

Academy for Learning Islam

The Academy for Learning Islam (ALI) is a registered charity committed to advancing and teaching the religious tenets, history and practices of Islam, according to the Shi'ah Ithna 'Ashari school of thought.

It maintains a religious school of instruction for children, youths and adults. It provides both onsite and online classes, as well as a variety of other educational programs.

ALI also provides counseling services for people experiencing religious and social difficulties. It further has programs aimed at reaching out to the public and creating awareness about Islam.

Prophetic Biography- *Sirat al-Nabi*

- How do we know such a man by the name of Muhammad b. 'Abdullah (as) existed?
- Why is such an epistemic and foundational question important?
- Historical religion and a historical God: A common Abrahamic dilemma that we are forced to contend with

1) The Basic Chronological and Ideological Framework

- All Muslims agree on the fundamental principles and historical milestones in the Prophet's life
- Mecca vs. Madina- why is this an issue?
- Concept of *tawatur* and its importance for both Qur'an and the *Sira*

2) Non-Hadith Anecdotes

- Many companions had relics from their battles with the Prophet
- Collective memory of families who had loved ones meet and fight alongside the Prophet
- Why is the collective memory/pysche an important element?

3) The Qur'an

- The most ideal and accurate source on life of Muhammad (saws)
- Why is this the case and how? To what extent?
- Verses regarding Badr, Uhud, childhood of Muhammad- numerous
- Ayatullah's Subhani and Makaremshirazi contribution
- Asbab al-Nuzul- a source of history

4) Poetry

- Historical material replete with Poetic utterances
- Gives us key information regarding the attitudes and positions of various tribes towards the Prophet
- Most popular medium of expressing oneself– Arabs would compose poetry when they wished to something important
- Ex.- The Imams also engaged in this discipline

The Meccan period

- Date of Birth: Aprox: 570 C.E- year of the Elephant
- Father- 'Abdullah b. 'Abd al-Mutallib
- Mother: Amina bint Wahb
- Religious affiliation?

The Prodigal Child-Grand Matter

- Signs and Occurrences----as prelude to his delivery

- *Aslab* (Loins) of Bani Adam- important theme

أنس بن مالك، قال سمعت رسول الله (صلى الله عليه و آله) يقول كنت أنا و علي عن يمين العرش نسبح الله قبل أن يخلق آدم بألفي عام، فلما خلق آدم جعلنا في صلبه ، ثم نقلنا من صلب إلى صلب في أصلاب الطاهرين و أرحام المطهرات حتى انتهينا إلى صلب عبد المطلب ، فقسمنا قسمين فجعل في عبد الله نصفا، و في أبي طالب نصفا، و جعل النبوة و الرسالة في، و جعل الوصية و القضية في علي، ثم اختار لنا اسمين اشتقهما من أسمائه، فالله المحمود و أنا محمد، و الله العلي و هذا علي، فأنا للنبوة و الرسالة، و علي للوصية و القضية.

- “ I am and you ‘Ali were postioned (as lights) at the right of the throne of Allah, we took his praise 1000 years before he created Adam.

And When he created Adam, He [Allah] hurled/placed us in Adam's loins, when we were transferred from one loin to another loin all of them being pure loins and pure wombs....

Until we ended up at ‘Abd al-Muttalib, at which point we were divided into two parts- one placed in the loins of ‘Abdullah and the other half in Abi Talib.....

The Qur'an: The Young Muhammad

- Sura 93: 3-8
- Context: Prolonged period without revelation
- Allah responds in an intimate manner to his Prophet's concerns
- "The Lord has not forsaken you, nor is he displeased"-3
- مَا وَدَّعَكَ رَبُّكَ وَمَا قَلَى
- Qur'an is responding to the depths of the Prophet's soul---it responds on his behalf
- Lapse of revelation

- 6--- “Did he not find you as an orphan and give you care”

“أَلَمْ يَجِدْكَ يَتِيمًا فَآوَىٰ”

- Abdullah died before he was borne & Amina whilst he was six years old
- Why an orphan- what is the importance in this information?
- Tender years of his life----imagine the society at the time
- Powerful moment
- How did he survive?
- Emanation of God’s love for his Prophets

- Sura Taha 38-40-Delicate infancy and childhood of Moses
- “Behlode we sent a *wahy* to your mother (oh Moses) the following message:
- Cast the child into the chest/tabut and throw it into the river, the river will cast him up on the bank and he will be taken up by one Who is an enemy to Me And an enemy to him
- *But I cast a garment of love over you from me and so that you may be brought up/develop under my (watchful) eye*
- وَأَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِنِّي وَلِتُصْنَعَ عَلَى عَيْنِي

- Story continues....
- 40- “Behlod! (Allah speaking to Moses):
- Your sister went forth (ahead along the river) and told those who recovered the child...
- “ shall I show you a person who will nurse and rear the child....
- “So we brought thee back to thy mother, that her eyes maybe be cooled (from immense tears)!..”

- فَرَجَعْنَاكَ إِلَى أُمِّكَ
- تَقَرَّرَ عَيْنُهَا وَ لَا تَحْزَنُ كَى

The Dessert---Early *tarbiyyat*

- Life in the desert----horizons of the infinite
- Meister Eckhart and the Soul
- Life with Bedouins- why was this a necessity?
- Mastery of Arabic and oral culture
- Early childhood development- life with foster brothers- community of love and affection
- God's Plan- requires our contemplation to realize it

● “Did he not find you lost and guided you”-93:7

● وَوَجَدَكَ ضَالًّا فَهَدَى

- Possible meanings of *dalan*----misguided, lost, in a state of error, or roaming (without sense of direction)
- و تقول: ضللت مكاني إذا لم تهتد له: و ضل
- Kitab al-'Ayn- “ I lost my position.”- When he is not directed to it that is.
- When someone swerves from the path or destination
- Hadith: الْحِكْمَةُ ضَالَّةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ فَحَيْثُمَا وَجَدَ أَحَدُكُمْ ضَالَّتَهُ فَلْيَأْخُذْهَا
- Wisdom is the lost property of the mu'min
- 24 interpretations- Fakhr din al-Razi
- tafsir al-qur'an bi l-qur'an- Interpretation of the Qur'an by the Qur'an

Points of Reflection...

“He (Musa) said: Our lord is that who gave everything its creation *then guided it.*” Taha :50

- قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى
- “You were not aware of what the book nor faith (*iman*)

مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِي مَا الْكِتَابُ وَلَا الْإِيمَانُ

- but we made it a light by which we may guide whom we wish from amongst our servants and indeed you (Muhammad) guide (people) to a straight path....

Shura:52

- “We have related you [Muhammad] the best of stories by what we have revealed to you through this Qur’an, surely prior to this you were from amongst the unaware (of it- the Qur’an)”-Yusuf, 3

وَإِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

- Imam al-Sajjad (as)-----Dua Abi Hamza-
- “ I am the misguided/lost one that you guided.–
 - أنا الضال الذي هديته
 - Dua Arafat---

- “ And he found/discovered you impoverished and enriched you” 93:8

• وَوَجَدَكَ عَائِلًا فَأَغْنَى

- The Meccan life of Muhammad took a decisive turn...



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