

GRADE 9

ISLAMIC STUDIES



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Taqwaa:

Allah-Consciousness or Heedfulness of Allah

The Term *Taqwaa*

The conventional translation of the term *taqwaa* as fear of Allah does not render the positive content of this expression. The term *taqwaa* denotes, among other things, the awareness of Allah's all encompassing knowledge and the desire to mould one's existence, in the light of this awareness. Hence, the interpretation adopted by some translators 'guarding oneself against evil', 'carefulness of one's duty', or 'guarding oneself extraordinarily from what would harm him in the life of the world to come', etc. does not give more than one particular aspect of the concept of *taqwaa*, or heedfulness of Allah.

The Concept of *Taqwaa*

Taqwaa is one of the most important themes in the Glorious Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ. It is in fact the bedrock of religion. In numerous *ahaadeeth*, Allah's Messenger ﷺ advised believers to practise *taqwaa*. In reality, this one characteristic of *taqwaa* combines all of the good of this worldly life and the afterlife.

Lane's Definition of the Term *Taqwaa*

In his monumental work titled *Arabic-English Lexicon*, E. W. Lane defines the term *taqwaa* in the following manner, 'He preserved or guarded himself exceedingly, or extraordinarily, from sin'. It may often be rendered 'he was pious or careful of his religious duties'. (Lane, vol. 2, p. 3059, 2003 Reprint)

The word *taqwaa* is often followed by the Name of Allah, Most High: have *Taqwaa* of Allah. This means that one should protect oneself from Allah's displeasure and punishment. This can only be done by obeying Him. This is the minimum aspect of *taqwaa*. In order to have complete *taqwaa* or protection from Allah's anger, one must perform all the obligatory deeds that he is capable of, and keep away from all of the prohibited acts and matters that one has doubt about. *Taqwaa*, therefore, is to act in obedience to Allah; it is to avoid acts of disobedience of Allah.

In order to attain *taqwaa*, one should protect and carefully keep oneself away from committing *shirk* – associating partners with Allah in worship. One should refrain from the great as well as small sins. One must also avoid disliked works and matters that one doubts.



Satan is your Enemy, so Take him as your Enemy

The activities of Satan are all-pervasive. Man must, therefore, constantly be alert and on his guard. Whenever the human self relaxes its watchfulness, it is liable to be preyed upon by Satan's beguiling although every human is, to some extent and in principle, as it were, exposed to Satan's tempting or beguiling. People who have *taqwaa* do not really lapse into evil, but become quickly aware of Satan's machinations. Thus, the Glorious Qur'an advises, **'Should a prompting from Satan invade you, seek refuge in Allah; Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. Those who are on their guard, when a seductive glamour from Satan touches them, they quickly remember [Allah] and thus begin to see things clearly [once again].'** (7: 200-201)

This means that Satan's activity essentially consists in confusing a







person and temporarily clouding his inner thoughts. The Qur'an stresses that, although no human is in principle totally immune from the touch of Satan or devil, he has no sway over those who are on guard against an invasion of their moral integrity. Thus, Allah, Most High makes it very clear to Satan: **'Indeed, upon my servants, you will be able to exercise no influence, but only those errant ones who follow you.'** (15: 42) He also says, **'He has no authority over those who believe and put their faith in their Lord.'** (16: 99)

This shows that Satan's whisperings alone are not strong. It is only man's weakness and lack of moral courage and alertness that makes Satan seem so strong. Satan, in reality, is more cunning and artful than being strong. He is more deceitful and contriving. He is more treacherous and waylaying than giving battle. It, therefore, follows that Satan is not powerful. Man is weak. Satan's master trick is to cause something to look attractive and tempting with the dross of the world as if it were tinsel. This is why he will say, on the Day of Judgement, to those who will accuse him of leading them astray, **'Allah made you a true promise, whereas I made you a false promise. I had no power over you, but only I invited you to error and you accepted my invitation. Do not blame me, but only yourself.'** (14: 22) It is, therefore, Satan's power of each person will differ.

Thus the real problem lies within man himself, because he is a blend of good and evil. He is a blend of ignorance and knowledge. He is a blend of power and impotence. The key to man's defence, therefore, is *taqwaa*. *Taqwaa* literally means defence, and it is a kind of inner light. It is a spiritual spark which man must kindle within himself to distinguish between right and wrong; between truth and falsehood; between seeming real and real; between dross and tinsel, between immediate and lasting. Once a human kindles the spark of *taqwaa* within himself, he should be able to see Satan's footsteps for what they are, and not be deceived by them.

It is reported that Umar ibn al-Khattaab رضي الله عنه once asked the learned companion Ubayy ibn Ka'b about the true meaning of *taqwaa*. Ubayy asked Umar, 'Have you ever taken a path between thorny bushes?' 'Yes, I have,' Umar replied. Ubayy asked again, 'How did you manage to get through it?' Umar replied, 'I gathered up my clothes and tried my best to avoid the thorns.' Ubayy said, 'This is precisely what *taqwaa* is.'



-  Give the meaning of *taqwaa* in the words of E. W. Lane.
-  What does it mean 'to have *taqwaa* of Allah'?
-  What should we do in order to achieve *taqwaa*?
-  What do people who have *taqwaa* do when tempted by Satan?
-  What is the true nature of Satan?
-  What did Ubayy ibn Ka'b compare *taqwaa* to?

Taqwaa in Action

Abu Hurayrah reported that Allah's Messenger ﷺ once came upon a stack of food, and he inserted his hand in it. When his fingers reached something moist, he turned to the food-merchant and asked, 'What is this, O Food-merchant?' The Food-merchant replied, 'It has been affected by the rain, Messenger of Allah.' Thereupon, Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'Then why did you not put it on top of the stack so that people can see it? He who defrauds us is not of us.' (Muslim)

A Word of Caution Regarding Taqwaa

Taqwaa signifies in Arabic a state of mind and heedfulness. A pious person thinks carefully before taking any action. He sees first whether his act is permitted by the *sharee'ah* or not. This reference to the *sharee'ah* at every step is a pointer to one's *taqwaa*. Thus, *taqwaa* is an outlook; it is an attitude and temperament.

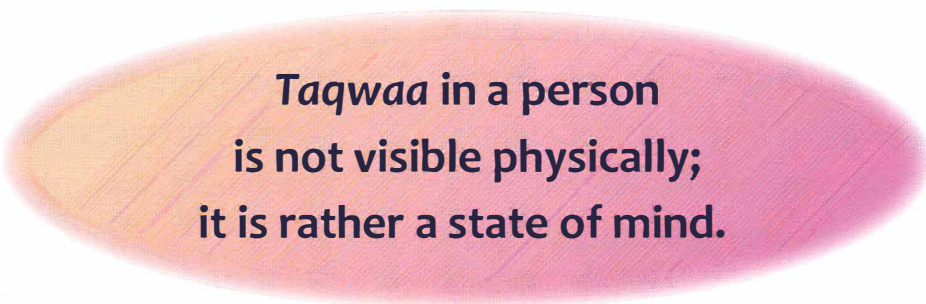
Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. *Taqwaa* is the _____ of religion.
2. The key to man's defence against evil is _____.
3. No human is immune from the touch of _____.

B. State whether these statements are true (T) or false (F).

1. Satan sways even people who are continually guarding their moral integrity. _____
2. The activities of Satan are not all-pervasive. _____
3. Man's weakness makes Satan seem so strong. _____



***Taqwaa* in a person
is not visible physically;
it is rather a state of mind.**

The Believers

Soorat al-Mu'minoon 23: 1-11

The Seven Attributes of a Believer

Most of the classical commentators agree that this soorah was revealed towards the end of the Makkan period. It consists of one hundred and eighteen verses. It is the twenty-third soorah of the Qur'an. From the first to the last verse, the discourse centres, as the title of the soorah suggests, on the issues of:

- (1) True faith,
- (2) The overwhelming evidence, which points to the existence of an Almighty Creator,
- (3) Man's ultimate responsibility before His Creator.

The objective of this lesson is to study the first eleven verses of this soorah.

Translation of the Meaning

In the name of Allah, the Most Kind,
the Most Merciful

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. Successful indeed are the believers.
2. Those who humble themselves in their prayers.
3. And those who turn away from all that is senseless.
4. And those who are active in az-Zakaat.
5. And those who guard their chastity.
6. Except from their wives or what their right hand possesses – for then, they are free from blame.
7. But whoever seeks beyond that, they indeed are the transgressors.
8. Those who are faithfully true to their trusts and promises.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ
فَاعِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ﴿٥﴾ إِلَّا عَلَى
أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٦﴾
فَمَنْ ابْتَغَى وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ﴿٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ
لَأَمْنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَوَاتِهِمْ
يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ
الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١﴾

9. And those who strictly guard their prayers.
10. Those are indeed the heirs,
11. Who shall inherit Al-Firdaws (Paradise). They shall dwell therein forever.

Explanation:

The success is for the believers, whose qualities are described here (verses 2-9). Faith or true belief (*eemaan*) requires its owner to respond to the commandments and prohibitions of Allah with excellent obedience and full compliance.

The name believer (*Mu'min*) is among the most noble of all names and descriptions. Since Allah refers to us in the world with the most noble of all names and descriptions, we may hope that, from His gracious favour, He will treat us in the hereafter with the best kind of treatment. The Arabic word *falaah* means success and prosperity. To say that someone has acquired *falaah* amounts to saying that he has achieved his objective. He has achieved prosperity and well-being.

The opening verses of this *soorah* (2-9) set forth the qualities of the true believers. These qualities serve as proof that it is the act of believing that leads the believers to success.

The First Attribute: 'Those Who Humble Themselves in prayers.' (Verse 2)

Those who are *khaashi'oon* during their *salaah*: The true meaning of *khushoo'* is to lower oneself before someone. It means to be submissive and show humility. The state called *Khushoo'* is related both to the heart and the outward conditions of one's body. *Khushoo'* in *salaah* is realised when the

person's heart is attuned to the prayer. The feeling in the heart is then reflected on the body. The person remains still and calm. His gaze is lowered. Even his voice displays the feeling of his heart. They feel the reverence of the prayer, as they stand to address Allah. Their hearts are thus filled with awe. It is, in turn, reflected in their features and movements. Their spirits feel Allah's Majesty as they realize that they stand in His presence. Thus, all their preoccupations and distractions vanish. In His sublime presence, they are heedless of all their surroundings.

Allah's forgiveness and pleasure are closely related to the prayers. Allah's Messenger ﷺ once said, 'If a person performs two units of prayer without the distraction of any worldly thought, all his previous sins will be forgiven.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Allah, Great and Glorious is He, also said, 'Do not approach the prayer when you are intoxicated until you know what you are saying.' (*an-Nisaa* 4: 43) The root of the matter resides in the wording 'until you know what you are saying'. Many are those who pray without really having drunk wine; yet do not know what they are saying in their prayers!

How can one better focus one's mind on prayer? Concentration relates to the whole of life. A man, who is normally distracted by worldly matters, cannot suddenly switch off all the noises within him and achieve full concentration.

Khushoo' in prayer can only be attained by someone who has emptied his heart totally, who pays no attention to anything else besides it and who prefers it above all. Allah's Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said, 'The coolness of my eyes lies in *salaah*.' *Khushoo'* is essentially a condition of the heart, but the *Sharee'ah*, or the Divine Law, does prescribe certain things which are required to be observed in prayers. They help create the state of mind that is helpful in gaining *khushoo'*; for instance, one of these rules is that during prayer one should move one's head neither to the left nor to the right. Nor should one look upward. It is also forbidden to move about or bend in different directions while one is offering the prayer. Likewise, it is not permitted to fold one's clothes over and over again, or brush or rub them, or play with them. Similarly, to yawn or belch loudly while in prayer is not consistent with the good manners of offering the prayers. The Prophet ﷺ said, 'Yawning is caused by the devil, so when one of you yawns he must repress it as much as he can.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

There are several bad habits that should be completely avoided during the performance of the prayer, namely:

Grunting with deliberate intent; fidgeting deliberately; sneezing with deliberate intent; raising one's head and

gazing up towards the sky; inspecting one's clothes in search of tiny, foreign objects; heaving a deep sigh, turning and glancing around, picking one's teeth; licking one's lips; swallowing food amounting to a grain or couple of grains; belching undigested food; deliberate coughing; dusting the spot where the forehead will be placed in the act of prostration; fiddling with one's clothes or with one's cell phone.



- ✎ What issue does Soorat al-Mu'minoon deal with?
- ✎ Explain what *khushoo'* in *salaah* means.
- ✎ How does the Divine Law help us in attaining *khushoo'* in prayer?

The Second Attribute: 'And Those who Turn away From all That is Senseless.' (Verse 3)

The Arabic word '*laghw*' signifies idle talk. It is speech which is futile, irrelevant and bears no relation to any purpose. It brings no benefit to the one who utters it. It may well bring misfortune instead. Hence all things, be they words or actions of the body, which have no benefit whatsoever or which lead to no useful results, fall under the meanings of '*laghw*'.

The believers avoid and hold themselves back from what is vain and frivolous. The essence of the verse is that the believers do not concern themselves with things that are pointless, irrelevant and fruitless. They rather pay no attention to them at all. They hold themselves back from approaching places where people are engaged in frivolous things, let alone directly take part in them. If they come face to face with nonsense, they simply turn away from it. If they are confronted with it, they remain aloof and withdrawn.

A Believer is Bestowed with Good Taste; his Temperament is Chaste

A true believer is always mindful of his duties. He looks at his being placed in the world as though he were in an examination hall, where he is taking a test. While seated in the hall, he fully concentrates on the examination. He knows that the time given to him to complete the test is very short. He, therefore, utilizes each and every second so that he might give the best possible performance. A believer spends all his time in pursuits which produce useful results. Even in choosing his leisure activities, he selects those that are beneficial to him. He regards his time a precious and priceless commodity.

Moreover, he is blessed with good taste. His temperament is chaste. He is bestowed with fine sensibility. He is not

attracted to things that are vulgar or obscene. He engages in useful talk, certainly not in silly gossip. He enjoys humour, wit and refined jokes; but he refrains from vulgarity. He keeps away from dirty jokes and clownishness. This *ayah* is truly profound in meaning and has far-reaching implications. If one ponders over the meaning of this verse, and applies it correctly, it could lead him to a great deal of good.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ once said, 'Part of the goodness of a person's Islam is his leaving alone that which is of no concern to him.' (at-Tirmidhee, and it is *saheeh*)

The things which are of no concern to a believer are the forbidden acts, things he has doubts about, and over-occupation in permitted matters of which he is not in need!

A Common Problem Today

A common problem among Muslims today is their unending pursuits and study of matters with very little benefit to them, if at all, while at the same time disregarding the most important matters that are of great significance and of great benefit. How much time do studying and Muslims today spend learning the Noble Qur'an? Compare this amount of time to the time they spend watching television, gossiping, debating trivial matters and reading various books for detailed information on different subjects with little benefit.



The Third Attribute: ‘And those who are Active in *az-Zakaat*.’ (Verse 4)

Most scholars say that the meaning here is the *Zakaat* that is paid on wealth. This *aayah* was, however, revealed in Makkah and the *Zakaat* was prescribed in Madeenah in the year 2 A H. The obvious meaning is that the basic principle of *Zakaat* was revealed in Makkah, while the *Zakaat* based on *nisaab* (the minimum levels of various wealth which obligate a believer to give *Zakaat*) was prescribed in Madeenah.

It is, however, significant to realize that the primary meaning of the word *Zakaat* is purification and growth. Hence it may embrace a wide range of acts including purification of one’s character, and purification of virtually everything. Allah knows best!

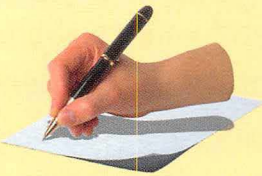
The Fourth Attribute: ‘And those who Guard their Chastity.’ (Verses 5-7)

This means that those who guard their chastity do not give way to their desires with any but their spouses or wives, or those whom they rightfully possess. The phrase ‘or their right hand possessions’ denotes captive women who were taken during battles. Those who seek to go beyond this limit are truly transgressors.

The physical relation between a man and woman is deliberately intended and instituted by Allah. It is a privileged gift. It enables a husband and wife to share in Allah’s creative plan. As Allah intends, children are the precious fruits of lawful relations. That is why it is sinful to engage in unlawful sexual relations which constitute a grave sin, an enormity and impurity. It is a serious and lashing injustice to the children who may be born out of wedlock.

It is, therefore, sinful to place oneself in circumstances that one may fall into the trap of shameful acts. An occasion of sin may be a person, place, thing or a combination of all the three. One sins gravely by committing unlawful acts with oneself or with others. One sins by voluntarily entertaining unlawful thoughts or desires. One sins by reading obscene literature. One sins by looking at vulgar illustrations. One commits sins by attending immodest shows, movies or plays. One sins by holding obscene conversation, and so on.

Some ask whether such a practice as dating is sinful. Some teens seem confused. Yet there should be no doubt or confusion at all. Such a practice has no place in Islam. Passions are aroused on account of some sight. Do you know what passions are? Passions are powerful movements towards things. Literally countless are the examples of evils that have had their origin in glances! One's dress, language, and general behaviour are to be guided by religion, and not blind passions.



- ✎ Why is it forbidden to have sexual relations outside marriage?
- ✎ Allah has forbidden unlawful sexual relations as well as the path that leads to them. What constitutes this path?

The Fifth and Sixth Attributes: '...True to their Trusts and Promises.' (Verse 8)

The word *amaanaat* or trusts (sing. *amaanah*) covers all kinds of trusts, which either Allah, society or an individual places in someone else's charge. As for the word *'ahd* or pledge, it embraces all pledges and promises between man and Allah, man and man, man and society, and between one nation and another. One of the distinguishing qualities of a believer is

that he never betrays a trust. He never goes back on his promises. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'He who is not true to his trust has no [true] faith and he who does not keep his promises is devoid of [true] religion.' (Ahmad, and it is *saheeh*)

According to Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه, the Prophet ﷺ said, 'Give what you hold in trust back to the person who has entrusted you with it, and do not betray anyone, even if he has betrayed you.' (Abu Daawood and at-Tirmidhee, and it is *saheeh*) Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim relate on the authority of Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'There are three things, which if present in a man show him to be a hypocrite, even if he prays, fasts, and claims to be a Muslim: when he speaks he lies; when he makes a promise he breaks it and when he is entrusted with anything, he betrays his trust.'

Al-Bukhaaree relates on the authority of Ibn Mas'ood that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'On the Day of Arising, every deceitful man will bear a banner and it will be said, "Behold the deception of so and so!"' Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim also record on the authority of 'Abdullaah ibn 'Amr that the Prophet ﷺ said, 'There are four things which make a man a pure hypocrite, if they are all present within him, and a partial hypocrite if one of them is present: when he speaks he lies; if he commits himself, he cheats; if he makes promises he

breaks them; and if he argues, he behaves in an evil manner.'

Allah, Most High, said, 'O you who truly believe! Fulfil your pledges (contractual commitments).' (*al-Maa'idah* 5: 1) This refers to one's promise to observe Allah's commands and prohibitions. This denotes a solemn undertaking, or promise, involving more than one party. These pledges are of three kinds:

- (1) The pledges between man and Allah (literally man's obligations towards Allah),
- (2) between man and his own soul, and
- (3) between the individual and his fellow men. This embraces all of man's moral and social responsibilities.

Hence, if you tell Mum that you will be back from the game at 10:00, be home on time. Ten o'clock means just that! For you, rather ten o'clock should mean 9:55! If you offer to clean the garden for Dad, then fulfil your promise. Do the job. Keep working until you finish it.

If someone gives you something for safe-keeping, take good care of it. Return it to its rightful owner on demand. It is a trust. If you borrow notebooks from a friend, return them on time. If you borrow books from a library or a friend, return them on time. They are a trust. If you know someone's secret, keep it concealed. It is a trust. If someone is employed to do a certain

job, then doing it well with a sense of responsibility is a matter of trust. If someone is employed for a period of eight hours, and he wastes his duty hours in laziness or making personal phone-calls, or by arriving late or leaving early, then he is not fulfilling the trust.

The secret of being dependable is constancy: to be on time on all occasions, to finish one's work and do it well and to keep every promise.

The Seventh Attribute: 'And Those who Strictly Guard their Prayers.' (Verse 9)

Strictly guarding one's prayers here means to offer them regularly and at their appointed times. The word *salawaat* (prayers) has been used in its plural form to include all the daily five prayers. In an early verse, the word *salaat* was used in the singular form. It was because the emphasis was on *khushoo'*, which is the 'soul' of prayers, whether they are obligatory, *Sunnah*, or voluntary (*nawaafil*).

Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: "The most virtuous deed is *salaat* during its appropriate time..." (Muslim)

The verse states that the believers persistently offer their prayers at their fixed times, with proper bowings and prostrations. It is important to realize

that Allah praises the believers at the beginning of this soorah and one of the first descriptions He states is their adherence to the prayers.




‘...Who Shall Inherit Paradise. They Shall Dwell therein forever.’ (Verses 10-11)

Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim have recorded that Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said, ‘If you ask Allah for Paradise, then ask Him for *al-Firdaws*: for it is the highest part of Paradise, in the middle of Paradise and from it spring the rivers of Paradise. Above it is the Mighty Throne

of the Most Merciful.’

A careful study of the above seven attributes will show that they embrace all the duties man owes to Allah and his fellow men. They contain all the laws governing those duties. A person who possesses these qualities is a true believer – a *mu’min*. He deserves *falaah* (success) in this world and the hereafter. It is also significant to realize that these seven attributes begin and end with a reference to the obligatory prayers. This indicates that if the prayers are offered in the prescribed manner with all their requirements and at their stated times, the other attributes will naturally follow.



-  What are the four qualities of a hypocrite?
-  What comprises man’s social responsibilities?
-  List the seven attributes that a true believer possesses.

Exercise

A. Give English meanings for these Arabic terms.

1. *Eemaan*
2. *Mu'min*
3. *Falaah*
4. *Khushoo'*
5. *Laghw*
6. *Amaanah*
7. *Salawaat*
8. *Al-Firdaws*

B. Fill in the blanks.

1. One's dress and general behaviour are to be guided by _____ and not by blind _____.
2. One of the distinguishing qualities of a believer is that he is _____.
3. The secret of being dependable is _____.

C. Think-up

1. This lesson states a common problem that faces the *ummah* today. Make groups in your class and make points by way of a solution to the problem.
2. Can you think of why dating is forbidden in Islam?
3. How is prayer related to all the seven attributes of a believer?

We have been discussing a number of topics that are very relevant to your life right now, as well as to your future. In this lesson, we will touch on the topic of shame, modesty or *al-hayaa'*. We will also discuss a number of things that are closely related to shame, like clothing, styles, shows and literature.

Allah, Most High, does not Forbid you your Fun

Real fun is part of what Allah has permitted for you. He does not forbid you your fun. But it is easy for us to confuse real happiness with glittering-but-quickly-fading 'fun' that leaves us downright unhappy.

Allah's Messenger ﷺ once said, 'From the words of the previous prophets that people still find are, "If you feel no shame, then do as you wish."' This is an authentic *hadeeth* recorded by al-Bukhaaree, Abu Daawood and Ibn Maajah. The importance of this *hadeeth* lies in the fact that it points to one of the most essential traits a believer can possess: the trait of *hayaa'* – shame; modesty; shyness or bashfulness. All the prophets admired the trait of modesty and ordered their followers to have it.

Modesty is Purity's Safeguard

Shame or modesty is one of the most important factors that are bound to keep a person away from committing a shameful or sinful act. If a person has no feeling of shame, there is nothing to stop him from doing anything. He would do almost anything because he has nothing 'within' him that would tell him that such-and-such a thing does not constitute proper behaviour, and that he should be ashamed to act in such a way. When a person commits sins, his feeling of modesty decreases. As he commits more and more sins, his sense of shame weakens. It weakens to the point that it may not exist at all. When he falls to that depth, he does not care what people might say or think about him. In fact, he might even brag or tell others about his sinful exploits.

The Word Hayaa'

Hayaa' is an Arabic word. According to E. W. Lane, it signifies shame; a sense of shame; shyness; bashfulness; or

modesty; a shrinking of the soul from foul conduct through fear of blame. (*Arabic-English Lexicon*, Vol. 1, p. 681, 2003)

It is in fact the feeling of shame that restrains a person from performing evil deeds. If a person has no shame, he will do whatever he pleases. He will care little what anyone might think or say about him. This is because he has no feeling of shame whatsoever. *Hayaa'* is a powerful restraining force in the face of temptation. A person's sense of shame may bother him if nobody saw the shameful act he has committed. His heart will become uneasy. He will be perturbed and will feel ashamed of what he has done.

***Hayaa'* Distinguishes Man from Animals**

Shame is an attribute that truly distinguishes man from animals. Animals do not feel any shame for their actions. Shame is in fact a trait that controls man's behaviour. It restrains him from acts that are considered shameful and offensive.

The Importance and Virtues of *Hayaa'*





Allah's Messenger ﷺ discussed the importance and virtues of modesty on several occasions. He said, 'Faith has some seventy-odd or sixty-odd branches. The most virtuous of them is the statement: there is no god but Allah; and the slightest of them is to remove something harmful from the road. And *hayaa'* is a branch of faith.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Removing a harmful object from the path is once again an act of charity in thankfulness to Allah; that is available to almost anyone. Deplorably enough, many Muslims see something harmful on the road, but they think that it is not their business to do anything about it. If the Muslims today were to act upon this teaching of the Prophet ﷺ, the roads of the Muslims would be the cleanest roads in the world.

In the above-quoted *hadeeth*, *hayaa'* is referred to as faith or part of faith because it calls or leads a person to all of the other branches of faith.

The Prophet ﷺ also said, 'Shame or modesty brings forth nothing but goodness.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)



-  Explain the *hadeeth*, 'If you feel no shame, then do as you wish.'
-  Explain the term '*hayaa*,' and mention the various meanings it entails.
-  How does the attribute of *hayaa'* work in keeping a believer from committing shameful acts?
-  Why is *hayaa'* referred to as part of faith?

Modesty was the Characteristic of all the Prophets

Allah's Messenger ﷺ is reported to have said, 'Certainly Moosaa was modest; a shy person. No part of his skin was seen due to modesty.' (al-Bukhaaree)

Allah's Messenger ﷺ was the Most Modest of all the People

Allah's Messenger ﷺ was the most modest of all the people. Abu Sa'eed al-Khudree ؓ said, 'Allah's Messenger ﷺ was more bashful than the virgin girls kept in their private apartments. If he saw anything he did not like, we would recognize it on his face.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Aai'shah ؓ also said, 'When the Prophet ﷺ heard something which he did not like about anyone, he would say, "What do you think about a people who do or say this?" So he would forbid it without actually naming the one who had done it.' (al-Bukhaaree, Muslim and at-Tirmidhee)

Human Beings and Angels

Every human being has angels with him all the time. They witness everything he does or says. A Muslim, therefore, should be heedful of their presence. He should be modest to perform shameful acts before them in the same way that he is shy to perform shameful deeds in front of humans. There is no good in a person who has no shame with respect to others. Above all, a believer must have

modesty towards himself. This is very close to the concept of self-respect or dignity.

Dignity is the Natural Right of every Individual

Dignity is the natural right of every individual. Dignity is the quality of being worthy of honour or respect. It is not permissible to violate the personal dignity of anyone, even that of one's own self. Hence, a person should be ashamed of himself when he performs deeds that are shameful. Allah's Messenger ﷺ once said, 'All of my Ummah (nation or community) are good enough to be forgiven, except for those who commit sins openly. Among those who commit sins openly is a person who performs a deed during the night, and although Allah has concealed his sins in the morning he says, "O so-and-so! Last night I did such-and-such a thing." He spent the night being concealed by His Lord, and in the morning he unveils Allah's concealment from himself.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

Such people commit evil in private, in darkness or away from the public eye. Then, instead of trying to make up for it or ask forgiveness of Allah, they actually broadcast and make public their sins, in violation of self-respect, self-restraint, dignity, or social decorum.

Two Types of Modesty: Natural and Acquired

Modesty can be classified into two types – natural and acquired. Modesty is a characteristic that every human being possesses. One of the aspects of shame, or *hayaa'*, which is naturally found in humans, is the wish to conceal one's private parts. Like all natural characteristics, this trait can be developed and nurtured. It is, however, very important to realize that some people possess modesty naturally and, as a result, they restrain themselves from committing shameful acts. But if this is not accompanied by the intention to please Allah, they will not be rewarded for it.

How to Form an Upright Sense of Modesty?

Given the importance of the concept of modesty in the teachings of Islam, it is of great significance that this character be developed in children as they grow up. Both young boys and girls should be taught to be modest in front of others. They should be made to realize that thoughts, words and actions may be hidden from the eyes of men, but not from Allah.

One should be ashamed not to perform the obligatory deeds. At the same time, one should not feel shy to perform permissible deeds. One must openly proclaim the truth when it is his duty to do so. He should never lie and

feel shy needlessly. Lying is hateful. It is harmful under every aspect. Lying in deeds is even worse. Under this category comes acting out of human respect, or for fear of what others might think. This includes hypocrisy too, which makes a show of qualities one does not possess to win for oneself undeserved praise and respect. Those who are unfaithful to their promises are also guilty of lying indeed. One must practise the virtue of modesty even when his only witness is Allah. A person of modesty does not steal, damage, abuse or use unlawfully what belongs to others.

Modesty is True when it is in Conformity with the Glorious Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ

Keep clearly in mind that modesty is true when it is in conformity with the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*. Each person, therefore, has the duty to increase his knowledge of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* until it reaches that degree of knowledge which is sufficient for him to live rightly in his own state of life.

Modesty is the characteristic we should cultivate. It makes us avoid anything displeasing to Allah. A person of modesty is a true person of character. He enjoys peace of mind and peace of heart. He is esteemed and trusted by all. To form modesty, it is not enough to avoid evil actions. One must also avoid evil thoughts, words and sentiments.

One must acquire the virtue of honesty, humility, self-control, and so forth. The person of modesty is respected. He wins the confidence of others. He establishes cordial relations with others. While the person of no shame is shunned and despised, he is a cause of social disunion. There is no peace for the shameless who tends to act contrary to *hayaa'*. To protect our modesty from harm, therefore, let us make a daily examination of our thoughts, words, deeds and shortcomings.

Offer more optional prayers. Deepen your faith. Lift up your heart. Draw close to Allah. Follow the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ in every step of your life.

Things which Harm and Dampen the Sense of Modesty

The mass media, whatever you see, materialism (a tendency to be more interested in material possessions, physical comforts, etc. than in spiritual values) permeate our existence. All this produces harmful fruits. We see how much radio, motion pictures and television, together with bad books, shamelessly illustrated magazines, unchaste stage shows, immoral dances, and immodesty on the beaches have contributed towards the increase of superficiality, worldliness and love for physical pleasure in many.

Immoral or suggestive books and magazines give rise to evil inclinations. Many young people owe their depraved

lives to obscene films and books. 'It was bad reading and films that brought me here,' prisoners often confide to their jail wardens.

The Effects of Present-Day Media

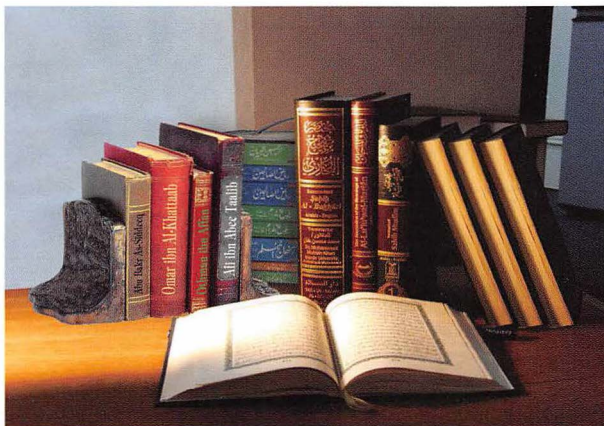
It is very important to realize that the heart definitely gets affected and influenced by what it witnesses and what it becomes willing to accept. One of the worst effects of the present-day media is that Muslims are witnessing on television and in movies acts that are clearly prohibited. When they continually watch them over and over again, they are no longer shocked by them. Their emotions no longer race. They gradually begin to accept such evils as normal. They often even begin to accept them and think of them as part of modern-day life.

The World of Tomorrow is your World

In the early evening of Thursday 22 September, 1988, a woman was raped at a local train station in Chicago in the presence of several people.

The horrifying feature of this incident was that nobody moved to help the victim. Her cries went unheeded, even though the rape took place during the rush hour. Several people were looking. She asked them for help. No one came to her aid!

You and your friends can work together to combat evils which threaten today's young people. The world of tomorrow is your world. Feel responsibility for it. Ask your elders for help. What you read and watch now will come to your mind at decisive moments over and over again throughout the years to come. The teenagers in the western world admit repeatedly that much of what they find themselves doing, saying and thinking, is directly traceable to something they have read, or to a television film or show they have watched. Be careful about what you permit to pass by your eyes and then settle in your mind.



Read Good Books


On the other hand, a good book can so mightily impress you, as to start you thinking in whole new directions, give you great ideas and ideals, and wonderfully shape your personality.

This is not the place to talk about the various ways of wearing your hair, or about particular

fashions, etc. The main problem in the matter of modern styles that has to be addressed is the moral one! Often against the teachings of Islam, girls dress immodestly by wearing low-slung tight trousers or hipsters, or by not wearing as much clothing as they should. However, the moral problem is especially true with boys. Possibly many girls are unaware that their immodest clothing causes boys very severe temptation against purity. Keep clearly in mind that the choice of clothing should first be governed by the unchanging principles of decency as taught by the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.

Modesty is one of the characteristics of a true believer. Allah's Messenger ﷺ once passed by a man who was criticizing his brother for his modesty. So he said, 'Leave him alone, for modesty is part of faith.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

However, it is important to realize that the quality of modesty does not prevent a Muslim from saying the truth. It does not prevent him from seeking knowledge, etc. It does not stop him from commanding good and forbidding evil.



- ✎ What factors dampen the sense of modesty?
- ✎ The attribute of modesty prevents one from committing sins. However, what causes one to fall into sins? Discuss.

Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Allah does not forbid you your _____.
2. *Hayaa'* is one of the _____ a believer can possess.
3. _____ distinguishes man from animals.
4. *Hayaa'* is a part of _____.
5. Modesty is of two types: _____ and _____.
6. Modesty is true when it is in conformity to _____ and _____.

B. Think-up

1. How can we regain our self-respect after committing sins?
2. How should we go about forming an upright sense of modesty? (Hint: Start your answer mentioning what needs to be done from childhood through adolescence and beyond).

Salaatul-Istikhaarah

Prayer for Guidance

Salaatul-Istikhaarah is the prayer for guidance in choosing the best option, and it has a specific supplication (*Du'aa*). When a problem confronts us and we are not able to decide how to resolve it, we should turn to our Lord. We should ask Him to set us in the right direction. After all, no one can be closer to us than He is! Remember that astrology, palmistry, numerology, feng shui (a system for deciding the right position for a building and for placing objects in order to make people happy) etc., have no place in Islam. Faint-hearted people who are weak in their faith turn to astrologers, palmists, numerologists and tarot readers. (Tarot denotes a set of special cards with pictures on them, used for telling somebody what will happen to them in the future) Looking for short-cuts and easy answers, these people become victims of deceivers who are self-proclaimed holy men.

War against Superstitions and Myths

A class of deceivers known as soothsayers (those who are believed to be able to tell the future) or diviners, existed in the Arab society before and during the Prophet's time. They pretended to know the events of the past and the future through their contact with *Jinn* or through other hidden sources. Allah's Messenger ﷺ declared war against this deception, which had no basis in divine guidance. Allah says, 'Say: No one in the heavens and the earth knows the unseen except Allah.' (27: 65)

Believing in those who Foretell the Future Constitutes an Act of Kufr

Islam's campaign was not confined to the soothsayers and diviners. It also included all those who go to them, seek

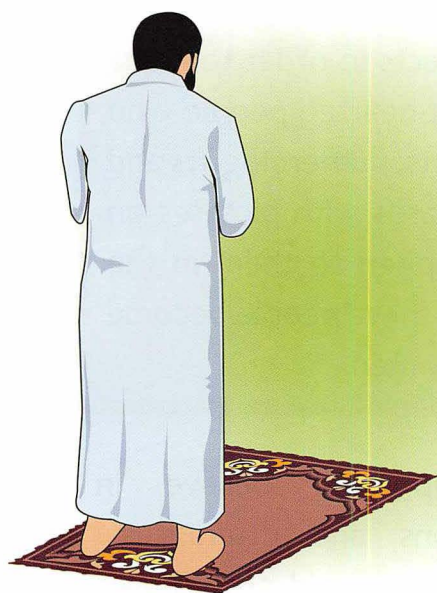
their help and believe in their superstitions and utterances. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, 'The prayer of one who goes to a soothsayer, asks him something, and believes in what he says will not be accepted for forty days.' (Muslim)

He also said, 'Whoever goes to a soothsayer and believes in what he says has denied what was revealed to Muhammad.' (Ahmad; and it is *saheeh*)

Allah, Most High, has liberated His believers from all such ridiculous behaviour by giving them the gift of *Salaatul-Istikhaarah* through His Final Messenger.



- ✍ What are the unlawful ways of seeking guidance regarding the future? What should we do instead?
- ✍ What did Allah's Messenger ﷺ say regarding soothsayers?
- ✍ Does going to a soothsayer entail that prayer will not be accepted for forty days? Discuss this point in the light of hadeeth.



Salaatul-Istikhaarah

The expression *Istikhaarah* denotes to seek the better choice. Muslims have practised *Istikhaarah* from the earliest time. *Istikhaarah* is the prayer of a man who has not yet made up his mind regarding an intended enterprise, a journey, marriage, etc.

Istikhaarah means to ask Allah to guide one to the right kind of action concerning any matter or task. It is to seek guidance from Allah by offering the prayer of supplication. We should practise the supplication of *Istikhaarah* in regard to every significant matter where one is ignorant of the good or evil outcome of intended enterprise.

The Prayer for Guidance and the Du'aa

According to a *hadeeth* transmitted on the authority of Jaabir ibn Abdullaah رضي الله عنه, who said, 'Allah's Messenger ﷺ used to teach us how to seek guidance in choosing the best course of action available in a practical enterprise, just as he would sometimes teach us a *soorah* from the Qur'an, "If one of you is concerned about some practical undertaking, he should perform two unit of prayer (*raka'atayn*), other than an obligatory prayer, but voluntary." Then he should say,

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْتَخِيْرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرُكَ
بِقُدْرَتِكَ وَاَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ الْعَظِيْمِ فَاِنَّكَ
تَقْدِرُ وَلَا اَقْدِرُ وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا اَعْلَمُ وَاَنْتَ عَلَّامُ
الْغُيُوْبِ، اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ اَنَّ هَذَا الْاَمْرَ خَيْرٌ
لِّيْ فِيْ دِيْنِيْ وَمَعَاشِيْ وَعَاقِبَةِ اَمْرِيْ فَاقْدُرْهُ لِيْ
وَيَسِّرْهُ لِيْ ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِيْ فِيْهِ، وَاِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ اَنَّ
هَذَا الْاَمْرَ شَرٌّ لِّيْ فِيْ دِيْنِيْ وَمَعَاشِيْ وَعَاقِبَةِ اَمْرِيْ
فَاَصْرِفْهُ عَنِّيْ وَاصْرِفْنِيْ عَنْهُ وَاقْدُرْ لِيْ الْخَيْرَ
حَيْثُ كَانَ ثُمَّ اَرْضِنِيْ بِهِ.

‘O Allah, I ask You to show me what is best through Your knowledge, and bring it to pass through Your Power, and I ask You of Your immense favour; for You are all-Powerful and I am not. You know but I do not, and You are the Knower of the unseen. O Allah! If You know this matter (at this point the supplicant should state or at least visualize the exact nature of the proposed enterprise) is in the best interests of my religion, my life in this world, and final outcome, in both the short term and long term, then bring it about and make it easy for me, and bless me with abundance therein. And if You know that this undertaking is evil for me in my religion, my life in this world, and the final outcome, in both the short term and long term, then turn it away from me, and turn me away from it, and bring about the good for me, whatever it may be, and make me pleased with it.’ (al-Bukhaaree)

Salaatul-Istikhaarah is a *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ. There is nothing authentic regarding any specific *soorah* that is to be recited in the prayer (means any particular *soorah*), nor is there any authentic report concerning how many times one should repeat it.

Imaam an-Nawawee said: ‘After practising the *istikhaarah*, a person should do what he is wholeheartedly




inclined to do, and feels good about doing. If his feelings change, then he should leave what he has intended to do.’

The *istikhaarah* prayer can be performed at any time except in the forbidden hours for prayer. Times when the prayer is forbidden are:

1. From sunrise until the sun is a spear’s length above the horizon;
2. From the time the sun is at its highest point in the sky until it moves on;
3. From when the sun yellows, before sunset until after it has set;
4. After praying the current dawn prayer; and
5. After praying the current mid-afternoon prayer (*al-‘Asr*)

Some people think that the right time for the performance of *Salaatul-Istikhaarah* is before going to bed. This is simply not true. It is, however, allowed. One may offer it at that time if one desires to do so. The supplication (*Du‘aa*) can be recited after performing the two units of prayer or even before *tasleem* (i.e. the final greeting ‘*Assalaamu alaikum*’ to conclude the prayer) after *tashahhud*. In order to enjoy these delightful moments, you will have to memorize the *Du‘aa* of *istikhaarah*. If, however, someone does not know this *Du‘aa* by heart, he can read it.



-  When should one perform *istikhaarah*? How many times should it be performed?
-  What should one do after performing *istikhaarah*?
-  When should one recite the *Du‘aa* of *istikhaarah*?

The Glorious Qur'an Makes Mention of Allah's Blessings

Allah, Most High, frequently speaks of the numerous blessings He bestowed upon many of His Prophets, including Daawood and Sulaymaan, peace be upon them.

Prophet Daawood's Ancestry

He was Daawood, son of Eesha, son of Uwayd. He was a descendant of Yahooda, son of Ya'qoob.

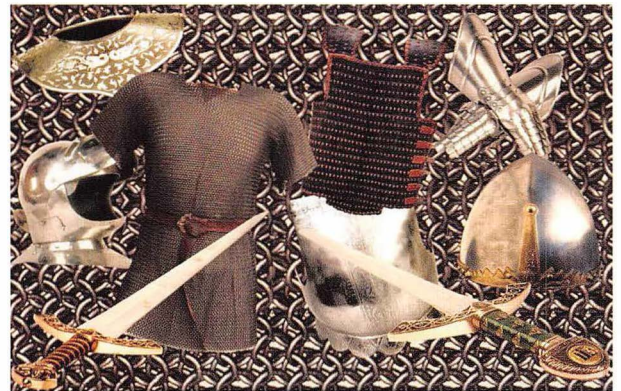
His voice and appearance were handsome. Prophethood and kingship were united in him. Historians report that he lived a hundred years, that he reigned for forty years, and that he had twelve sons. Allah knows best.

Daawood's Bravery

The king of the Israelites, Taaloot (Saul), called the Israelites to fight Jaaloot (Goliath) and his army. Jaaloot (Goliath) and his forces had driven out the Israelites from Palestine, in the period that followed Prophet Moosaa ﷺ. The army of Taaloot (Saul) fought them, and among them was Daawood, who himself killed Jaaloot.

Kingship and Prophethood

Allah united in Daawood both kingship and Prophethood, making him the king after he had killed Jaaloot. Before him, kingship had been vested in one tribe and Prophethood in another, but they were brought together in Daawood ﷺ.



Allah taught Daawood ﷺ to make armour from iron to guard against battles with the enemy. He instructed him in its manufacture and softened iron for him to the extent that he could work with it by hand without the need for fire or a hammer. He was the first to make armour from chain mail.



- ✎ Why did Taaloot call the Israelites to fight Jaaloot?
- ✎ How did Allah guide Daawood in making armour?

Daawood's Piety

Prophet Daawood ﷺ was very pious. He was a modest, penitent slave of Allah. He always remembered Allah and spent long periods of time praying to Him and glorifying Him. He was endowed with so much inner strength. Allah's Messenger ﷺ once said of him, 'The most beloved prayer to Allah is the prayer of Daawood. The most beloved fast to Allah is the fast of Daawood. He used to sleep half the night, then keep vigil for another third of it, then sleep for another sixth. He used to fast for a day, and then break the fast for a day. He did not flee when he met an enemy in battle.' (al-Bukhaaree and Muslim)

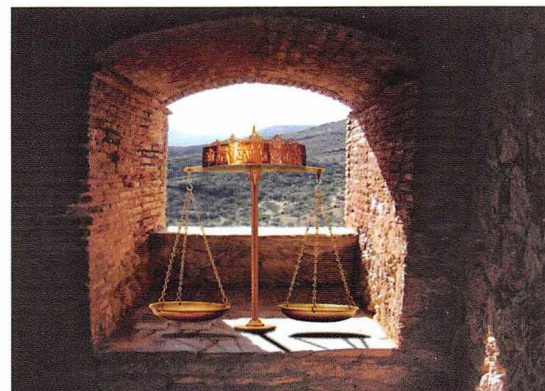
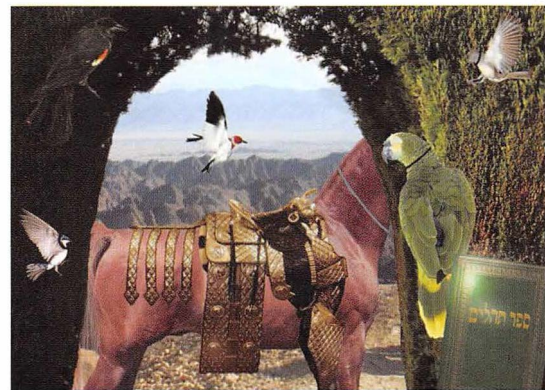
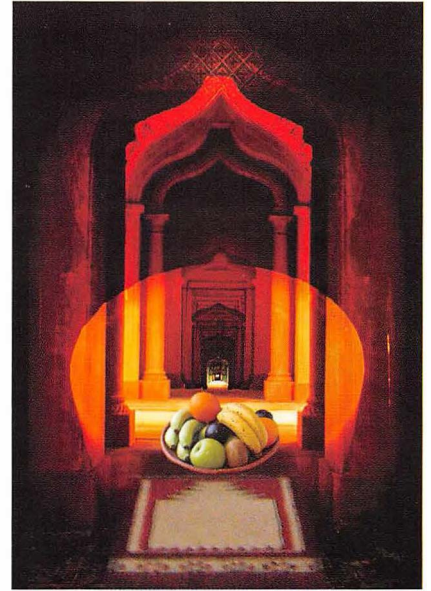
Zaboor is the name of the book revealed to Daawood ﷺ. It contained wisdom and warnings for his people. According to a *hadeeth* narrated by Imaam Ahmad, it was revealed to him in the month of Ramadhaan.

Allah Had Given Prophet Daawood ﷺ a Great Voice

Allah had given Prophet Daawood ﷺ a beautiful voice. Whenever he recited the Zaboor, the birds would pause in the air and echo with his recitation, praising with his praises. Likewise, the mountains responded to him, singing Allah's praises with him, every morning and every evening. He used to recite the Zaboor with a voice that was unlike anything that had been heard before. Prophet Daawood ﷺ ate from the work of his own hands.

Prophet Daawood's Wisdom

Prophet Daawood ﷺ was known for his wise judgements. He was abundant in worship. He performed many sacrifices so that not a single hour passed of the night and beginning and end of the day without the people of his house being in worship of Allah Most High. He is mentioned by name sixteen times in the Glorious Qur'an.



Exercise

A. Fill in the blanks.

1. Daawood ﷺ was a prophet as well as a _____.
2. _____ is the name of the book revealed to Daawood ﷺ.
3. Prophet Daawood is mentioned by name _____ times in the Qur'an.

B. Think-up

Why did nature respond to the voice of Daawood?