash so as to literally fulfil his vow, but not to hurt her at all because she had faithfully served him in his time of trial. Allah then restored Prophet Ayyub (A) to his former prosperity. He was blessed with many children and more followers than he had before.

There is a great lesson for us in the proverbial patience of Prophet Ayyub (A). He suffered his hardship without bitterness, and submitted himself to the will of Allah, Who rewards plentifully those who remain steadfast in seeking His pleasure.

CLASS 6 - LESSON 20

PROPHET YUNUS (A)

Prophet Yunus (A) was sent by Allah to the people of Naynivah (Babylon) to guide them on the right path. The people of Naynivah were idol worshippers, and although Prophet Yunus (A) tried night and day to explain to them how useless their worship was, they did not accept his advice. They said to him,

"You are a liar. Our forefathers have always worshipped these idols and we will do the same."

Prophet Yunus (A) tried to convince the people for a long time to worship One God. He even warned them of Allah's punishment if they continued in their sinful ways, but they refused to give up their idol worshipping. They said

"O Yunus, do not bother yourself about us. We neither believe in your Lord, nor do we care about any punishment."

At last Prophet Yunus (A) was fed up with these stubborn people. He asked Allah to send His punishment on them and walked out of their town. However, Prophet Yunus (A) had made a mistake because his anger had caused him to leave the people before he had received the command of Allah to do so.

After his departure, the signs of Allah's punishment appeared over Naynivah. A huge cloud came over the whole area and the land was plunged into darkness.

The people at once realised that they were about to be punished for their sins. A wise man from amongst them advised them to ask for Allah's forgiveness at once, before they were all destroyed. All the people, young and old, men and women, came out of their homes and sincerely begged Allah to forgive them. Allah accepted their prayers and withdrew His punishment.

Meanwhile, Prophet Yunus (A) had gone a long distance and had reached the sea. There he saw some people in a boat that was ready to sail. He requested them to allow him to join them. Since he looked like a very respectable person, the passengers of the boat cheerfully welcomed him on board.

In the sea, the boat was suddenly caught up in a heavy storm. It was in danger of going under and the captain said that unless they reduced the weight load, they would all drown. It was agreed that one person would have to be thrown overboard. To decide who that person would be, the passengers cast lots. The first time the lot fell to Prophet Yunus (A), but since he was considered to be a dignified person, the lots were cast again.

When the lot fell to Prophet Yunus (A) the second time, they had no choice but to throw him overboard. At that moment, Prophet Yunus (A) realised his mistake in walking out on his people without waiting for the command of Allah.

He knew that his present problems were due to that mistake but he trusted in the Wisdom of Allah and jumped into the stormy sea.

In the meantime, Allah commanded a large fish to swallow Prophet Yunus (A) into its belly. Prophet Yunus (A) suddenly found himself in the stomach of the fish, and he lay there, frightened but unharmed. The Holy Qur'an says:

Yunus was certainly a Messenger. He abandoned his people and sailed away in a full ship where the people cast lots. Because he lost, he was thrown in the water. The fish swallowed him up and he deserved (all this). Had he not glorified Allah, he would certainly have remained inside the fish until the Day of Resurrection.

Saffat, 37 : 139 - 144

Prophet Yunus (A) spent several days and nights inside the fish while it swam across the sea. In the darkness of the stomach of the fish Prophet Yunus (A) prayed to Allah to forgive him for his mistake and his prayers were accepted.

The Holy Qur'an says:

Zan Nun (Yunus) went away in anger and thought We would never have Power over him, but in darkness he cried, "Lord! You are the only Lord whom I glorify. I have certainly done wrong to myself so forgive me." We answered his prayer and saved him from his grief. Thus do We save the faithful ones.

Anbiya, 21 : 87,88

The fish went to the seashore and vomited out Prophet Yunus (A) safely onto the ground. Prophet Yunus's (A) body was badly burnt by the acids inside the fish and Allah caused a plant to grow whose leaves healed Prophet Yunus (A) and whose fruits fed him. Soon Prophet Yunus (A) had regained his health and he was commanded to return to Naynivah.

When he went back he was amazed to see that the people had given up their idol worshipping and were worshipping Allah. His people welcomed him and he spent the rest of his life preaching and leading them on the right path.