



ALI 657: Living Islam through Combating the Self

This course on Zoom is designed to give a 15-minute *spiritual dose daily during Month of Ramadan*. We will *Inshā'Allah* discuss 2 -3 Hadiths on Jihād bin-Nafs from *Wāsā'il al-Shi'ah* of Muhammad bin al-Hasan al-Hurr al-‘Āmilī and see how we can implement them in Living Islam.

Instructor: Hasanayn Kassamali

Dates: 6th to 20th April 2023/ 1st to 29th Ramadan 1444.

Times: Karachi 2:30 pm, Dubai 1:30 pm, Dar-es-salaam 12:30 pm, London 10:30 am, NY/Toronto 5:30 am. The time may change after 15th Ramadan; stay tuned.

Āyāt 12:53 text and translation

وَمَا أُبْرِئُ نَفْسِي ۚ إِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَأَمَّارَةٌ بِالسُّوءِ إِلَّا مَا
رَحِمَ رَبِّي ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٥٣﴾

12:53 And I do not acquit myself. Indeed, the soul is a persistent enjoiner of evil, except those upon which my Lord has mercy. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful.

- Nabi Yusuf عليه السلام says that even he is not safe from the *nafs*
- Nafs al-Ammārah is persistent in misleading
- We need Divine mercy to be protected from it
- However, Allah is All-forgiving, All-merciful.

Why this topic? – part 1

اللَّهُمَّ مَا كَانَ فِي قَلْبِي مِنْ شَكٍّ أَوْ رَيْبَةٍ أَوْ جُحُودٍ أَوْ قُنُوطٍ أَوْ فَرَحٍ أَوْ بَذَخٍ أَوْ بَطَرٍ أَوْ
خِيَلَاءٍ أَوْ رِيَاءٍ أَوْ سُمْعَةٍ أَوْ شِقَاقٍ أَوْ نِفَاقٍ أَوْ كُفْرٍ أَوْ فُسُوقٍ أَوْ عِصْيَانٍ أَوْ عَظَمَةٍ
أَوْ شَيْءٍ لَا تُحِبُّ فَاسْأَلْكَ يَا رَبِّ أَنْ تُبَدِّلَنِي مَكَانَهُ إِيْمَانًا بِوَعْدِكَ وَوَفَاءً بِعَهْدِكَ،
وَرِضًا بِقَضَائِكَ وَزُهْدًا فِي الدُّنْيَا، وَرَغْبَةً فِيْمَا عِنْدَكَ وَآثَرَةً وَطْمَإْنِينَةً وَتَوْبَةً نَصُوحًا

Imam al-Sadiq عليه السلام used to recite on the last night of Sha‘ban:

O Allah, whatever there may be in my heart 1. doubt, mistrust, unbelief, despair, vanity, 6. pride, recklessness, conceit, wild thoughts, desire for fame, 11. dissent, hypocrisy, faithlessness, corruption, disobedience, and 16. arrogance, or anything that You do not approve of, I beseech You, o my Lord, to replace it with faith in Your promise, loyalty to Your covenant, resignation to Your decrees, indifference to the world and eagerness for that which is with You and with awareness, peace of mind and sincere repentance!

Why this topic? – part 2

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي حَبَانَا بِدِينِهِ، وَاخْتَصَّنَا بِمِلَّتِهِ، وَسَبَّلَنَا فِي سُبُلِ إِحْسَانِهِ لِنَسْلُكَهَا بِمَنِّهِ إِلَى رِضْوَانِهِ، حَمْدًا يَتَقَبَّلُهُ مِنَّا، وَيَرْضَى بِهِ عَنَّا وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي جَعَلَ مِنْ تِلْكَ السُّبُلِ شَهْرَهُ شَهْرَ رَمَضَانَ، شَهْرَ الصِّيَامِ، وَشَهْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ، وَشَهْرَ الطَّهْوَرِ، وَشَهْرَ التَّمْحِصِ، وَشَهْرَ الْقِيَامِ

2. And all praise be to God, who favored us with His religion, and distinguished us with His creed, and directed us into the paths of His goodness, in order that, through His grace, we may walk along them towards His good pleasure —a praise which He may accept from us, and through which He will be pleased with us.
3. And praise be to God who ordained through those paths His month, the month of Ramadan, the month of fasts, the month of Islam, the month of purity, the month of putting to test/purification and the month of standing up (for prayer); (*The Sahīfah*, Du‘ā 44)

Tamhees from hammasa = to roast; to fry, broil

Why this topic? – part 3

Marhūm Āyatullāh Sayyid Musawi al-Khumayni (qs) has a great book on Ethics and spirituality titled *Forty Hadith: An Exposition of Ethical and Mystical Traditions*.

The first Hadith it covers is on *Jihad* of the Self. Perhaps, this shows that it is an entry point into spirituality and has Makārimul akhlāq.

Al-Sukuni relates on the authority of Abu ‘Abd Allah al-Sadiq (A): *Verily on seeing the returning armies from the battlefield, the Prophet (S) of God said, ‘Blessed are those who have performed the minor jihad and have yet to perform the major one.’ When asked, what is the major jihad? the Prophet replied, ‘the jihad of the self’ (struggle against self).*

<https://www.al-islam.org/forty-hadith-exposition-second-revised-edition-sayyid-ruhullah-musawi-khomeini/first-hadith-jihad>

Why this topic? - 4

In the famous sermon welcoming the month of Ramadan, the Apostle of Allah (Rasūlullāh ﷺ) said:

شَهْرٌ هُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَفْضَلُ الشُّهُورِ وَأَيَّامُهُ أَفْضَلُ الْأَيَّامِ وَلَيَالِيهِ أَفْضَلُ اللَّيَالِي وَسَاعَاتُهُ أَفْضَلُ السَّاعَاتِ . . . فَاسْأَلُوا اللَّهَ رَبَّكُمْ بِنِيَّاتٍ صَادِقَةٍ وَ قُلُوبٍ طَاهِرَةٍ

A month, which in the eyes of Allah, is the best of all months, its days are the best of all days, its nights are the best of all nights, and its hours are best of all hours . . . Therefore, ask your Lord with sincere intentions and pure hearts.

From all the *a'māl* (fasts, prayers, tilāwah, istighfār, Du'ās, charity, etc.,) we perform, there are limits to how long we can do them in 24 hours. However, we can train ourselves to maintain sincere intentions and pure hearts throughout the month of Ramadan. How do we do that? iA, we will cover

Hadith on the Jihād of nafs

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنِ النَّوْفَلِيِّ عَنِ السَّكُونِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع
أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ ص بَعَثَ سَرِيَّةً فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا قَالَ مَرْحَباً بِقَوْمٍ قَضَوْا الْجِهَادَ الْأَصْغَرَ وَبَقِيَ
عَلَيْهِمُ الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ فَقِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ قَالَ جِهَادُ النَّفْسِ

Imam Ja‘far al-Sādiq عليه السلام said that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله dispatched his soldiers to battle to fight the enemy and, upon **triumphant** return, said: ‘Greetings on those who have successfully carried out the “Minor Combat” (*al-jihād al-Asghar*), but have yet to engage themselves in the “Greater Combat” (*al-jihād al-akbar*). He was asked: ‘O Prophet of Allah! What is the “Greater Combat” (*jihād al-nafs*)? To which he replied: ‘Combat with self’. (*Wasā’il a-Shī‘ah*, H 20208)

Similar Hadith on combat against self

عَنْ مُوسَى بْنِ جَعْفَرٍ ع عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ آبَائِهِ عَنْ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ع قَالَ: إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ
ص بَعَثَ سَرِيَّةً فَلَمَّا رَجَعُوا قَالَ مَرْحَباً بِقَوْمٍ قَضَوْا الْجِهَادَ الْأَصْغَرَ وَ بَقِيَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْجِهَادُ
الْأَكْبَرُ قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ - وَ مَا الْجِهَادُ الْأَكْبَرُ فَقَالَ جِهَادُ النَّفْسِ وَ قَالَ ص إِنَّ
أَفْضَلَ الْجِهَادِ مَنْ جَاهَدَ نَفْسَهُ الَّتِي بَيْنَ جَنْبَيْهِ.

From Musa ibn Ja'far عليه السلام narrating from his father who took from his forefathers that Amirul Mu'minīn عليه السلام said: The Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ dispatched his soldiers to battle to fight the enemy and, upon their **triumphant** return, said, “Greetings those who have successfully carried out the ‘Minor Combat’ (*al-jihad al-Asghar*), but have yet to engage themselves in the ‘Greater Combat’” (*al-jihad al-akbar*).” He was asked, ‘O Prophet of Allah! What is the ‘Greater Combat’? To which he replied, “Combat with the self.” And the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: ***The best combat is the combat of one who fights his inner self.*** (Ibid, H 20216).

Hadith from *Combat with the Self* -3

وَمِنْ أَلْفَاظِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ص الشَّدِيدُ مَنْ غَلَبَ نَفْسَهُ

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said: the truly powerful person is the one who has conquered himself (*Wasā' al-Shī'ah*, H 20212)

- When two people were wrestling, the HP ﷺ stopped. People thought he was interested in the game or in judging who is better. But said above.

وَإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سِنَانٍ عَنِ الْمُفَضَّلِ بْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: قَالَ الصَّادِقُ جَعْفَرُ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ ع مَنْ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ وَاعِظٌ مِنْ قَلْبِهِ وَ زَاجِرٌ مِنْ نَفْسِهِ وَ لَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ قَرِينٌ مُرْشِدٌ اسْتَمَكَنَ عَدُوَّهُ مِنْ عُنُقِهِ

Imam al-Sādiq عليه السلام said: He who does not have a preaching heart, a reproaching self, and a guiding friend will be easily overcome by his enemy (*Ibid*, H 20213).

-Three qualities for defense against the self

-Meaning of preaching heart: knowledgeable, wise, thoughtful

-Reproaching self would never give into desires or whims.

Hadith from *Combat with the Self* - 4

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ حَمَّادِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو وَ أَنَسِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ جَمِيعاً عَنْ جَعْفَرِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ آبَائِهِ ع فِي وَصِيَّةِ النَّبِيِّ ص لِعَلِيِّ قَالَ: يَا عَلِيُّ أَفْضَلُ الْجِهَادِ مَنْ أَصْبَحَ لَا يَهُمُّ بِظُلْمِ أَحَدٍ.

Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq عليه السلام narrated on the authority of the Imams before him, that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله in his advice to Imam Ali عليه السلام said: O Ali, the best thing about self-struggle is when a person wakes up with no desire to wrong anyone. (*Wasā'il*, H 20214)

- Wake up with a clear mind, not influenced by desires
- sleep with purity in heart by doing wudu and planning not to harm
- When we go to sleep, we are on the threshold of death. Q 39:42

اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا ۖ فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

39:42 *Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die [He takes] during their sleep. Then He keeps those for which He has decreed death and releases the others for a specified term. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought.*

Observing Ramadan beyond it

Holy Prophet ﷺ said (found in Shi'ī & Sunni sources)

لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الْعِبَادُ مَا فِي رَمَضَانَ لَتَمَّتْ أَنْ يَكُونَ رَمَضَانُ سَنَةً

If the servants knew what was in Ramadan, they would have wished that Ramadan lasts for a year. (Shahrullāh, H 2)

لَوْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَا لَكُمْ فِي رَمَضَانَ لَزِدْتُمْ لِلَّهِ شُكْرًا

If you knew what is there for you in Ramadan, you will increase appreciation/ thanks for Allah (Ibid, H 3)

1. List all you can that is associated with Ramadan.
2. Highlight those that you can continue beyond Ramadan.
3. Do not allow the spirit of Ramadan to leave you.
4. Have a buddy: the 2 can remind and admonish each other
5. Do not be carried away on the Day of Eid.

Hadith from *Combat with the Self* - 5

وَبِإِسْنَادِهِ عَنْ ابْنِ فَضَّالٍ عَنْ غَالِبِ بْنِ عُثْمَانَ عَنْ شُعَيْبِ الْعَقْرُقُوفِيِّ عَنِ الصَّادِقِ ع قَالَ: مَنْ مَلَكَ نَفْسَهُ إِذَا رَغِبَ وَ إِذَا رَهَبَ وَ إِذَا اشْتَهَى وَ إِذَا غَضِبَ وَ إِذَا رَضِيَ حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ جَسَدَهُ عَلَى النَّارِ

H 20215 Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq عليه السلام: One who has complete control over himself (*nafs*), when he desires something as well as when he fears something, when he is angry as well as when he is pleased, Allah prohibits the Fire of Hell from touching his body.

- Complete control over self allows you not to transgress
- We have the right to desire as well as fear
- It is natural to get angry or become pleased
- It is the *nafs* which makes us cross the red lines
- Instead of the *nafs* let us be driven by wara', taqwā and 'aql.

After listening to the famous sermon of from the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ, Imam Ali asked: *O Rasūlullāh, what is the best of the deeds in this month?* The Apostle said, *O Abul-Hasan! The best of deeds in this month is wara' from what Allah has prohibited.*

Hadith from *Combat with the Self*-6

و عَنْ عِدَّةٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ خَالِدٍ وَ عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ عِيسَى جَمِيعاً عَنْ الْبَرْقِيِّ عَنْ النَّضْرِ بْنِ سُؤَيْدٍ عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ عِمْرَانَ الْحَلَبِيِّ عَنْ عُبَيْدِ اللَّهِ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ عَنْ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ هَارُونَ قَالَ: قَالَ لِي أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَ الْبَصَرَ وَ الْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا - قَالَ يُسْأَلُ السَّمْعُ عَمَّا سَمِعَ وَ الْبَصَرُ عَمَّا نَظَرَ إِلَيْهِ وَ الْفُؤَادُ عَمَّا عُقِدَ عَلَيْهِ.

Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq عليه السلام: *Surely the ears and the eyes and the heart, all of these shall be questioned about that (Q 17:36), i.e., that the ears will be questioned regarding what they heard, and the eyes with regard to what they looked at, and the heart regarding what it believe it (Ibid, H. 20219)*

Importance of Jihad of the self (Āyatullāh Khumaynī, *Forty Hadith, An Exposition*)
the *jihad* of the self is the *jihad* of greater importance. This *jihad* is superior to being killed in the way of God, since this condition implies overpowering one's own powers and faculties, and placing them under the yoke of God's command, and purging the domain of our body of satanic elements and their forces

Hadith from *Combat with the Self* - 7

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ إِلَى وَصِيَّةِ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ع لَوْلَدِهِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحَنْفِيَّةِ أَنَّهُ قَالَ:
يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تَقُلْ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُ بَلْ لَا تَقُلْ كُلَّ مَا تَعْلَمُ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ فَرَضَ عَلَى جَوَارِحِكَ كُلِّهَا فَرَائِضَ
يَحْتَجُّ بِهَا عَلَيْكَ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَ يَسْأَلُكَ عَنْهَا وَ ذَكَّرَهَا وَ وَعَظَهَا وَ حَذَّرَهَا وَ أَدَبَهَا وَ لَمْ يَتْرُكْهَا سُدىً
فَقَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَ جَلَّ وَ لَا تَقْفُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ إِنَّ السَّمْعَ وَ الْبَصَرَ وَ الْفُؤَادَ كُلُّ أُولَئِكَ
كَانَ عَنْهُ مَسْئُولًا

Imam Ali Amiirul-Mu'minin عليه السلام in his will to his son Muhammad b.

Hanafiyyah, said: O my son, do not say that which you do not know, and at the same time, do not say everything that you do know, for Allah has enjoined certain duties on each and every one of your limbs, which He will use to testify against you on the Day of Judgment, and He will ask you concerning them, as to how you heeded their counsel, their admonition, their warnings, and how you refined them, and He has not left them to wander aimlessly. Allah, Mighty and Exalted, has said: *and do not follow that of which you have no knowledge; surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these shall be questioned about that* (Q 17:36). (H 20224)

Allāmah Tabātabā'ī on Q 17:36

The verse forbids one from following what one does know. Given the unconditional form of the verse it includes every form of such following, whether in beliefs or practice. It effectively includes all the following: Do not believe that of which you have **not any knowledge**; do not say that of which you have **not any knowledge**; do not do that of which you have **not any knowledge**—because all of these involve a form of adherence.

Do not follow that of which you have no knowledge, because surely God will soon ask one's hearing, sight and heart—which are the instruments that one uses to acquire knowledge... the hearing, the sight and the heart are God's blessings upon mankind so that they may identify and acquire the truth, so that they may believe in it and act according to it. Each of them will soon be asked whether it was used to acquire knowledge, and whether the person followed the knowledge acquired by that instrument.

Hadith from *Combat with the Self*-8

وَفَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللِّسَانِ الْقَوْلَ وَ التَّعْبِيرَ عَنِ الْقَلْبِ بِمَا عُقِدَ عَلَيْهِ وَ أَقَرَّ بِهِ قَالَ اللَّهُ تَبَارَكَ وَ تَعَالَى اسْمُهُ وَ قُولُوا لِلنَّاسِ حُسْنًا - وَ قَالَ قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَ أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَ إِنْ هُنَا وَ إِيَّاهُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَ نَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ - فَهَذَا مَا فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَى اللِّسَانِ وَ هُوَ عَمَلُهُ-

Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq عليه السلام: (continues from Hadith 20,218)

Allah has made incumbent upon the tongue to speak and express that to which the heart has contracted and attested. Allah, Glorified and Exalted be His name, has said: *You shall speak good words to people* (Q 2:83), and: *Say, "we believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you, and our God and your God is one, and to Him do we submit* (Q 29:46). So, this is the duty that Allah has made incumbent upon the tongue.

- Know that the tongue has certain obligations (*faridha, farā'dh*)
- The words should always say what is in the heart; NO hypocrisy
- Ensure that the *qalb* believes and confirms tawhid; work for it.
- The least we expect the tongue to say are good word (*qawlan hasanah*)

Hadith from *Combat with the Self* - 9

وَقَالَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَ تَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ - ثُمَّ اسْتَعْبَدَهَا بِطَاعَتِهِ فَقَالَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَافْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ - فَهَذِهِ فَرِيضَةٌ جَامِعَةٌ وَاجِبَةٌ عَلَى الْجَوَارِحِ

Imam Ali Amīrul-Mu'minīn عليه السلام (continues) . . and He has said: *When you received it with your tongues and spoke with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge, and you deemed it an easy matter, which with Allah it was grievous (Q 24:15). Then He bade them to worship Him by obeying Him and said: O you who believe! Bow down and prostrate yourselves and serve your Lord and do good that you may succeed (Q 22:77). This is, therefore, a comprehensive duty incumbent of all of the limbs, (H 20224, continued).*

- Avoid transmission of news without investigation or contemplation
- You plunged and immersed into this [slander] when you received it, and passed the news from one tongue to another, speaking of what you had no knowledge of. Serious with God because it is false allegation & slander (Tabātabā'ī, *Al-Mizān*, 29:43)

Let us remember Sayyidah Khadījah عليها السلام

We have a good habit of saying a short ziyārat after prayers. Please add:

اَلسَّلَامُ عَلَیْكَ يَا خَدِیْجَةُ الْكُبْرَى اُمُّ الْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ وَرَحْمَةُ اللهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

Khadījah died in 619 CE, in the same year as Hadrat Abū Tālib. Prophet called it “Year of Sadness – *‘amul huẓn*”.

The Prophet’s first wife, Khadījah, may be cited as an example of a woman who possessed her own wealth and ran her own business. She was also the first person to hear the message revealed to Muhammad, the first to accept it, and one of Muhammad’s most important supporters during the early years of his prophecy (*The Study Quran*, p. 4168)

“Prophet’s countenance, character, manners and dealings were so impressive to Khadījah that she proposed marriage to him, a proposal which he accepted since she was a person of great nobility of character and beauty of soul.” (S H Nasr, *Muhammad - Man of Allah*)

Sayyidah Khadijah عليها السلام (continued)

The orphan who had suffered so much loneliness, financial difficulty and hardship in everyday life was blessed by God with a wife who loved him dearly, who believed completely in him and who had the means of providing the kind of social status in Mecca which would later allow him to carry out his religious activities on a wider basis and, after the call of Heaven came to him, to establish firmly the seeds of religious community of Islam.” (S H Nasr, *Muhammad - Man of Allah*)

“The marriage with Khadījah was of very great significance in the life of the Prophet of Islam for it provided for him the companion upon whom he could rely completely in the most difficult period of his life and who was endowed with the necessary moral and spiritual virtues to act as the perfect wife of God’s most perfect creature and the mother of the prophetic family – the Ahlul Bayt- whose light was later to illuminate the world.” (Ibid)

Something for you to ponder?

Try to answer the following question in 2 – 3 lines and email them to director@academyofislam.com. Although a spiritual/internal fast is important and essential, for it is like the major combat (*al-jihad al-akbar*) why would an evil thought or plan to harm someone or harbor envy not break our physical fast?

Why we reminded you thrice and not more?

From al-Sadūq in *al-Faqīh*: Amīr al-Mu'minīn عليه السلام said to a man from Banī Sa'd: Should I not tell you about myself and Fātimah? ... The Holy Prophet صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّمَ came to us in the morning while we were still in bed and said: '*As-Salāmu 'Alaykum*' (Peace be upon you). We were silent out of shyness for where we were. Then he said: '*As-Salāmu 'Alaykum*' (again) and we remained silent. Then he said again: '*As-Salāmu 'Alaykum*' so we feared that if we remained silent (a third time) then he would leave. This was his practice – he would salute thrice and if he were permitted to enter, he would do so otherwise he would leave. So, we said: '*Alaykas-Salām Ya Rasūlullāh*' (Upon you be peace O Prophet of Allah!) Please enter! So, he entered. <https://www.al-islam.org/sunan-nabi-sayyid-muhammad-husayn-tabatabai>

Your responses - 1

1. Fasting is a mean to an end-Taqwa. Taqwa leads to wisdom of avoiding envy, hate, evil & other deadly sins promoted by Shaitan. By invalidating a fast Allah does not wish to negate a chance for a human to achieve a higher purpose. In an analogous example, not offering salat **does not** invalidate a fast.

2. According to Sh Leghaei, fasting has three levels, namely: Fasting Al-Shariah (jurisprudential), Fasting of Al-Tariqat (ethical), and fasting of Al-Haqiqat (mystical). So, although an evil thought or envy does not invalidate jurisprudential fasting, it would undoubtedly impact mystical fasting. In mystical fasting--the highest level of fasting--one should detach from everything other than God. Envy or an evil plan would prevent the believer from detaching and risk the mystical fast but not necessarily compromise the jurisprudential fast.

3. I think the fasts do not break because: 1. Allah (swt) is encompassing in His mercy, and He has determined that only physical (carnal) desires like eating will break the physical fasts

Your responses - 2

Due to Allah's mercy as it would be difficult for most of us to have a perfect fast. Our goal, whether we are in Ramadan or not, to purify our soul, and fasting helps achieve this goal. It's a goal of a lifetime but until we get there, Allah accepts our physical fast due to his mercy. Allah swt knows best.

It has invalidated the fast but:

- 1) No action has taken physically, by consuming any food or drink
- 2) Not breath the smoke knowingly which could break the fast physically nor said verbally anything wrong about Quran Hadith or Ahlulbayt.
- 3) asked the forgiveness, pay some Sadaqah and repented immediately As the evil thought came in mind.

Your responses - 3

Why is a nonspiritual fast still acceptable and not deemed void. There are two answers I can think of

1. it is out of Allah's mercy that he accepts whatever we give
2. there are levels of fasting and the basic one is the one where we stay away from food and drink. Once we accomplish that we try and move on to the next level and do better - it is in this level that it becomes more of a spiritual fast

The Physical Fast is the steppingstone for the purification of the soul with long-term good Akhlāq.

The Spiritual Fast cannot be imposed as an absolute requirement because of its in-depth and long-term implications.

InshāAllāh the Physical Fast will result in some improvement in their spiritual life.

Our response to the question -1

Although a spiritual/internal fast is important and essential, for it is like the major combat (*al-jihad al-akbar*) why would an evil thought or plan to harm someone or harbor envy not break our physical fast?

Let us reflect on the following two verses in sūrahs 2 & 5:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ ﴿١٨٣﴾
مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦﴾

1. Fasting is not an easy obligation. Per 'Allāmah Tabātabā'ī, Allah had to convince them by it was also obligatory on the past nations. So, only the basic aspects/level of fasting has been made obligatory
2. The prescribed fasting may result into taqwā. If the internal fast was prescribed, then it could have resulted into taqwā and wara'
3. Allah never wishes to make thing difficult for the believers.

Our response to the question - 2

Although a spiritual/internal fast is important and essential, for it is like the major combat (*al-jihad al-akbar*) why would an evil thought or plan to harm someone or harbor envy not break our physical fast?

Let us reflect on the following Hadiths from the Prophet ﷺ:

- *Jibra'il continuously advised me to stay up at night until I thought that the virtuous ones of my ummah should not sleep.*
- *The two-unit prayer that a person offers in the middle of night is better for him than the world and what is in it; and if it were not difficult for my Ummah I would certainly enjoin those two on them.*

We can say that the internal fast has a lot of merits, but it may be difficult for many to follow. Thus, physical fast is obligatory.

In closing we share with you a hadith on going beyond physical fasting.

Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq عليه السلام: *The day of your fast should not be like any ordinary day. When you fast, all your senses - eyes, ears, tongue, hands and feet must fast with you.*

Hadith from *Combat with the Self* - 10

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَلِيٍّ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ بِإِسْنَادِهِ إِلَى وَصِيَّةِ أَمِيرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ع لَوْلَدِهِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحَنَفِيَّةِ أَنَّهُ قَالَ ...
ثُمَّ اسْتَعْبَدَهَا بِطَاعَتِهِ فَقَالَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَافْعَلُوا
الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ - فَهَذِهِ فَرِيضَةٌ جَامِعَةٌ وَاجِبَةٌ عَلَى الْجَوَارِحِ وَ قَالَ وَ أَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا
تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا - يَعْنِي بِالْمَسَاجِدِ الْوُجْهَ وَ الْيَدَيْنِ وَ الرُّكْبَتَيْنِ وَ الْإِبْهَامَيْنِ.

Imam Ali Amīrul-Mu'minīn عليه السلام (H 20224 in *Wasāil* continues)

. . . Then He bade them to worship Him by obeying Him and said: *O you who believe! Bow down and prostrate yourselves and serve your Lord and do good that you may succeed* (Q 22:77). This is, therefore, a comprehensive duty incumbent of all of the limbs, for He has also said: *And that the parts of prostration are Allah's, so call not upon anyone beside Allah* (Q 72:18). By the 'parts of prostration', He means the face, the hands, the knees, and two big toes.

‘Allāmah Tabātabā’ī on Q 22:77

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَافْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾

O you who believe! Bow down and prostrate yourselves and serve your Lord and do good that you may succeed.

Bow down and prostrate yourselves: This is equivalent to commanding, “Perform the prayer (al-salāh).” The verse then adds *and serve your Lord*, which refers to other acts of worship that have been legislated in Islam, such as pilgrimage and fasting. Thus, what remains for *and do good* is all other laws and rules in the shari‘ah, since performing and attending to them involves the good of the society, the felicity of the individuals, and the [true] life of all. He says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ

O you who believe! Answer (the call of) God and His Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life (Q 8:24). Hence, the verse enjoins everything that has been legislated in Islam, including rituals and other laws. (*Al-Mizan*, v 28, p 263)

Discussion on Sajdah - 1

الرَّسُولُ ص: أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ . . . وَ ظُهُورُكُمْ ثَقِيلَةٌ مِنْ أَوْزَارِكُمْ فَخَفِّفُوا عَنْهَا بِطُولِ سُجُودِكُمْ

O people . . Your backs have become heavy from the burden of your [sins], so lighten them by lengthening your *sujūd* (prostrations).

Hafs said: I saw Abū ‘Abdillāh عليه السلام alone in the gardens of Al-Kufa. He came to a palm tree, so he performed ablution near it, then bowed and prostrated. I counted in his عليه السلام prostration five hundred Glorifications (*tasbīh*). (*Al-Kāfi*, v 8, H 111)

Abū ‘Abdillāh عليه السلام said: Acts of *salāt* fall in three categories They are *tabūr* (cleansing), *rukū‘* (bowing down), and *sujūd* (Ibid, v 3, H 8)

Imam al-Ridhā عليه السلام was seen bidding farewell to the grave of Rasūlullāh صلى الله عليه وآله when departing for ‘Umrah . . . he prostrated for such a long time that the earth on which he had prostrated was moistened by his sweat. And some of our companions said that he was seen resting his cheek on the floor of the Masjid (*Kāmil al-Ziyārāt*, Ch 3, H 3)

Discussion on Sajdah - 2

Imam Ja‘far al-Sādiq عليه السلام said: When Ali b. al-Husayn [i.e., Imam Zayn al-‘Ābidīn] عليه السلام used to go down in prostration, he would not raise his head until he was dripping with sweat. (*Bihār*, v 85, p 137, H 17).

Rābi‘ah Ibn Ka‘b reports: “Once, the Noble Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said to me: O’ Rābi‘ah! *You have been serving me for seven years and therefore, will you not ask for something from me so that I grant it to you?*

“O’ Prophet of Allah! Grant me some time so that I may reflect on the matter,” I requested. The next day, when I arrived in his presence, the Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: O’ Rābi‘ah! *Speak out your wish.*

“Pray to Allah that He makes me enter Paradise along with you!,” I said. Hearing this request, he inquired: *Who is it that has taught you to seek this from me?*

“No one has taught it to me. I considered that if I sought great wealth, it would eventually get exhausted; if I sought a long life and numerous children, the ultimate eventuality would be death; hence, as a result of this contemplation, I eventually opted for this request,” I replied.

The Noble Prophet صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ lowered his head for a few moments as he deliberated, after which, raising his head, he said: *I shall seek your wish from Allah, but you must help me too (in this matter) by prostrating excessively.* (*Anecdotes for Reflection*, Chapter 24)

Objective of long sajdah

تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِّنْ أَثَرِ السُّجُودِ ۚ

Q 48:49 *You see them bowing and prostrating [in worship], seeking Allah's grace, and [His] pleasure. Their mark is [visible] on their faces, from the effect of prostration.* According to a Hadith: mark of their faces indicates:

“wakefulness at night for establishing prayer” whose marks are visible on their faces during the day (*ECITLQ* from *al-Faqih & Nur al-Thaqalayn*).

الإمام الباقر (عليه السلام): كَانَ لِأَبِي (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ) فِي مَوْضِعِ سُجُودِهِ آثَارٌ نَاتِيَةٌ ، وَكَانَ يَقَطَعُهَا فِي السَّنَةِ مَرَّتَيْنِ ، فِي كُلِّ مَرَّةٍ خَمْسَ ثَفِنَاتٍ فَسُمِّيَ ذَا الثَّفِنَاتِ لَذَلِكَ.

Imam al-Bāqir عليه السلام said, ‘My father عليه السلام used to have protruding marks from prostration on his forehead, which he used to cut twice a year, and every time he would do so, he would scrape off five lumps, and came to be nicknamed ‘the one with lumps’. (*Iala al-Sharā'ih*, p 233, H 1)

The objective should **not** be to prostrate so long as to have a mark, as it may result into ostentation/showiness (*‘ujb*). Rather we should **bring tears** into our eyes due to recalling our sins, audacity, negligence.

Recitations in Sajdah

الإمام عليّ ع لو يَعْلَمُ الْمُصَلِّي مَا يَغْشَاهُ مِنْ جَلَالِ اللَّهِ مَا سَرَّهُ أَنْ يَرْفَعَ رَأْسَهُ مِنْ سُجُودِهِ .

If the praying one knew about the Sublimity of Allah covering him, he would never wish to raise his head up from prostration (Al-Khisāl, H 632)

وكان ابو جعفر (عليه السلام) يقول وهو ساجد: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ حَقًّا حَقًّا سَجَدْتُ لَكَ يَا رَبِّ تَعَبُّدًا وَ رِقًّا وَ إِيْمَانًا وَ تَصَدِّيقًا يَا عَظِيمُ إِنَّ عَمَلِي ضَعِيفٌ فَضَاعِفُهُ لِي يَا كَرِيمُ يَا جَبَّارُ اغْفِرْ لِي ذُنُوبِي وَ جُرْمِي وَ تَقَبَّلْ عَمَلِي يَا كَرِيمُ يَا جَبَّارُ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ أَنْ أَخِيبَ أَوْ أَحْمَلَ ظُلْمًا اللَّهُمَّ مِنْكَ النِّعْمَةُ وَ أَنْتَ تَرْزُقُ شُكْرَهَا وَ عَلَيْكَ يَكُونُ ثَوَابُ مَا تَفَضَّلْتَ بِهِ مِنْ ثَوَابِهَا بِفَضْلِ طَوْلِكَ وَ بِكَرِيمِ عَائِدَتِكَ.

Abu Ja'far عليه السلام in would say in the state of sajdah: No one deserves worship except You. You deserve worship in all truth and without doubts. I have prostrated before You, my Lord as (Your) slave and a sole servant. O Most great, my (good) deeds are weak, so please increase them for me, O gracious Lord. O compassionate Lord, forgive my sins and crimes and accept my deeds, O gracious Lord. O most powerful Lord, I seek protection with You against failure or tolerating injustice. O Lord, from You come bounties and You grant the ability to appreciate such bounties. With You are the reward due to your generosity and benevolence and Your graciously caring. (*Al-Kāfi*, v 3, H 21). Other reports indicate that he said this in tahajjud prayer.

Hadith from *Combat with the Self* -11

وَعَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ يَحْيَى عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ عِيسَى عَنْ ابْنِ أَبِي عُمَيْرٍ عَنْ جَمِيلِ بْنِ دَرَّاجٍ قَالَ: سَأَلْتُ أَبَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ عَنِ الْإِيمَانِ فَقَالَ شَهَادَةٌ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ص قَالَ قُلْتُ: أَلَيْسَ هَذَا عَمَلٌ قَالَ بَلَى قُلْتُ فَالْعَمَلُ مِنَ الْإِيمَانِ قَالَ لَا يَثْبُتُ لَهُ الْإِيمَانُ إِلَّا بِالْعَمَلِ وَالْعَمَلُ مِنْهُ

Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq عليه السلام, when asked about faith by Jamīl b. Darrāj, said: *It is to testify that there is no deity worth of worship, except Allah, and that Muhammad* صلى الله عليه وآله *is the messenger of Allah. Jamil then asked: Is this not achieved through action? To which he replied: Of course, for faith can remain firm only when accompanied by action, and action is part of it. (H 20223)*

- In the Quran about 50 verses has (الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ). The 1st is 2:25:

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ ۖ كُلَّمَا رُزِقُوا مِنْهَا مِنْ ثَمَرَةٍ رَزَقُوا ۖ قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۖ وَأُتُوا بِهِ مُتَشَابِهًا ۖ وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا أَزْوَاجٌ مُطَهَّرَةٌ ۖ وَهُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

And give good news to those who have faith and do righteous deeds, that for them shall be gardens with streams running in them: whenever they are provided with their fruit for nourishment, they will say, 'This is what we were provided before,' and they were given something resembling it. There will be chaste mates for them, and they will remain therein [forever].

Hadith from *Combat with the Self* - 12

عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مُسْلِمٍ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ ع فِي حَدِيثٍ قَالَ: الْإِيمَانُ لَا يَكُونُ إِلَّا بِعَمَلٍ وَ الْعَمَلُ مِنْهُ
و لَا يَثْبُتُ الْإِيمَانُ إِلَّا بِعَمَلٍ.

Imam Ja'far al-Sādiq عليه السلام said: Faith can exist only with action, and action is part of it, such that faith can remain firm only when accompanied by action (*Wasā'il*, H 20220). Reflect on the following verse Q 5:93

لَيْسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعِمُوا إِذَا مَا اتَّقَوْا وَآمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَآمَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوْا وَأَحْسَنُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾

There will be no sin upon those who have faith and do righteous deeds regarding what they have eaten [in the past] so long as they are Godwary and faithful and do righteous deeds, and are further Godwary and faithful, and are further Godwary and virtuous. And Allah loves the virtuous.

Regarding those acted wrongly before the revelation or those who had not heard of that ordinance. No sin on them provided: that such people should be virtuous, have Faith, and do good actions. (*ECITLQ*)

Discussion on Sūrat al-‘Asr

سَمِ اللّٰهُ الرَّحْمٰنُ الرَّحِيْمُ * وَالْعَصْرُ ﴿١﴾ اِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ لَفِيْ خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوْا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَتَوٰصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوٰصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٣﴾

In the name of Allah, the Most merciful, the Most beneficent. By Time! (1) Man is indeed in loss, (2) except those who have faith and do righteous deeds, and enjoin one another to [follow] the truth, and enjoin one another to patience. (3)

This sūrah was revealed in Makkah and consists of 3 verses. It summarizes the Quranic teachings and pieces together all Quranic objectives in the most concise way. It could be either Makkan or Madinan, though it resembles the Makkan chapters more.

Wal-‘asr - this is an oath, swearing by the time. The next two verses describe how human beings are in a state of loss, except for those follow the truth and are patient upon it – which amounts to the believers who do righteous deeds. Given the context, it is most likely that the *time* in this verse refers to the era of the Prophet ﷺ. That is, it is the time in which the sun of Islam rose and started shining over humanity. That is when truth vanquished falsehood. (Tabātabā’ī, *Al-Mīzān*, v. 40, p. 335)

Hadiths on action and deeds

لَا تَكُنْ مِمَّنْ يَرْجُو الآخِرَةَ بِغَيْرِ الْعَمَلِ... يُحِبُّ الصَّالِحِينَ وَلَا يَعْمَلُ عَمَلَهُمْ

Imam Ali عليه السلام said, ‘Do not be among those who hope for the Hereafter without acting ... admiring the righteous people and yet not acting like them, and despising the sinners whilst he is one of them ... he fears for others worse chastisement than what he himself deserves for his sin, and for himself hopes for greater than his actions deserve ... When he acts, he falls short of the action, and when he is asked something, he exaggerates ... so he is presumptuous in his speech though performing little action.’ [*Nahj al-Balāghah*, Saying 150]

الإمام الهاديُّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: النَّاسُ فِي الدُّنْيَا بِالْأَمْوَالِ، وَفِي الآخِرَةِ بِالْأَعْمَالِ.

Imam al-Hādī عليه السلام: ‘People transact through wealth in this world and through deeds in the Hereafter.’ [*al-Durra al-Bahīrah*, p. 41]

Misbāh al-Sharī‘ah: Bliss belongs to the servant who strives for Allah (swt) against his own nature and passions; he who then defeats his passion wins Allah's pleasure (*Lantern of the Path*, p. 94)

Your Questions Answered

Q1. Where can we get the book *Combat with the Self*?

A1. Preview for the book can be found at

https://books.google.com/books/about/Combat_with_the_Self.html?id=p3g5I3nORiUC

Q2. Some people had trouble joining the class.

A2. Yes, we had erred in saying that it would be at 11 am in UK, till Saturday March 25 it would be at 10 am, and thereafter *iA* at 11 am.

Q3 Some of you could not register for the course.

A3 Please email director@academyofislam.com and you will receive the Zoom invitation link. You may chat privately to Sr Najma Dhala-Datoo.

Q4 How can I access the previous sessions? Go to www.academyofislam.com/ali-657 and ALI YouTube channel

Q5 How to get spiritually connected in Ramadan. *iA* we will cover this.

Q6. Can we take picture of the slide screen? Yes, sure you can.