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LESSON 5 :

FAITH, SABR AND SHUKR :

Allah has mentioned patience more than 70 in the Qur'an and has commanded patience in more than 16 ways in His Book.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) has said that faith is divided into 2 halves:

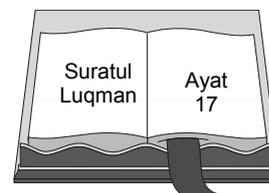
$\frac{1}{2}$ = Patience (Sabr), and

$\frac{1}{2}$ = Thanksgiving (shukr).

Patience (Sabr):

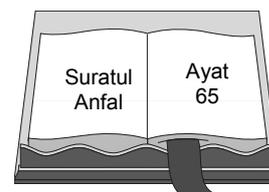
In Islam, patience is a quality that enables one to have forbearance in times of difficulty and hardship:

“O my son, establish prayer, enjoin good, forbid evil, And bear patiently that which befalls you. Truly, these are acts of steadfastness.”



Patience is a quality that is often thought to be a passive and inactive one. People even think that a patient person is a cowardly one. On the contrary, patience is an active and positive action, and requires bravery.

“O Prophet! Urge the believers to fight. If there be of you twenty patient men, they shall overcome two hundred, and if there be of you a hundred, they shall overcome one thousand of those who disbelieve, because they are a people who do not understand.”



The above verse describes the quality of patience as the quality of a brave soldier.

It is no wonder that Allah repeatedly says in the Holy Qur'an:

“Truly, Allah is with the patient ones.” (Suratul Anfal: Verse 46)

“Allah loves the patient ones.” (Surah Ale-Imran: Verse 146)

“...Indeed Allah is with those who have sabr.” (Suratul Baqarah: Verse 153)

We are told that if we have Sabr then Allah is with us, and we know that if Allah is with us then we have nothing to worry about.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) said that patience was required in 3 circumstances:

- **Sabr in times of hardship:** to endure difficult times without blaming Allah, and to carry on with one's responsibilities in spite of the difficulties.
- **Sabr in regards to obedience:** to persevere even though we may find certain acts of worship difficult, like fasting or waking up for prayers or giving khums.
- **Sabr in regards to disobedience:** to resist the temptation to sin.

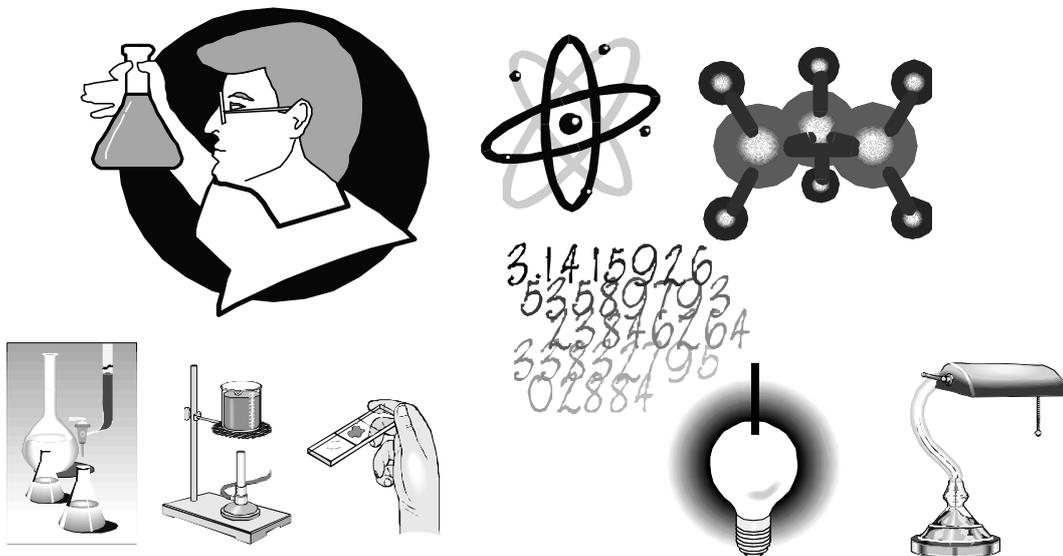
Examples of Sabr:

Eg 1: Kerbala:

The Ahlul Bayt showed by example that, through patience and perseverance, through years of hardship and struggle, we can achieve victory.

Eg 2: Thomas Edison:

Thomas Edison was an inventor. He was expelled from school because he was considered mentally retarded and unsuitable to receive an education. He spent many hours experimenting in the family garage.



His journals show that he went through 10,000 different experiments before perfecting his famous electric lamp. That means he failed 9999 times, but he did not allow his failures to discourage him. He used the same **success formula** that is in the Holy Qur'an, namely **patience** and **perseverance**.

Thanksgiving (Shukr):

This tells us that to have true faith in Islam, we must be patient **and** thankful. We must remember this the next time something unfortunate happens to us.

Once a group of people came to our 4th Imam, Imam Ali Zainul Abideen (AS), and said that they were his true followers.

Imam asked them what they did when they received something nice. They replied that they thanked Allah.



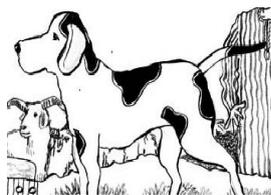
Imam asked them what they did when something nice was taken away from them. They said they got upset, but came to terms with the loss.



Imam asked what they did when they did not get anything. Puzzled, they replied that they did nothing.

Imam replied that these were not the actions of his believers, but those of a dog:

- When dogs are given something, they wag their tails in thanks.
- When something is taken away from them they bark a little to complain, then walk away.
- When they get nothing, they do nothing.



Imam explained that his true followers are those who Allah:

- when they get something,
- when something is taken away, and
- even when they get nothing.



thank

WORKSHEET 11.5: FAITH, SABR AND SHUKR:

Give 2 examples of Sabr and 2 examples of Shukr and explain the role of Faith in both.

LESSON 6: HONESTY AND LYING:

Honesty = truthfulness - in words and actions.

Lying = saying something that we know is wrong intentionally.

The perfect example of Honesty is Our Holy Prophet (SAW), who was known as the Truthful one (As-Sadiq) even by his enemies.

Once a man came to the Holy Prophet (SAW) and told him that he was committing many sins like drinking, gambling, stealing, etc. and now he had decided to become a Muslim but could only give up one of the sins at a time.

The Holy Prophet (SAW) told him to give up lying.

The man agreed, thinking he had gotten off lightly.

The next day, when the man went to do something wrong (stealing), he stopped and thought. If he got caught, he would not be able to deny it because he could not lie. And even if he did not get caught, how would he be able to face the Holy Prophet (SAW) and tell him all the wrong he had done. It would be so embarrassing.

So by giving up lying the man also gave up his other sins.

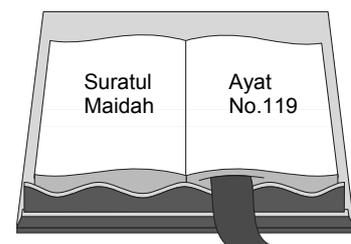
We all know that lying is a great sin; however, sadly, we do not realise how often we are doing it.

One lie usually leads to another, as we try to cover our tracks to keep our lies from being discovered. Therefore, it is better to tell the truth at the beginning; otherwise it will soon develop into a habit.

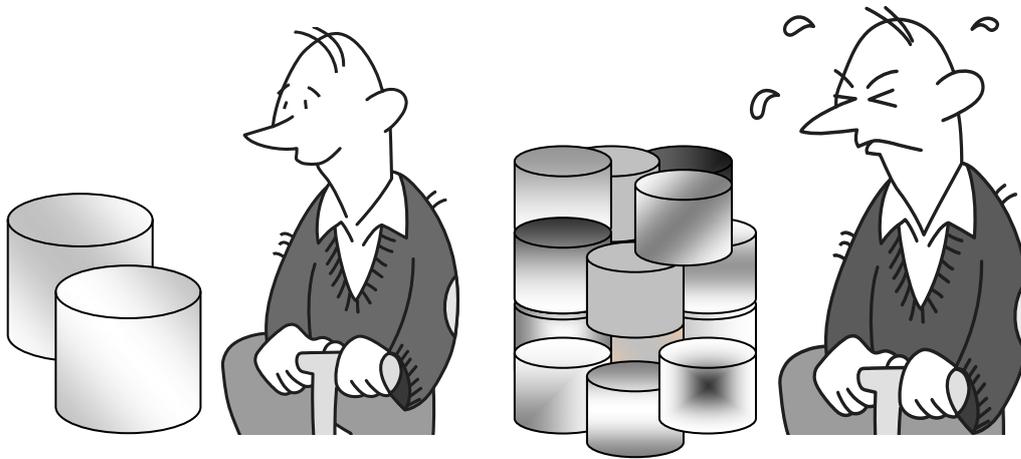
Allah knows everything, so although we may think we have gotten away with telling a lie without anyone knowing, we have to remember at all times that Allah knows, and we are ultimately answerable only to Him.

We have all heard about the English saying "Honesty is the best policy", but what does it actually mean? A policy is a long-term strategy. This phrase means that if we make honesty a part of our character it will not only make our life easy but will also include us among the people "liked" by Allah.

Allah says in the Qur'an.. ***This is the Day that shall benefit the truthful ones their truth; for them shall be gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein forever;....***



Our 6th Imam (AS) said that it is more difficult to repent for many small sins than for one big sin. Remember the story of the two men who came to Imam to repent for their sins.



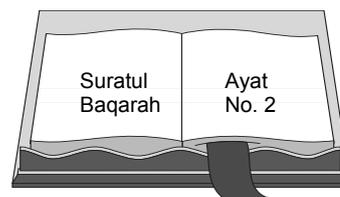
To lie is Haraam because we are **deceiving others**. How many times do we lie in a day? We lie:

- to avoid people or responsibilities,
- to get out of trouble,
- to make ourselves look better, or
- just to get attention.

All the above reasons are bad. If we have done something which gets us into trouble, then we should face it, and not lie our way out of it because that is being very irresponsible.

The Qur'an also tells us not to lie and not to cover up the truth,

"And cover not Truth with falsehood, nor conceal the Truth when you know (what it is)."



Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has also said:

"Beware of association with the liar for he is like a mirage which draws the far one nearer to you and the nearer far from you."

If we get into the habit of lying, then we will lie very often without realising. We will lie to our family, our friends and everybody we meet. Then one day we will be caught out because we will have trapped ourselves in a corner, and there will be no escape.

Also if we make it a habit of lying, we may start doing other things that are even worse – and cover it up by lying! One evil leads to another.

There should never be any reason to avoid the truth. If we are honest in your dealings with people, if we have nothing to hide, then we should be able to speak the truth without fear.

"A person who is not honest cannot have a perfect and strong faith". Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

"I recommend two things to you: one of them is truthfulness and the other is honesty, for these two are the key to sustenance." Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (AS).

Lying is the doorway to any number of evils. But we may distinguish between lying in the sense of teaching a falsehood about reality (E.g. propagating atheism or a false doctrine) and lying in the sense of deliberately misleading and deceiving another about a matter of which he has certain knowledge.

The first type of lie may in fact be based on honest conviction; the second type of lie is deliberate deception. Untruth in the former sense may be classed as ignorance. Even so, often there is only a short distance between ignorance about truth and lying purposely.

What do other religions say about lying:

"Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." **Judaism and Christianity: Proverbs 12.22.**

"Do not assert with your mouth what your heart denies." **Taoism: Tract of the Quiet Way.**

"I tell you, on the day of judgment men will render account for every careless word they utter; for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." **Christianity: Matthew 12.34-37.**

"There is no evil that cannot be done by the liar, who has transgressed the one law of truthfulness and who is indifferent to the world beyond." **Buddhism: Dhammapada 176.**

"All things are determined by speech; speech is their root, and from speech they proceed. Therefore he who is dishonest with respect to speech is dishonest in everything." **Hinduism: Laws of Manu 4.256.**

"A liar lies to himself as well as to the gods." **Buddhism: Sutra 27.**

When a person maintains honesty and truthfulness, they become characteristics of all his actions and he is righteous.

Scholars have identified **six aspects of truthfulness** that a Muslim must maintain:

- **Refraining** from telling any lies.
- **Sincerity of intention** - which means not to say something verbally and have something different in mind.
- **Truthful resolve** – which means if we intend to do something good, we should strengthen our resolve to do it, especially when the chance presents itself.
- **Acting** on what one has resolved.
- **Sincerity of action**.
- **Sincerity of attitude** – which means that if we say that we rely on Allah, we actually mean it and it is endorsed by our actions.

A person who combines **all** the six aspects of truthfulness is a true believer. Moreover, he is bound to be good, because truthfulness encourages every aspect of righteousness.

When a person maintains truthfulness, he earns the title of “truthful” not merely among his fellow human beings but also with Allah. This is a verdict passed on him and publicized among angels and other creatures of Allah.

Conversely, falsehood leads to evil, since a liar thinks that he can cover up any evil action he commits with a lie. If, he is successful once, he is encouraged to do it again.

In actual fact, every human being is on a journey that lasts throughout his life. He is either moving towards heaven or towards hell. Every deed he does is a step in his journey. He chooses his directions. When he dies, he reaches the position towards which he has moved progressively. He is not admitted into Heaven or thrown in Hell all of a sudden.

It is important to realise that Islam abhors lying in all situations. It should be noted however that there are cases when telling a lie is acceptable. However in normal situations, telling a lie is forbidden, whether it is said in earnest or in jest.

LESSON 7:

HAQQ-UN-NAAS:

Haqq = right (ie. a person's right to have or own something)

Naas = person or human beings.

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

Allah can forgive us for the sins that we commit against Him (eg. qadha namaaz), provided we repent for them sincerely; but how can He forgive us for the sins that we commit against others. That would be going against His justice. We cannot be forgiven for breaking the rights of others, **unless** the person whom we have wronged forgives us, whether he is a Muslim or a non-Muslim, a sinner or a believer.

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

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



This sin against me cannot be forgiven unless I have forgiven it. This is the reason why we should avoid committing actions that breach the rights of others. Islam is a religion that not only benefits a person directly, but also helps the community in general. Where else can we find laws that command us to guard other peoples' reputation in public and private. Each of us has a responsibility to the other: to maintain justice and respect the rights of the other.

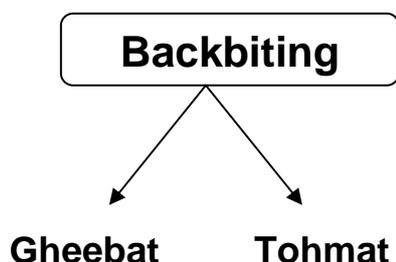
Islam advises that we should seek forgiveness from the person whom we have wronged before one of the parties dies. If one person dies before forgiving the other, there is no direct way of obtaining forgiveness, and that sin will carry forward until the day of Judgement. Consider the danger of this sin!

These social crimes break the community as they cause enmity and hatred. Let us remember this the next time we are about to commit a sin against another human being.

LESSON 8:

BACKBITING (GHEEBAT & TOHMAT)

Backbiting = talking about a person in his/her absence in such a way as to displease him/her.



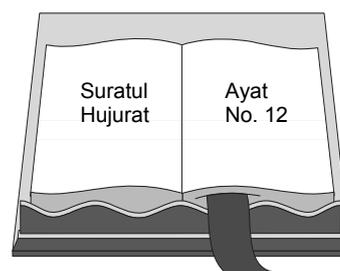
Gheebat = when you say something bad about a person and it's true.

Tohmat = when you say something bad about a person and it's a lie.

Both are considered major sins and are strictly forbidden.

A famous quote from the Qur'an says,

"....And do not spy nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the dead flesh of his brother ?" (49:12)



This shows us that backbiting is as bad as eating the flesh of our dead brother. If someone you know has done something bad, they have killed their own reputation. By telling others what they have done, you are enjoying and gaining at their loss. It is as if you are eating and feasting on the reputation they have already destroyed.

Backbiting is haraam because it spoils peoples' names and characters. When you speak badly of someone, you make others think badly of them.

Also, the people who are being talked about are not there to defend themselves. If you hear wicked things about others, you should give the others a chance to defend themselves by explaining, before you believe what you hear.

It is the duty of a good Muslim to stop others from speaking ill of a person, and if that is not possible he should go away from the people who are talking ill.

Story 1:

In the early days of the first few Imams, there were two men. Let us call the first one Haroon and the second one Khalid. One day Khalid started telling everybody bad things about Haroon. He was spreading lies all around.

After a few days Haroon heard about this. The first thing he did was to go home and put all his money and gold and silver in a big bag and then took the bag to Khalid's house.

When Khalid saw Haroon coming he became scared because he thought that Haroon had come to beat him up. Khalid came out of his house and fell on his knees and begged to Haroon, "O Haroon, I am really sorry, I did not mean to tell tales about you, O please do not beat me!!"

Haroon said, "I have not come to beat you, I have come to give you this money, and this wealth." Khalid had the shock of his life.

Haroon continued, "Khalid, I have come to thank you, here have this wealth of mine." Khalid stood up and asked, "Why are you giving me wealth when I have insulted you and spoilt your name among the people?"

Haroon replied. "The Holy Prophet (s.a.w.w.) has said that if one person TALKS BEHIND THE BACK of another, the thawaab of the first person gets transferred to the second." he continued, "So now that you have spoken bad of me behind my back, I am thanking you for giving me all your thawaab. This money is too little for the amount of thawaab that you have given me."

Story 2:

Once there was a man who did tohmat of our Sixth Imam.

Imam did not know about it until a few days later when one of his 'friends' came to him and said, "Oh Imam, I have heard terrible news. This person has been going around and saying this about you."

Imam became angry at his 'friend'. He said, "Think of the person who did tohmat towards me as if he shot an arrow at my body. I did not hear him so it is as if the arrow missed me; But by telling me this news, you have picked up the arrow from the ground and have hit me with it."

In Islam, we should always give the benefit of the doubt to others. Even if someone does do something bad, you should hide it, and not tell others.

Reasons to hide others faults:

- A person may repent & Allah forgive, but people still remember.
- How would we feel if Allah made others aware of the wrongs that we perform?
- If Allah can hide our faults, then you should hide the faults of others.

Gheebat and Tohmat are often a result of jealousy or a need for attention. If a person is respected, has done good, has helped others, there will always be people who are angry and bitter that such a person is respected by all. The result is to try and slander and destroy this reputation by sowing seed of venom in their character, by telling the world lies or exposing sins to turn that respect into outrage and shame. Such people are cursed by Allah, and are referred to as the evil whispers of mankind in Suratun Naas

Consequences of Backbiting:

In this world: loss of reputation, etc. It has become second nature for our tongues to wag continuously with tales of other peoples' lives, regardless of the devastating effect this has on our souls, our family lives, and ofcourse our society as a whole.

In the hereafter: On the day of Judgement, the person who was backbitten about will claim retribution from the one who spoke ill of him. Allah will compensate the victim by handing over the good deeds (the currency of the Hereafter) of the culprit to him. If the latter has no good deeds to his credit, the sins of the victim will be transferred to him.

A tremendous loss indeed! How often do we engage in gheebat, yet regard ourselves as free from this crime?

To comment about a person being 'fat' or 'skinny' or being a 'slowcoach'; etc. is also gheebat. Negative comments about a persons' dressing habits, eating habits, manner of walking or speaking. Physically imitating the action of a person - often done merely to amuse others, too is gheebat.

Thus in a mere facial expression, one is passing over his hard-earned precious good deeds to the next person. Can we really afford to do this?

The Harms of Gheebat:

- duas are not answered,
- good deeds are not accepted, and sins are increased
- causes ill feeling, hatred and animosity between people.
- people soon become wary of a person who constantly backbites, since they fear he will also talk ill of themselves to others. Thus people lose trust and confidence in such a person.

