

# Branches of Iman

Lessons from  
Shaykh Yasir Qadhi

Adapted by  
Makmor Tumin

***If you are able to contribute...***

1. Improvements to the materials (including publication possibilities) by contacting me through the following email: [makmor.tumin@gmail.com](mailto:makmor.tumin@gmail.com)
2. Financially by sharing the cost and effort (any amount is appreciated).
  - i. Here is the PayPal: <https://www.paypal.me/akmalmakmor>
  - ii. Here is the bank account number: 7005307962 (Makmor Tumin - CIMB Bank)
3. A minute of your time by sharing the materials if you find them beneficial for others.

## **Contents**

<b>Session 1: The 70 Odd Branches of Iman</b> .....	3
<b>Session 2: Iman, The Metaphor of the Tree and Nuur</b> .....	6
<b>Session 3: Iman and Its Sweetness</b> .....	10
<b>Session 4: Muslimin, Mu'minin and Muhsinin</b> .....	14
<b>Session 5: Allah, The Blessed Names, One Kalimah</b> .....	19
<b>Session 6: Faith in the Angels and the Role of Jibril</b> .....	25
<b>Session 7: Belief in The Prophets and The Sirah of Rasulullah SAW</b> .....	29
<b>Session 8: Belief in The Books and The Specialties of the Quran</b> .....	33
<b>Session 9: Belief in Yaumul Qiamah (Judgement Day)</b> .....	39
<b>Session 10: Belief in Predestination (Qada' and Qadr)</b> .....	43
<b>Session 11: Love, Fear and Hope</b> .....	49
<b>Session 12: The 10 out of 77 Imam al-Bayhaqi's Branches of Iman (Part 1)</b> .....	53
<b>Session 13: The 10 out of 77 Imam al-Bayhaqi's Branches of Iman (Part 2)</b> .....	57
<b>Session 14: Hayak, Bashfulness, Wudhu' and Purity</b> .....	62
<b>Session 15: Benefits of Iman and How to Keep it Uplifted</b> .....	66

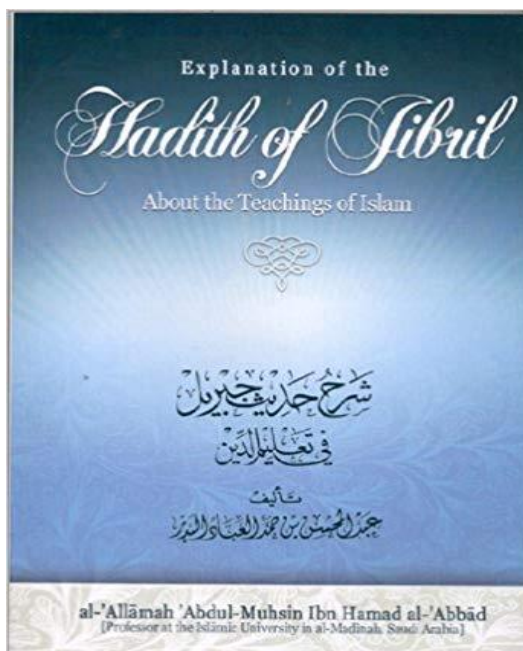
## **Session 1: The 70 Odd Branches of Iman**

May our hearts, tongues and limbs be protected by Allah SWT from committing any form of wrongdoings. AAmin. We are currently in the beginning of the 1st session of the tazkirah on the 70 odd branches of Iman According to many scholars and ulamas, any attempts to systematically discuss this topic should deal with three separate things. They are the Hadith of Jibril narrated under Umar al-Khattab RA's authority, the hadith on Iman narrated under Abu Hurairah RA, and the detailed account of the 70 odd branches of Iman as remarked by Imam al-Bayhaqi.

Before embarking into our discussion on the 70 odd branches of Iman, let us discuss about the three things mentioned above. First, we shall talk about the Hadith of Jibril, and it is as follows: -

*One day while the Prophet was sitting in the company of some people, (The angel) Gabriel came and asked, "What is faith?" Allah's Messenger replied, 'Faith is to believe in Allah, His angels, (the) meeting with Him, His Apostles, and to believe in Resurrection.'" Then he further asked, "What is Islam?" Allah's Messenger replied, "To worship Allah Alone and none else, to offer prayers perfectly, to pay the compulsory charity (Zakat) and to observe fasts during the month of Ramadan." Then he further asked, "What is Ihsan (perfection)?" Allah's Messenger replied, "To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that He is looking at you." Then he further asked, "When will the Hour be established?" Allah's Messenger replied, "The answerer has no better knowledge than the questioner. But I will inform you about its portents.*

The Hadith of Jibril above have been referred to and is still being referred to by many ulamas, usually in introductory sessions when the topic of Islam, Iman and Ihsan is about to be presented. The hadith is clear in terms of the specific Arqan or pillars of the respective aspects except for the case of Ihsan, which we will, InsyaAllah, deal with when we discuss on Ihsan and Tasawwuf. May Allah give us the strength to do so. Actually, the Hadith of Jibril ended with a question on the signs of the hour which gives us hints that besides Islam, Iman and Ihsan, our ad-Din (Islam) requires us to ponder and always be prepared for the End of the world.



*The Hadith of Jibril is an extremely important hadith which teaches us on the specific pillars of our ad-Din, which our soul developed by first having pure Iman (through the pillar of Iman), worshipping spiritually (through the pillars of Islam), and obtaining the highest peak transcendently (through the pillars of Ihsan). The hadith was explained in detail by Shaykh Abdul Muhsin, a great Muhaddith who was born in 1353H in Zulfi, Saudi Arabia.*

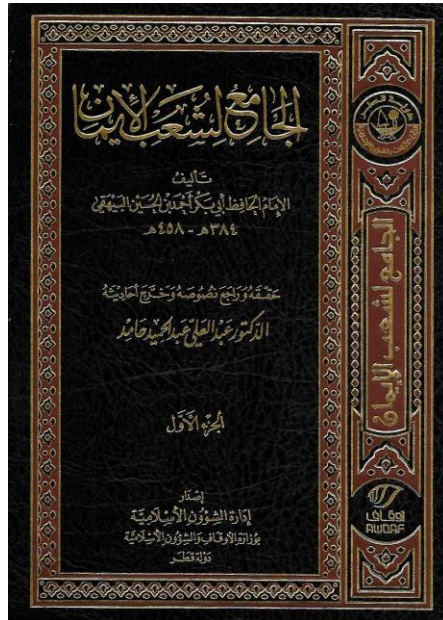
There are 6 pillars of Iman which are faith in Allah, the angels, the prophets, the books, the Day of Reckoning and the Ordain. Of course, there is indeed a need for us to understand or explain in detail what the 6 pillars are. Hence, together with the Hadith of Jibril, ulamas and experts combined this hadith with the hadith on the 70 odd branches of Iman narrated by Abu Hurairah RA.

The hadith is as follows:

*Reported by Abu Hurairah (r.a): Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Iman (faith) has sixty odd or seventy odd branches. The uppermost of all these is the Testimony of Faith: La ilaha illallah' (there is no true god except Allah) while the least of them is the removal of harmful object from the road. And shyness is a branch of Iman." [Appears in Bukhari and Muslim]*

Commenting on the hadith, Shaykh Yasir Qadhi mentioned three aspects of requirements in the hadith as three branches of the 70 odd branches of faith; the requirement of spirituality, morality and social action. Individuals are considered to have fulfilled their obligations as Mu'minin if they made spiritual statements by remembering or invoking the kalimah "Lailaha illallah (there is no Deity worthy to be worshipped but Allah".

The second aspect is modesty or shyness. This is one of the moral or ethical requirements of faith. The third involves physical action in society such as removing sticks or branches from the road. The hadith is found almost everywhere, even in other Imams' compilation such as Abu Daud, an-Nasa'i and Ibn Majjah. According to Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, the common accepted concept is that there are 70 odd branches, although there are some who mentioned that there are 60 odds. 70 odd refers to odd numbers from 73 to 79 and in Imam al-Bayhaqi's book, he took 70-odd as 77. His book is titled "Al-Jaami' li Shu'ab Al-Iman".



*Abū Bakr Aḥmad ibn Ḥusayn Ibn 'Alī ibn Mūsā al-Khosrojerdi al-Bayhaqī, a.k.a. Al-Bayhaqī was a scholar of fiqh of the Shafi'i school of thought, as well as of that of hadith. He studied fiqh under Abū al-Faṭḥ Nāṣir ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Naysaburi as well as Abul Hasan Hankari. He also studied hadith under Hakim al-Nishaburi, Abu Mansur Al-Baghdadi and others, and was al-Nishaburi's foremost pupil. He died in 1066 CE (458H). -Wikipedia*

The primary discussion of this book centers around the principle of Iman, in which Muslims have to take great care of how they use their heart, tongue and limbs. After all, people can easily stray away and use any of their body parts to their desires. We will InsyAllah discuss this book later in our next session. We will cover as many as we are able to on the specific branches of Iman. In this monumental book, besides highlighting on the importance of the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah earlier, Imam al-Bayhaqi who died in 458H referred to over 10,000 hadiths to explain specifically the 77 branches of Iman. May Allah SWT give us strength and bless us with His rahmah so that InsyAllah we can eventually discuss Imam al-Bayhaqi's book, which is now in its modern printing, available in 15 volumes. We pray to Allah for strength and so that we are able to enter Jannah without hisab.

## **Session 2: Iman, The Metaphor of the Tree and Nuur**

Never can we continue our tazkirah discussion without The Almighty's guidance and help. Therefore, we must thank and praise Allah SWT for giving us the strength and guidance. Our plan in this series of tazkirah is to detail the 70 odd branches of Iman, mostly discussed by Imam al-Bayhaqi as mentioned in the previous session. However, before that it is very important for us to understand a few aspects of Iman, especially on how Iman has been metaphorically explained by Rasulullah SAW, as well as how in the Quran, Allah SWT symbolized Nuur as an aspect of Iman. Therefore, in this section, we will specifically reduce our discussion on these two aspects of metaphor or parables of Iman based on the Hadith and Quran which are Iman as the lush green tree, and Iman as "*Nuurun Ala Nuur*" as mentioned in Surah an-Nur, Verse 35.

In singling out a lush green tree as Iman, there is a hadith narrated by Ibn Umar. Among it was a discussion as to what Iman is, to which Rasulullah SAW was said to have mentioned, is lush and green. As the discussion ensued, Rasulullah SAW continued, as lush and green as a date palm tree. Shaykh Yasir Qadhi explained that nearly everything on a date palm tree can be related with Iman. Before we explain about it, let us discuss some other hadiths concerning those of the Mu'minin. The Mu'minin is comparable to that of a fragrant fruit such as the citrus. Not only do they memorize the Quran, they also recite it over and over again. The Muslims on the other hand are like date fruits. They have taste but carry no fragrance. It should be noted that the hadith on date fruits should not negate the hadith of the lush green tree, as the benefits derived from these two hadiths are different. InshaAllah we will discuss this matter below based on Shaykh Yasir Qadhi's explanation.

First, those who are with Iman is always firm and stable, like that of a lush green tree which has roots firmly embedded into the ground and capable of withstanding its towering branches. If we are not firm and are easily shaken by others, it might be because of our roots not being strong. Therefore, it is important for us to fertilize the tree, which in our case to continue reading and learning the Quran and Hadith, as well as being close to the Mu'minin and Mu'minat, Wallahua'lam. Second, the Mu'minin are like the stems of a lush green tree. Not only are they able to bridge the roots to the leaves, but because of their strength, they also protect the leaves and fruits from collapsing. A Mu'min should have such character, for it would enable him to carry himself with dignity and with the virtues of Iman. By looking at him/her, we know that he/she is a person of dignity, and we also know that they are not easily swayed by others. Thirdly, those with Iman are like the leaves of a date palm tree. Not only can it bear lush leaves, but from such tree, it can allow others to rest under it.

According to Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, modern ulamas even mention that through the leaves of the tree, photosynthesis takes place, and from the leaves, oxygen is also produced. Therefore, the Mu'min not only looks fresh and lively from afar, but his/her firmness emanates good towards others. People can receive protection from them and have better lives. Fourth, the Mu'minin, through their life and death, would benefit the ummah. Huge trees can benefit others when it is chopped down. People in Medina for instance use nearly all parts of the date palm trees for building, among others. During the construction of The Mosque of Nabawi, many date palms were used for its construction. In short, when Mu'mins die, through their ibadah and legacy, they would benefit others. Through their knowledge, people receive guidance and through their charisma or aura, people learn from their example. This is the metaphor for the Mu'min.



*The date palm has been mentioned many times in the Quran. Rasulullah SAW was said to have mentioned that our Iman is just like that of a date palm tree. Not only do they look firm, but every part of the tree is useful, be it alive or dead. A Mu'min should have such characters.*

Now we turn our discussion to Surah an-Nur verse 35, which highlights the concept of “Nur” (light) and “Nuurun Ala Nuur” (light upon light). Before we discuss about Surah an-Nur verse 35 as another concept of Iman, let us read together the verses and ponder on its meaning: -

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ ۚ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ ۚ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا



شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ ۚ نُورٌ عَلَىٰ نُورٍ ۗ  
يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۚ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

*Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents examples for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things.*

Let us begin by saying that in these verses, there is also the concept of tree (*Syajarah*). According to Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, this is the concept discussed earlier (the tree of Iman), which in this verse it is mentioned that from this tree, the oil called Zaytuna is produced. It should be noted that those with Iman has a heart full of light. The light not only shines radiantly onto itself, but on others too. This surah has been interpreted in numerous ways by philosophers, Sufists, the al-Mehdi movement, Batiniyyah movement, etc. Some say that if we were to collect all the interpretations, it would be among the hundreds.

Let us follow the traditional interpretation of this verse, detailed by Ibn Abbas RA by highlighting 5 aspects of this verse which InshaAllah we will be able to benefit from. First, there is light coming from Allah SWT and there is also potentially light coming from ourselves. If these lights merge, we will attain the real Iman. This merging point is always called by the Sufi group as Ma'rifah, when all doors of truth are wide open. Wallahua'lam. Secondly, there are three terms which should deserve our attention. They are *Misykat* (a place or niche), *al-Misbah* (lamp) and *az-Zujajah* (the glass covering the lamp). For the purpose of brevity, *Misykat* is our chest, a part of our body which the Qalb is located in, where the *Misbah*, a lamp that can produce light is situated and the lamp is covered with shining glass. This means that if our heart or Qalb is clean and clear, we can produce light that shines onto others as well.

Third, there is a concept of a tree that is neither in the East nor West, which refers to the tree of Iman and from this tree, an oil called Zaytun is produced. The oil itself is used to produce light. This is the light of Iman. Fourth, the merging of two lights, as mentioned in the first point, are the lights which comes from the Misbah and the light from Allah SWT from the phrase "*Allahu nurussamawati wal ardh*". Lastly, Allah SWT will give light to those whom He chooses and of course, to those who search for the light. May we be among those of Iman who search for the light, Amiin.

InshaAllah, from our discussions today about the metaphor of the tree and the parables of Nuur, we understand a little bit more on the concept of Iman or at least how, from the hadith and the Quranic verse, Allah SWT teaches mankind to learn from the metaphors



which, as a man with Iman would bring benefit to their surroundings, both when they are still alive or when they are already dead. What is equally important are those with Iman; Allah's Nuur touches his Nuur. Hence, they will be guided. May we be among them. AAmeen. With that, we end today's discussion. InshaAllah, in our next session we will discuss more aspects of Iman.



*The concept of Nuurun Ala Nuur (Light upon light) had been interpreted in countless ways by different groups. Laymen like us should just follow what the early ulama and sahabas have interpreted. It is the first light from Allah SWT which gives guidance to mankind. The other light is from ourselves which through Allah, our Qalb (Misbah) can produce light, Wallahua'lam.*

### **Session 3: Iman and Its Sweetness**

Thanks, and praise be to Allah SWT, Lord of The Universe, The Mercy Giving and The Merciful. We are entering into the third session of our tazkirah series on the branches of Iman. At this point, at the very minimum, we have understood on the importance of the Hadith of Jibril in describing our Deenul Islam which comprises of three things, the Faith (Iman), the Submission (Islam) and the Ihsan. We have also been exposed to the hadith of the 70 Odd Branches of Iman narrated under the authority of Abu Hurairah which also comprises of three-dimensional aspects of Iman. The statement of "*Lailahailallah*", the ethical and moral modesty and shyness and also the physical actions in society.

Based on our discussion from the books of Imam al-Bayhaqi on the 70 Odd Branches of Iman and we have discussed about how the metaphor of trees and the parables of Misykat, Misbah and Az-Zujajah has helped in explaining the concept of Nuur as a dimension of Iman. Having that as the backdrop, we now try to understand what the ulama mean when they talk about Iman. We would also like to discuss just how sweet is the taste of Iman. We may sometimes be excited for instance to head to the mosque to perform salah. But at times we may feel lazy, and in worst cases at other points we can even be stressed to go to the mosque. This is a small example telling us the different points of our iman; high when we are excited, low or zero when we are stressed to perform ibadah.

Therefore, there is always the case where we taste the sweetness when performing ibadah and at some point feel the bitterness. Let us talk about what the ulama mean when talking about Iman. Of course, any discussion about Iman by early sahabas was a discussion based on the Quran and the Sunnah of Rasulullah SAW. Iman, according to Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, linguistically speaking, comprises of two different meanings. The root word of Iman is from the word "Amina", meaning security. Security capable of granting peace to us. This is the first meaning.

The second meaning deals with the aspect of belief, in which if we are to believe in Allah SWT to a level of certainty for instance, this is the meaning of Iman. Of course, without a practical example we are unable to fully grasp the meaning, let alone internalize it. Let us present here the Six Arqan or Pillars of Islam. They are - to belief in Allah SWT, Angels, The Book, Prophet, World-After and finally The Ordained Good and Evil. We have the knowledge of the existence of Allah SWT. But non-believers also have such knowledge. Only by knowing does not show a person's Iman. After all, we not only know that Allah SWT exists, but Allah SWT is also the one that created us.

Definitely, Iblis knows that there is a revelation in the Quran or The Book and of course he does believe in the World-After. By believing it does not make Iblis a Mu'minin or

Mu'minat. It requires obedience or action. Hence, ulama such as the one in the books of al-Bayhaqi, mention the three pillars of belief. They are - having conviction in our heart, verbalize it with our tongue and perform actions with our body. Iblis not only understands but also admit the true Arqan of Iman. But when Allah SWT told them to prove by performing sajdah to Adam AS, he refused and was called al-Kafirun.

In Surah al-Baqarah and Surah al-A'raf for instance, Allah SWT mention how his refusal to bow down to Adam had led him astray, therefore Kafir. He believes in Allah SWT and The Day of Judgement. Therefore, in his arrogance and anger, he had to ask Allah SWT to give permission to stray mankind by making doa.



*He, The Iblis definitely believes on The Almighty Allah SWT as The sole Creator of The World. He certainly believes that Allah SWT is the Most Powerful. All this does not make him a "believer", for it is not enough for just our tongue to say, but our heart and body still fail to acknowledge Allah SWT as The Creator and The Most Powerful.*

There are many episodes of history worth sharing concerning those who believe but refuse to surrender to Allah SWT, simply because of their fame and glory. The case in point is Abu Talib and Heraclius. Abu Talib not only believed in Allah SWT as The Most Powerful Creator, but because of the fame of being The Bani Abdul Motalib's Chieftain, together with Abu Jahal's persistence, he succumbed to infidelity. Heraclius, as mentioned by Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, also admitted to the fact that Allah SWT is The Most Powerful when he met Abu Sufyan, but his throne to him is more important than The Almighty Throne. Hence, he too remained as an infidel. It is all about the heart. Not only

does the heart have to know, but it also has to believe, and the heart has to have emotional convictions. If we do not feel anything when our Lord and prophet were belittled, we do not have the heart that can emotionally act to defend our faith, and therefore our Iman is still shallow.

Let us turn to the second topic of our session, which is the sweetness of Iman. Before we move any further, let us see what our response to the following questions is: -

1. Do I feel bad if I still fail to take action when the Azan is performed, calling me for prayer?
2. Do I feel anything bad if I do not follow Rasulullah SAW's sunnah?
3. Am I okay, whether I read or do not read The Quran every day?
4. I know that The End of Time will be at any point in time, but do I consider worldly matters more important to me?

Our response to these questions tells us a lot about our level of Iman. There are many people, as they read Quran not only will they feel excited, but also enjoy doing it. This is simply because they have tasted the sweetness of Iman. Shaykh Yasir Qadhi has mentioned three Quran verses and Hadiths which tells us of the characteristics of people who have tasted the sweetness of Iman. Those who give priority to all Arqan of Iman, plus those who prove his beliefs by submitting to Allah SWT through the practice of Arqanul Islam. Salah, fasting, alms-giving, etc.

Lastly, those who treat Rasulullah SAW as their model by following his Sunnah are those people who Allah SWT granted Iman to them, and therefore can taste the sweetness of Iman. It should be clear to us that it is not through our own effort, and it is not through our birthright to have Iman and to taste its sweetness. It is all from Allah SWT and written by Allah SWT for those He choose or want to taste the sweetness. There are many verses in the Quran such as the one that we discussed in Surah Nur verse 35, which Allah SWT mentioned: -

يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ

Allah guides to His light whom He wills.

Which explains that Allah SWT will give Nour to those He wants. Therefore, we should always be thankful to Allah SWT for us to be born in Islam and for us to have Iman. Of course, we have to make efforts, but even effort itself comes from Allah SWT's ordain based on the principles of the ordain of good and evil (the last Arqan of Iman). Shaykh Yasir Qadhi also mentions that those who can taste the sweetness of Iman are among those who only give priority to Allah SWT and Rasul first before the others.

This is to say that although our teachers and parents are important to us, we cannot make them more important than Allah SWT and Rasul. It happened once to Umar al-Khattab, when he mentioned that his love to significant others, especially his parents were more than Rasulullah SAW. Rasulullah SAW mentioned that it is important for Umar to love Rasulullah SAW more than the others in order for him to perfect his Iman. Besides that, those who can taste the sweetness of Iman must give priority to the Ummah and all Muslim brothers and sisters first, then only himself. This means that if he were to still see people living in poverty, while he lives in richness, his heart would still feel uneasy and always think of how to find ways to make others feel better.

Thirdly, those who taste the sweetness of Iman will not want to go back to any types of bad things he/she has committed in his/her life. If they were to make attempts in making sure that a wall is built to prevent themselves from going back, any attempt of building the wall is a sign of Iman from him/her. Therefore he/she can taste the sweetness of Iman. If we are the opposite type of people and we will taste the opposite type of sweetness, that is the bitterness. A simple example is that whenever we do not want, for instance, to go to the mosque, but are forced to do it, we have to do it. But what else do we taste but bitterness. The same applies to when we are forced to read the Quran, perform salah, pay zakat, etc. May Allah SWT grant us to be among the people of Iman, and may Allah SWT grant us to be a good practicing Muslim so that we avoid ourselves from the taste of bitterness, Amin.



*When we hear of the call for prayer (Adhan), do we rush to prepare for salah, or do we just continue doing whatever it is that we do. If our answer is the latter, continue doing whatever we do, we have a problem with our Iman. Our Iman is very low, and possibly zero. May Allah SWT grant us Iman so that not only do we rush to prepare for Salah, but we can already be on the praying mat before the adhan is called.*

With that, we end this section.

### **Session 4: Muslimin, Mu'minin and Muhsinin**

May Allah SWT grant Iman to us, and may we be rewarded with Jannah without Counting (Hisab), Amin. InshaAllah, at this point, we have understood that there is a hadith known as Hadith Jibril explaining the three components of Deenul Islam, i.e. Iman, Islam and Ihsan. And at this point, we still have yet to begin our discussion on the 70 odd branches of Iman as have been discussed by Imam al-Bayhaqi. We are still dealing with a few important concepts as the prelude or precursor to the specific branches of Iman remarked by Imam al-Bayhaqi.

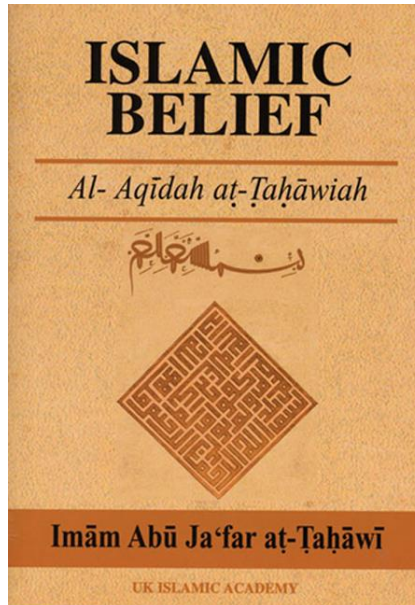
Today, InshaAllah, we would like to first discuss the meaning of Muslimin, Mu'minin and Muhsinin according to the Hadith of Jibril. Secondly, we want to look at how the Quran differentiates Muslimin and Mu'minin. InshaAllah, we will add related concepts in our discussion such as Munafikun, Musyrikun and also Kafirun. We may be familiar about the Six Arqans of Iman and the Five Arqans of Islam because we might have studied it when we were young. However, we might not have known that the detailed principle, or Arqan, was derived from the Hadith of Jibril.

However, we were not exposed when we were kids on the idea of Ihsan, even though the Hadith of Jibril mentions Ihsan as a state of “Anta'budallah ka annaka taraah, fa'llam takun taraah, fa'innahu yaraak.”, to perform our Ibadah to the level that we can see The Almighty. However, if we cannot reach that level, always remember that Allah SWT is seeing us. Ulamas explain differently on how to begin or start explaining the Deenul Islam, whether to talk about Arqanul Islam first followed by Arqanul Iman or vice versa.

Even so, we agree that the concept of Ihsan should be discussed when both concepts of Islam and Iman have been fully explained. Let us now try to discuss both approaches by first discussing about Iman, followed by Islam and later Ihsan, concurrently explaining who are the Muslimin, Mu'minin and Muhsinin. We shall discuss this following the chronological order of Rasulullah SAW's sirah when he was in Mecca and when he migrated to Medina, InshaAllah. The first thing that the Prophet SAW talked of to the Musyrikun was about faith, believing in Allah, the Hereafter, angels, etc. This is to say that Rasulullah SAW began discussing the concept of Iman most of the time during the Meccan Era. This is not surprising.

After all, all of the sahabas were converts and therefore, the first thing which they were supposed to be exposed with was the concept of Iman or belief. In this concept, if we want to draw a scale from the lowest to the highest, the lowest on the scale would be Iman. Whosoever falls below the level of Iman is either a Musyrikun or Kafirun. This scale or chart should be applicable to us because there are many among us who believes on the 6 Arqanul Iman but don't actually practice them.





*Imam Abū Ja'far Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭaḥāwī or simply al-Ṭaḥāwī (الطحاوي) was (843–5 November 933) a Sunni Islamic Scholar who was from the Hanafi madhhab (wikipedia). Theology or Aqīdah is the first message that Rasulullah SAW spread in Mecca. Sunni followers of today were basically followers of either al-Tahawi or combination of Al-Asha'ari and al-Maturidi or Hambali (Hambali is both the mazhab of fiqh and aqīdah in Islam). - Wikipedia*

Commonly, these people are described with the term non-practicing Muslims. Take a look, there is a difference of islam and Islam (with an uppercase “I”). Those of the lowercase “i” would only believe of the Arqanul Iman. However, they are still Muslims. Nonetheless, in order to become a better Muslim, we have to climb up the scale, so to say practicing the 5 Arqanul Islam. Then only can we be better Muslims and Mu'mins. This is very important for us to understand. If we really do believe in Allah SWT, there is no reason for us not to pray or worship to Allah as said in one of the 5 Arqanul Islam.

Generally, those who only believe without practicing will still go through Hisab and to Jannah after they have suffered in Hellfire, if they do not pass the Hisab. Those who climb up the scale and practice would generally have to go through Hisab, and if they pass then they can enter Jannah. If we are already a practicing Muslim, sometimes we may slip and therefore it is definitely a must to repent for our mistakes. The next level is Ihsan, which is when a Mu'min who began from the lower level of the scale successfully climbs to the second ladder and is still trying to go up another level.

Before we discuss the third level of the scale, it is important to say that for those who manage to reach this level, there will be no Hisab for them and they will straight away enter Jannah. This level does not only apply to those like the prophets, the Ashara

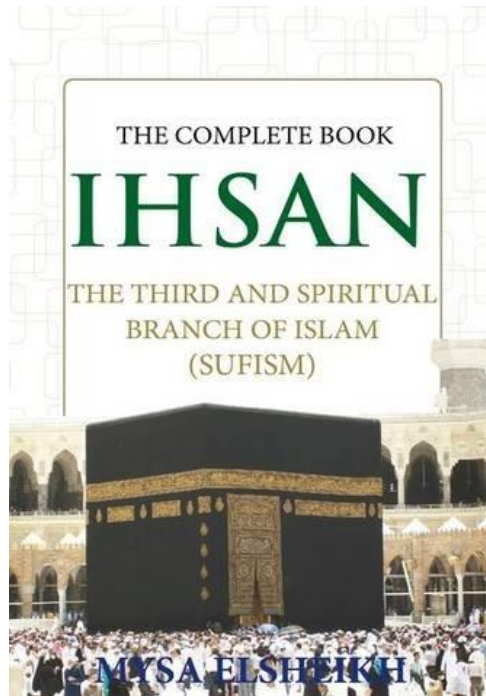


Mubasharas and to a certain extent, the great saints. In this level, not only do they have to internalize the 6 Arqanul Iman and practice the 5 Arqanul Islam, but they also need both the quality and quantity in their internalization and practices.

As far as Iman is concerned, these people will redha with anything that happens to them and as far as Islam is concerned, when they worship, and when they fast, not only is the quality of it great, but the quantity is countless as well. It is not enough for them to just pray 5 times a day, they will also perform all kinds of practices and sunnahs. The quality of their ibadah is magnificent, as they do them sincerely and consciously, knowing that Allah SWT sees them, after much they have tried to reach to the level of being able to see Allah. This is the achievement of the third level, Ihsan. "Anta'budullah ka annaka taraah, fa illam takun taraah, fainnahu yaraak".

So far, we have only discussed the first approach of understanding the three levels, beginning with Iman, Islam then Ihsan. As we have mentioned earlier, we shall now discuss the second approach to understanding this concept, which is starting with Islam, then Iman, then Ihsan. This method is the method which most of us are commonly exposed to. We started worshipping and praying simply because when we were born, we were already Muslims. Therefore, the only sensible thing to be taught was the 5 Arqans of Islam. Generally, there are no differences, as far as the teachings and practices of the 5 Arqans of Islam are concerned, between these two approaches.

Following these approaches, as we move up the ladder, we will be taught of the importance of not only believing, but also understanding Who is Allah SWT Who we worship. Therefore, we learned what is commonly called as-sifat or the attributes of Allah, names of Allah, etc. We were also taught to understand who the prophets are, the angels, the books, the world after and the Qada' and Qadr in the procedure. As we want to move further upwards to reach the level of Ihsan, not only will we be taught that we should look at the quality and quantity of our practices or the 5 Arqanul Islam and the 6 Arqanul Iman, we will also be expected to have a Guru to guide us to the third level. We will be taught on how to practice certain dhikrs or salawats as a way to purify ourselves and to reach the next level. More often than not, we will be asked to follow the path of Tasawwuf and their Tariqat movements such as Syattariyah, Naqsyabandiyah, etc.



*Ihsan is about "Anta'budullah ka annaka taraah, fa'llam takun taraah, fa'innahu yaraak". Whenever we are to perform ibadah, try to bring our level higher so that we can see Allah SWT. If we cannot reach that level, know that Allah SWT sees us. Ulamak such as al-Muhasibi, Abu Talib al-Makki, Junaid al-Baghdadi, al-Syibli, Abu Yazid al-Bustami were among the earlier scholars of Islam in the world of Ihsan or Tasawwuf. May Allah SWT make us among the Muslimin, Mu'minin and up to the level of Muhsinin (The highest level).*

Obviously, as mentioned in the following verses 14 and 15 of surah Al-Hujurat, there is a clear demarcation between Muslimin and Mu'minin. We may be in the category of Muslimin, but there is no guarantee that we are in the category of Mu'minin, let alone Muhsinin.

The following verses might give us some light:

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

*The Bedouins say, "We have believed." Say, "You have not [yet] believed; but say [instead], 'We have submitted,' for faith has not yet entered your hearts. And if you obey Allah and His Messenger, He will not deprive you from your deeds of anything. Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." (Al-Hujurat: 14)*

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ  
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

*The believers are only the ones who have believed in Allah and His Messenger and then doubt not but strive with their properties and their lives in the cause of Allah. It is those who are the truthful. (Al-Hujurat: 15)*

For the record, the word “believes” in the verses refer to Iman while the word “submit” refers to Islam. We have mentioned earlier that the word Musyrikun simply means idolaters, which are those who associate partners with Allah SWT. The following verse will tell us a little bit on the concept of Munafikun before we discuss about the concept of Kafirun.

وَلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا ۗ وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا قَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ ادْفَعُوا ۗ قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ  
قِتَالًا لَاتَّبَعْنَاكُمْ ۗ هُمْ لِلْكَفْرِ يَوْمئِذٍ أَقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ ۗ يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي  
قُلُوبِهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ

*And that He might make evident those who are hypocrites. For it was said to them, "Come, fight in the way of Allah or [at least] defend." They said, "If we had known [there would be] fighting, we would have followed you." They were nearer to disbelief that day than to faith, saying with their mouths what was not in their hearts. And Allah is most Knowing of what they conceal -(Al-Imran: 167)*

The verse clearly mentions that the hypocrites are those who are nearly in disbelief (Kufr), while those who are Kafir are not only those who reject Allah but are also ungrateful to Allah SWT's nikmahs. There are a few things which are still unable to cover in this section such as the rise and fall of Iman and its consequences to our aqidah and some other topics which we will Insha'Allah deal with in our next tazkirah session. With that, we end our session today.

## **Session 5: Allah, The Blessed Names, One Kalimah**

Thanks, and all praises be to Allah, The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful. May we be guided to the Straight Path. AAmiin. After many sessions, InshaAllah, in this section, we will finally begin our discussion on the 70 odd branches of Iman, mentioned by Imam al-Bayhaqi in his book, "al-Jami' li Shu'ab al-Iman". Obviously, any discussions on Iman must start with the knowledge on the one kalimah, the kalimah "Lailaha illallah", there is no God worthy to be worshipped but Allah.

Before engaging ourselves with the heavy concept of "Lailaha illallah", let us try to understand the many names of Allah such as Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim, Al-Hayy, Al-Qayyum, etc. In fact, Imam al-Bayhaqi, in the first volume of his encyclopedia of 15 volumes, spent nearly 100 pages discussing the blessed names of Allah. The concept of God or The Almighty had been discussed by many, including by great philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Aristotle is celebrated as a great philosopher partly due to his book the Metaphysics (a concept that discusses about other worlds or 'Ilm al-Ghayb).

In his book, he discussed about God as the Prime Mover, the Unmoved Mover. What is important for us to appreciate is the fact that Aristotle is said to have mentioned that no one can get access to the Almighty. Therefore, no one knows about Him despite Him existing. The Quran tells us about God, the Almighty Allah by mentioning His names or His attributes such as The All-Seeing, All-Listening, The Merciful, The Mercy Giving, etc. Hence, it is very important for us to know and comprehend the names and attributes of Allah SWT. Herewith, we will highlight what we have discussed in our previous series in brief, concerning the attributes of Allah SWT (Only the mandatory aspects): -

### Mandatory Attributes of Allah

#### 1. Wujud - Ada - Existence

Wujud is categorized under the attribute Nafsiyyah (Self-attribute of Allah), implying his necessary existence. Therefore, the following five attributes of Allah, Salbiyah (Negation) should be understood as completely against the existence of creation. They are: -

#### 2. Qidam - Sedia - Pre-eternal.

#### 3. Baqa - Kekal - Without ending, infiniteness or sempiternal.

#### 4. Mukhalafatuhu Lil Hawadis - Berlainan dengan yang baharu - Bearing no resemblance to the created/ incomparability.

#### 5. Qiyamuhu Binafsih - Berdiri dengan sendiri - Without relying on others.

#### 6. Wahdaniyah - Maha Esa - Oneness, such as without lineage.

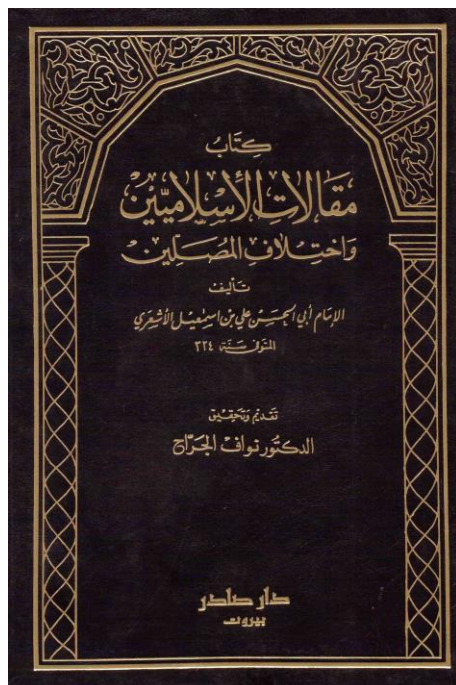
Now we move to the attributes of Ma'ani (The attribute that explains God's meaning of in essence), there are seven of them which are: -

7. Qudrat - Maha Kuasa – Power.
8. Iradat - Maha Berkehendak - Free will.
9. Ilm - Maha Mengetahui – Knowledge.
10. Hayat - Maha Hidup - Ever-living.
11. Sama' - Maha Mendengar - All-hearing.
12. Basar - Maha Melihat - All-seeing.
13. Kalam - Maha Berbicara/Berfirman - The word, all that is taught, is His.

While the above attributes of Allah explain God's power and its omniscience (state of knowing everything), the following seven Ma'nawiyah attributes explains the infiniteness or the eternity of the power and the omniscience of Allah SWT. The seven Ma'nawiyah attributes of Allah SWT are as follows: -

14. Kaunuhu Qadiran - KeadaanNya Yang Maha Berkuasa - He the Most Exalted being Powerful.
15. Kaunuhu Muridan - KeadaanNya Yang Maha Berkehendak - He the Exalted being free chooser.
16. Kaunuhu Aliman - KeadaanNya Yang Maha Mengetahui - He the Most Exalted being all-knowing.
17. Kaunuhu Hayyan - KeadaanNya Yang Maha Hidup - He the Most Exalted being alive.
18. Kaunuhu Sami'an - KeadaanNya Yang Maha Mendengar - He the Most Exalted being All-Hearing.
19. Kaunuhu Basiran - KeadaanNya Yang Maha Melihat - He the Most Exalted being the All-Seeing.
20. Kaunuhu Mutakalliman - KeadaanNya Yang Maha Berbicara/ Berfirman - He the Most Exalted being All-Speaking.

Ulamas say that our Iman increases as our knowledge on the names of Allah increases. In our previous session, we were not able to complete our discussion on how Iman can rise and fall, and by knowing the names of Allah SWT, we can get benefit and InshaAllah our Iman will rise. Our Iman can rise in many ways, not only by increasing our belief (heart level), by performing dhikr and saying good things (tongue level) but also by doing good actions and deeds. It is very significant for us to always be with people of great Iman so that we can keep the same momentum as them.



*Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari's Maqālāt al-islāmīyīn comprises not only an account of the Islamic sects but also an examination of problems in kalām, or scholastic theology, and the Names and Attributes of Allah. The greater part of this works seems to have been completed before his conversion from the Mu'tazilites. The knowledge of the sifat 20 was developed by this Imam and later advanced by al-Maturidi (853-944CE). - Wikipedia*

Back to our discussion on the blessed names of Allah, we are commonly taught that there are 99 of them. According to Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, the 99 names are only the ones that are most accepted by the ulamas and the names for Allah is infinite. There are ulamas that derived more than 200 names of Allah from the Quran, excluding the names found in the other books such as Injil, Taurat and Zabur (Bible, Torah and Psalm respectively). Knowing the blessed names of Allah is important in increasing our Iman. However, we have to look into the aspects related to the names of Allah and implement them in our lives and use them especially when making du'a.

What do we mean by implementing them? Once we know that Allah is All-Hearing (Sama') and All-Seeing (Basar), we should not talk things that are impermissible, and we should not do things that are impermissible as well because Allah can hear what we say and see what we do. Some ulamas go further in making attempts to understand what we mean when we say that Allah is All-Seeing and All-Hearing in the context of philosophical inquiries, such as by investigating how Allah hears and sees. This is beyond the scope of our discussion today.

After knowing and implementing them, it is also vital for us to mention His name when making du'a such as As-Shafi (The Healer) and Al-Qawi (The Supremely Strong) when asking for health. When we ask for offsprings, we should call the name Al-Wahhab (The Bestower) and when we ask for forgiveness, we should use names such as Al-Ghafur (The All-Forgiving). We have been told that it is important for us to make the following du'a, especially during the month of Ramadhan.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ كَرِيمٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي

*(O Allah! You are the one who forgives greatly and loves to forgive. So, forgive me)*

There are many blessed names of Allah SWT in the Du'a. One of the names, al-Afuw essentially means The Wiper, which means that if we sincerely ask for forgiveness from Allah SWT, He will wipe all the sins that we have committed. Therefore, it is important for us to make du'a. Before we engage our discussion with the kalimah "Lailaha illallah", it is important to mention two other pairs of Allah SWT's blessed names, "Ya Zal Jalaliwal Ikram" and "Ya Hayyu Ya Qayyum". Of course, the name "Allah" is the most powerful name, and it appears more than 3000 times in the Quran.

However, the name of "Ya Zal Jalaliwal Ikram" and "Ya Hayyu Ya Qayyum" is said to be the names known as Al-Isma'ul Azzam, the names that whenever pronounced, our du'a will be answered. Hayyu basically means The One That Is Alive, while Qayyum means The One In Which Everything Depends On Him. Always remember to try to understand the names and make du'a using these names. Let us turn our discussion towards "Lailaha illallah", in which under the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah RA, mentioned in the books of Imam al-Bayhaqi, the kalimah is highlighted, together with two dimensions of Iman, which are modesty or shyness, and removing obstacles from the road as a form of obligation.

The kalimah "Lailaha illallah", There is no God but Allah SWT is the phrase which carries obligation, in which all the prophets were tasked with preaching it, informing the ummah on the fact that there is no other God worthy of worshipping other than Allah SWT. Rasulullah SAW mentioned that there are no other blessed phrases except the one that he uttered to make syahadah. Asyhadu alla ilaha ilallah wahdahu la syarikalah, lahulmulku walahulhamdu yuhyi wayumitu wahuwa ala qullisyaiin qadir.

There are many earlier ulamas such as al-Hakim, al-Tabrani and al-Tabari, besides Imam al-Bayhaqi himself, that mentioned the importance of the kalimah "Lailaha illallah". As a matter of fact, it is said that the kalimah itself is the deciding point to which this world was created. It is said that the Prophet Moses (Musa) AS, when given the kalimah "Lailaha illallah", asked for other kalimahs better than it. When we put the Samawat (heaven) and



al-Ardh (the world) on one side of the scale and the kalimah “Lailaha illallah” on the other side, there is nothing in the Seven Heavens and The Ard which is heavier than the kalimah. Our Iman will rise as we make dhikr, either through inner remembrance or open invocation. Given the nature of the only best kalimah to be made Dhikr, whosoever recites it can feel how their Iman would gradually increase. We can then observe our behaviour change as we give more attention to doing good deeds and give less attention towards bad deeds.

In the book “70 Odd Branches of Iman” by Imam al-Bayhaqi, the first branch was this kalimah, “Lailaha illallah”. Rasulullah SAW once said that whosoever utters the kalimah “Lailaha illallah” in his heart, Jannah is guaranteed for him. Of course, if he is to commit sin, he is to be punished, but the kalimah has secured him a ticket to Jannah. Rasulullah SAW once said that whosoever in his last breath utters the kalimah “Lailaha illallah”, he will straight away enter Jannah. May we be one of those granted with Iman, in which all the benefits of the kalimah is given to us and our families, Amin.

Before we end, let us recall our basic knowledge on Iman, which most ulamas divide into three, Uluhiyyah (The Concept of Oneness), Rububiyah (Allah the Sustainer) and Asma' Wa Sifat (Blessed names that we have discussed). The first and second is basically concerning the kalimah we have just discussed and the third relates to the names we have first discussed in the first session of this tazkirah. May Allah SWT bless us again, Amin.



## **Session 6: Faith in the Angels and the Role of Jibril**

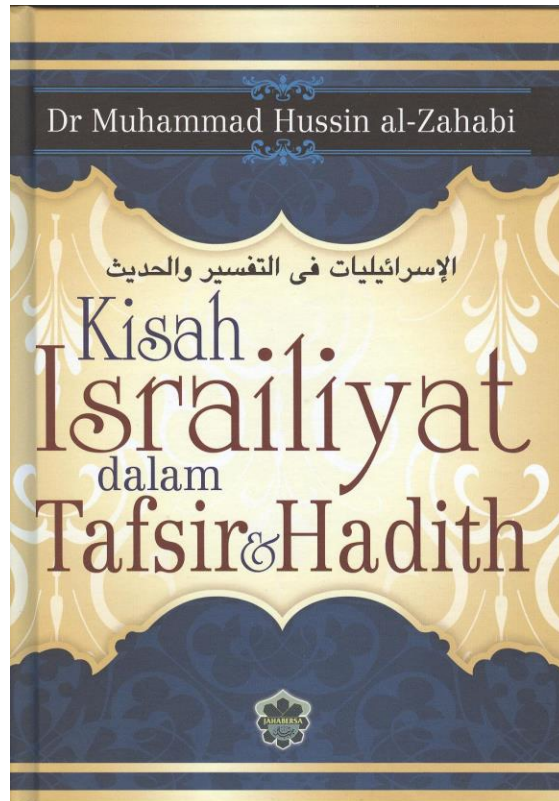
We thank Allah for granting us the strength to continue our tazkirah session, and for this section, we will take a look at the second pillar of Iman, believing in the angels (Malaikah). The first pillar of Iman has been discussed in our previous session (believing in Allah SWT) and InshaAllah, the other 4 pillars (believing the prophets, books, judgement day and Qada' and qadr) will be discussed in our next and upcoming tazkirah sessions.

It appears that the first contact at the idea level between the malaikah and the humankind began when Allah SWT informed the angels that He had a plan to create a human being as the khalifah on Earth. Generally, the angels were curious to know why Allah SWT wanted to create beings on Earth when it is said that previous beings, especially the Jinns, had created problems on Earth. The following verses in surah Al-Baqarah (31 and 32), explain the "dialogue" between Allah and the angels over the creation of mankind.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

*And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?" Allah said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know."*

It should be noted that any detailed discussions concerning the angels must be made with great care, as many of the stories are accepted from the Jewish and Christian sources, sources that we call Isra'iliyyat.



*Isra'iliyyat is a name given to the Jewish lineage. Beginning from Prophet Yaakub AS downwards, the group known as Ismailiyat refers to Prophet Muhammad SAW, simply because Rasulullah SAW was a descendant of Prophet Ibrahim AS and Prophet Ismail AS through many generations.*

Jinns had been sent down to Earth before humans, according to Isra'iliyyat sources. However, ulamas generally concluded that as long as the concept is authentic, there is no harm for Muslims to consider it, but the general principle on Isra'iliyyat sources for Muslims to consider is “Fala tukazzibuhum wala tusaddiqhum” (Neither do we have to agree nor do we have to deny them). Before we go further, let us refresh our knowledge on the angels, especially the ones we learned when we were kids, together with their duties.

1. Gabriel (Jibril)- The Angel of Revelation
2. Michael (Mikail)- The Angel of Mercy
3. Azrael (Izrail)- The Angel of Death
4. Raphael (Israfil)- The Caller of Judgement Day
5. Munkar and Nakir- The Testers of the Dead
6. Kiraman Katibin- Honourable Recorders, (aka Raqibun Atid)
7. Malik- The Governor of Hell
8. Ridwan- The Keeper of Paradise

Throughout human civilization, we have come to believe the fact that there is an outside world which some might call the metaphysical world. This world generally exists interdependently with our physical world, a world based on the five senses. The Metaphysical World is the world that we call Alimul Ghaib and in the Quran, Surah al-Baqarah mentions that believers are to believe in the 'Ilm al-Ghayb. Allazi nayukminunabil ghaibiwayukimunassolat In general, angels and jinn are among those in the 'Ilm al-Ghayb. Occasionally, with Allah SWT's permission and instruction, they may appear in our world. The classic example is during the time of Rasulullah SAW when Gabriel appeared in the form of a human being in the shape of a sahaba called Dihyah al-Kalbi (Wallahua'lam). There is an occasion where angels appear in the form of light, as in the case when a sahaba called Husayb was reciting the Quran. Angels are made out of light (Nuur), the Jinn from fire (Narr), and we humans are created mainly from clay.

How many angels exist? There are just too many. They are known to be obedient since the Early Creation until the Judgment Day. Angels are always on the side of righteous humans. When people give sadaqah, angels will make du'a asking Allah SWT to bless more amounts of sadaqah to those who gave sadaqah. Angels also make du'a for those who take sahur before fasting. Angels also make du'a when we together say Amin coincidentally. One important thing that we should practice when making du'a is to ask for good things (good wealth, health, spirits) to others sincerely (friends, relatives, strangers, etc.) without their knowledge. The angels themselves will make the same du'a onto us because of our sincere du'as. We should be aware that there is a rational movement that preaches the idea of demons and angels only symbolically refers to the good and bad energy in human beings in the Quran. According to this movement, when we think and act positively, we will be attracted to angelic forces and energy. When we think negatively, we are attracted to demonic energy. May we be protected from being influenced with such movements.

Let us discuss about the role of Jibril (Gabriel). His essential role is to reveal wahyu to all the prophets, from Adam AS to Prophet Muhammad SAW. There are many stories about his original form, which according to many narrations, is very huge in size and has colourful wings, Wallahua'lam. It was in the Cave of Hira' that Rasulullah SAW encountered face to face with Jibril and the first wahyu of Surah al-Alaq was revealed. When Rasulullah SAW made the night journey to Sidratul Muntahar (The highest point of the seven skies), it was Jibril who was together with Rasulullah SAW until the point where Rasulullah SAW had to proceed alone. We may have heard of stories about Gabriel in other religions, especially Judaism and Christianity. No Muslims can deny that the wahyu was brought down by Jibril to the earlier prophets, despite knowing the existing problem of authenticity in the current version of the previous books revealed, Wallahua'lam. When there is no other prophet, does it mean that Jibril no longer brings down wahyu and

descend to Earth? Of course, there is no other wahyu, but it does not mean that he is not coming down to Earth. Jibril descends very year, in the night of power (Lailatul Qadr) as mentioned in Surah al-Qadr: -

تَنْزِيلُ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾

*There in come down the angels and the Spirit by Allah's permission, on every errand:*

Ulama' mentioned that the word ruh (spirit) in this verse refers to Jibril and there is a good reason for us to be excited in performing ibadah on the night of power.



*During this night, sometimes called The Night of Decree, all angels including Jibril are sent down. Our decree is then rewritten following the du'a that we make on that night. Therefore, we should be excited in waiting for the chance of worshipping on this special night.*

Obviously, only with Iman can we strongly believe with the stories and facts about the angels. Therefore, it is very important for us to not only learn about the branches of Iman so that it can enter our hearts, but it is also equally important for us to verbalize it and put it into action. For example, having knowledge on the malaikah, including about Jibril's descendance during Lailatul Qadr, we should to share the knowledge over and over, and when the fasting month approaches, we have to be excited in performing the ibadah so as not to miss the night of power, not only because the Angels are coming down at this time, Allah SWT also gives barakah of 1000 months of reward.

Insyallah, from today's discussion we have increased and enriched our knowledge on the second pillar of Iman, believing in the angels and we pray to Allah SWT that He grants us with increasing Iman so for a stronger belief and the ability to practice more ibadah, concurrently getting closer to Allah SWT. With that we end today's discussion.



## **Session 7: Belief in The Prophets and The Sirah of Rasulullah SAW**

May Allah SWT continue to open the floodgates of rahmah upon us and our families, Aamin. In this section InsyaAllah, we will devote our energy towards discussing the third pillar of Iman, which is belief in the prophets. We will pan our discussion towards the following: -

First, rationalizing over the roles of the prophet's vs philosophers.

Second, listing the name of important prophets.

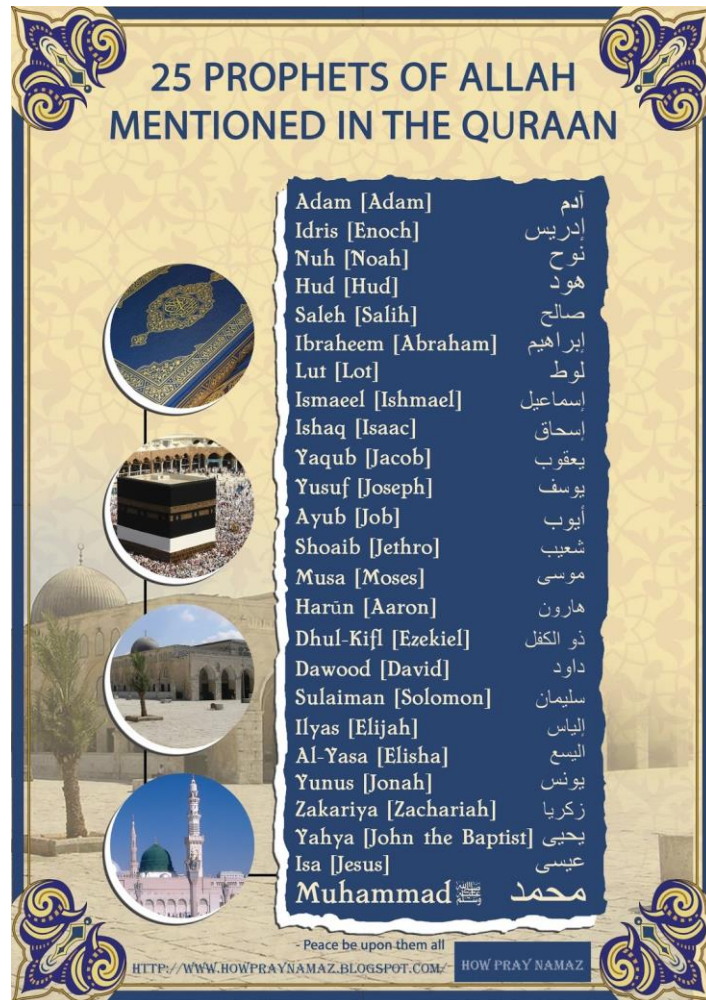
Third, mentioning some important episodes of Rasulullah SAW's time or sirah.

Before we do so, let us ponder on specific hadiths compiled by Ibn Hibban, in which among other things Rasulullah SAW was said to respond to Abu Dharr al-Ghifari's questions concerning the prophets. Abu Dharr once asked the number of prophets in total. The response was quite straightforward, 124,000. There is also a hadith mentioning that there is 300+ rasuls. Perhaps it is important for us to define or deconstruct some important concepts such as Anbiya (prophets) and Rasul (messenger). Anbiya is an individual whom Allah SWT had revealed wahyu from Jibril to him and the wahyu is generally for his own knowledge and the society for ibadah. Whereas the rasul (messenger), apart from being given the same kind of traits, has other responsibilities such as spreading the message to larger societies.

The rasul had a different kind of wahyu revealed to them, because in their wahyu, attached within it is a new ruling or shari'a. For instance, the Prophet Nuh (Noah) AS, Prophet Musa (Moses) AS, Prophet Isa (Jesus) AS and Rasulullah SAW were all responsible for new rulings. Let us rationalize the importance of prophets/messengers over the role of philosophers. Philosophers such as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were known with their efforts in coming up with laws on how to live a good life. They devote their entire lives to think and ponder as to how the humans can come up with a system with better lives. Over a period of time, from civilizations to civilizations, we may have a better understanding and knowledge of how a good system of life should be, varying in different contexts and times the philosophers have lived.

Oftenly, we would find that there is no absolute rule to govern the human society. Generally, there is no right or wrong for such efforts. However, the fact that not only the world, but the philosophers themselves were created by The Superior Being, the only system of good life should be the one that is told and revealed by The Supreme Being Himself. Through the wahyu given to the prophet through Jibril, we get to know what the system of good life is. Now, we turn our discussion to the names of prophets/rasul, the general 25 of them are as follows: -



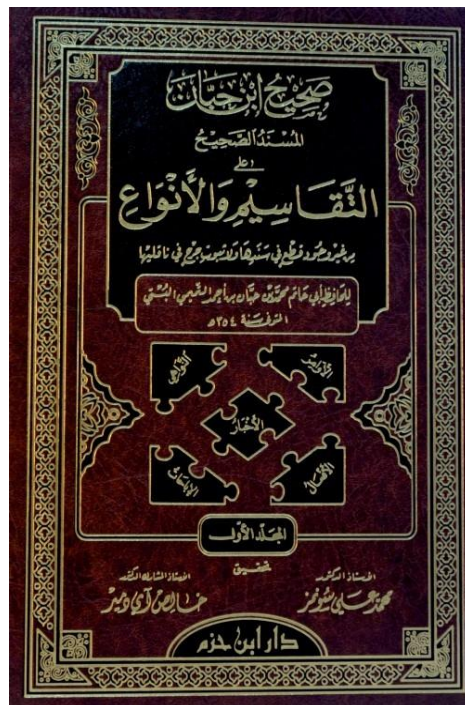


*The prophets are of two categories, Rasul (messenger) and Anbiya (nabi). Once we recite the shahadah and receive the messages of Allah SWT through Rasulallah SAW, we have to spread the message of Islam to the world. Hence, we are the rasul of Rasulallah SAW (messengers of The Messenger).*

Insyallah, in a different tazkirah series, we will discuss each of the prophets/messengers' role. May Allah SWT grant us the strength and knowledge, Amin. Now we turn our discussion to the last prophet, Muhammad Ibn Abdullah SAW, who was responsible in spreading the message, not only for his own society, but to the whole world. After all, he was a prophet of "Rahmatul Alamin" (The blessing of the world). From Shaykh Yasir Qadhi's 105 youtube lectures on the sirah of Rasulallah SAW, we can understand that the Sirah of Rasulallah SAW can be easily understood if we were to separate them into 4 sections. First is his early life up until the big migration at the age of 53. He was known as al-Amin (The Trustworthy), before he received the first revelation, which was at the age of 40. Born in Mecca in 570 CE, his 13 years span of time after the first revelation at the age of 40 were on the subjects of theology, or on Arqanul Iman. Believing in God, Judgment Day, Angels, etc.

The persecutions and torture by the idolaters/musyrikuns then intensified. Rasulallah SAW then migrated to Medina, which marks the beginning of the second episode of Rasulallah SAW's life. The second episode begins from the first Hijrah until 5 Hijrah. In this short span of time, Islam began to gain good momentum, despite three big battles, Badr, Uhud and Khandak. While it was true that many sahabas died during battle, there were still many who had converted to Islam, including those from Mecca. As a result, the idolaters/musyrikuns in Mecca began to see the strength and influence of Islam. Therefore, they later signed an agreement called the Treaty of Hudaibiyah. The signing of this treaty marked the beginning of the third episode of Rasulallah SAW's sirah.

In this period, not only were there skirmishes and battle between two cities, Mecca and Medina, but knowing the increasing strength of Islam, Rasulallah SAW began to eye other lands, such as those in the North and the South. As the Muslim army's strength began to grow in number, Rasulallah SAW made the first attempt in testing the Muslims' strength by deploying the contingent to move towards Mu'tah, the northern region close to the Roman Empire. 8th Hijrah was the fourth and last episode of Rasulallah SAW's life. Beginning with the conquest of Mecca in that year, it signaled that the whole Hijjaz area, Mecca and Medina are solidified by the political and military leadership of Islam, which Rasulallah SAW was not only victorious at being the great prophet, but also the statesman and commander of the army. The whole area of the Arab lands now gave their baiah or oath under Rasulallah SAW, specifically when multitudes of delegations came from many different regions in order to meet Rasulallah SAW in Medina.



*Ṣaḥīḥ Ibn Hibbān (صحيح ابن حبان) is a collection of hadith by the Sunni scholar Ibn Hibban. It has the distinction of being one of the small number of collections intended by the respective authors to contain only authentic hadith. The author of this Sahih is Abu Hatim Muhammad ibn Hibban ibn Ahmad al-Tamimi al-Busti[ar], from Bust in Khorasan. He was a prominent Shafi'i hadith specialist and prolific author who died in 965 CE. - Wikipedia*

This is now the time for Rasulullah SAW to test further boundaries, reaching way up North in an area called Tabuk, penetrating the Roman Empire. This implies that Islam at that time was moving beyond the boundaries of the Arab lands, suggesting the that the next leadership will be aiming for the global spreading of the message of Islam. Rasulullah SAW died in the 11th year of Hijrah. His religion and political legacy remain until today and the end of time. The revelations which were later compiled and known as the Quran remains as a Miracle (Mukjizat). InsyaAllah in our next discussion, we will discuss about the next pillar of Iman, which is Belief in The Book (Kitab), InsyaAllah. With that, we end this session.

## **Session 8: Belief in The Books and The Specialties of the Quran**

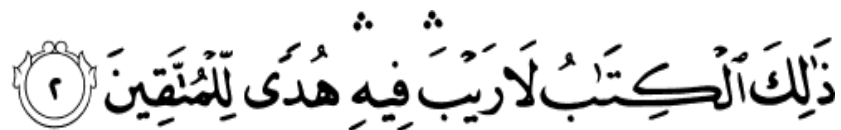
There is no God worthy of worship but Him, and Prophet Muhammad SAW is His final messenger. May we be guided towards the straight path, Amin. We have covered so far, the first three Pillars of Iman. Believing in Allah SWT, angels and the prophets/rasuls. Today, InsyaAllah, we move one step further in dealing with the fourth pillar of Iman, which is The Belief in The Book (Kitab/Suhuf).

To begin with, let us first understand the concept of The Book (kitab) in the Quran, simply because what we understand as a “book” are compiled papers containing sentences or words, which might not be the same as when Allah SWT mention The Book or Kitab in His domain (Luh Mahfuz).

A simple example is the first part of the verses in Surah al-Baqarah: -



*Alif. Lam. Mim.*



*This is the Book; in it is guidance sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah;*

If we start reading the Quran by understanding the Kitab as a book, we can easily confuse ourselves with the question of how the Quran can be a collection of wahyu when the first part of the Quran has already mentioned the phrase book. What has been revealed to the prophet were verses after verses, not books. But this verse in particular mentions that it is a Book that can guide human beings. What does The Book in this context mean?

Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan, when responding to this verse mentions the phrase “*Za likal kitab*” as being different with the phrase “*Haazal kitab*”, because “*Za likal kitab*” means something from afar, meaning that The Book came from someplace far away, to which we know that it is the Luh Mahfuz. Hence, the concept of Kitab that we understand in our mind is different from the Kitab in the Metaphysical world, or ‘Ilm al-Ghayb. May Allah SWT grant us Taufiq and Hidayah. Now we turn our discussion to the great prophets who are also rasuls, in which they were given or revealed with the wahyu and risalah for the ummah.

We are familiar with the concept of the elites among the prophets, The Ulul Azmi. They were Prophet Nuh (Noah) AS, Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) AS, Prophet Musa (Moses) AS, Prophet Isa (Jesus) AS, and Prophet Muhammad SAW. We know that these five prophets, including Prophet Daud (David) AS, were given suhuf, including Prophet Nuh AS and Prophet Ibrahim AS. Therefore, there is a law or specific injunction that they have to use to guide their ummah. Prophet Musa AS was given the Taurat (Torah), Prophet Isa AS the Injil (Bible), Prophet Daud AS the Zabur, and Rasulullah SAW the Quran that we read today until the end of time.

Prophet Musa AS is a prophet with the Taurat in Hebrew. He was sent to the Jewish community who had migrated to Egypt during Prophet Yusuf AS (Joseph)’s time, when the whole family lead by his father Prophet Yaakub (Jacob) AS moved due to drought and famine in today’s Palestine. We may be familiar with the term The Ten Commandments in the Hebrew scriptures. Obviously, no one knows the original content of the Torah, and the Jewish community came up with a new compilation of its teachings in the book of Talmud.



"**Talmud**" translates literally as "instruction" in Hebrew, and the term may refer to either the Gemara alone, or the Mishnah and Gemara together. The **Talmud** is the basis for all codes of Jewish law and is widely quoted in rabbinic literature. -Wikipedia



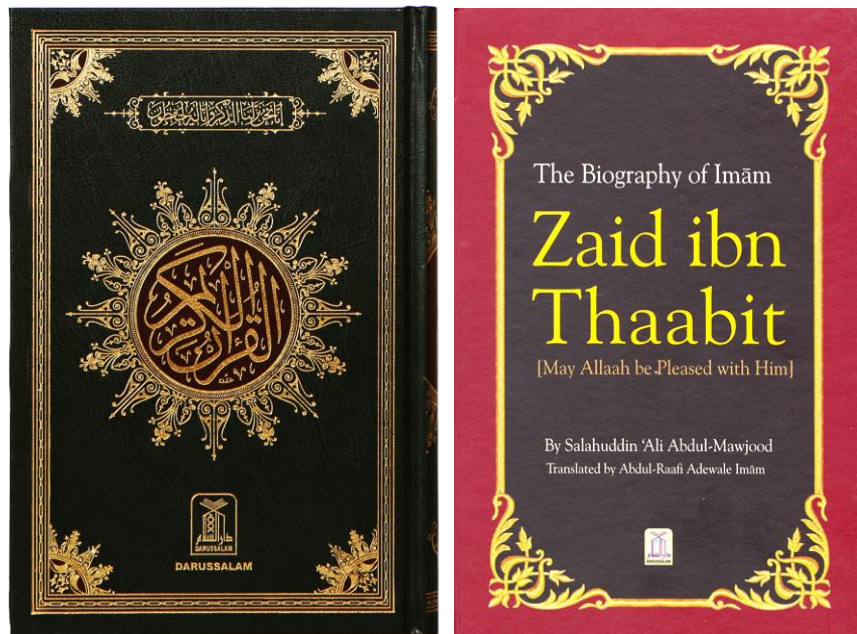
The book of Zabur was given to the Prophet Daud AS which consists of verses praising Allah SWT called Psalms. Some people in Sufi orders, such as the Mehlevi founded by Jalaluddin Rumi, argued that books by their masters carry the same element of Psalms, very much like Zabur as well, Wallahua'lam. Prophet Isa AS with his book, the Injil, written in Aramaic basically contains messages about loving God and love towards humankind. It is also said that most of the teachings is about living a simple life and aim towards the world-after, Wallahua'lam.



*Books and Suhuf were revealed to prophets such as Abraham AS when he was given the suhuf, Moses AS when given the Taurat (Torah), Jesus AS with the Injil (Bible), David AS with the Zabur, and Rasulullah SAW with the Quran that remains today until the end of time. We do not have the original scriptures of the previous Books, and so their authenticity is called into question. Hebrew is the language in the torah, Aramaic in Injil and Syriac is the language most used by the Judeo-Christian group situated in the Northern region of the Arab lands.*

According to Shaykh Khalid, a Shaykh based in America, Prophet Isa AS' message of da'wah only took place in the span of 2 years and 4 months. Therefore, there was not much opportunity for him to preach to the people, and it is assumed that the Injil was not as thick as the Quran. The last Book is the Quran, the one that we know for sure was revealed to our Prophet, Muhammad SAW. Quran comprises of 114 Surahs, and generally has 6236 words altogether.

It is normally seen to be on three parts; on theology (aqidah), narrations of the earlier prophets and on the law or hukum. In one of Imam Ahmad's compilation of hadiths, Rasulullah SAW was said to have mentioned that he was given a privilege, because in the Quran, everything given to the earlier prophets were given to him. There was a hadith under the authority of Imam Ahmad which says that the Quran had been divided into four, the ones revealed to Prophet Musa AS which are among the first 7 long surahs called At-Thiwal, the ones where the contents were given to Nabi Daud (Zabur), Qal Al-Ma'in, the ones where the contents are given to Jesus as, Qal Al-Masani, and finally the ones given specifically to the Prophet SAW. This specific part is called the Mufassal, which, according to Ibn Mas'ud, starts with Surah ar-Rahman. However, from a different angle, especially the one mentioned by Zaid Ibn Thabit, the Mufassal begins with surah number 50, Surah Qaf.



*The great sahaba, Zaid Ibn Thabit's role was so phenomenal. He was tasked to lead the first effort in compiling the Quran during Sayidina Abu Bakr RA's reign, and later was appointed as an important figure during Sayidina Uthman RA's time when the Quran was standardised to follow the tongue of the Quraisy (the tongue of the Rasulullah SAW). The same Quran is read until The End of Time.*

Rasulullah SAW, instead of being given Taurat, Zabur, and Injil, was revealed the At-Thiwal, Al-Ma'in, Al-Masani and Mufassal altogether. We know that the Quran and wahyu revealed during the Meccan period was mostly about Aqidah, whereas the wahyu revealed during the Medinan period was basically about the hukum. Those about the stories or narrations of the earlier periods were revealed in both times, Mecca and Medina. It is very important for us to believe in the content of The Quran, because not



everything in the Six Pillars of Iman cover everything in The Quran. A simple example is that there are a lot of stories about the Jinn in the Quran which we have to believe but is not a part of the Six Arqans of Iman. A clear example is in Surah Ar-Rahman, where Allah SWT mentions that humans are created from clay while the Jinn were created from Narr:

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ ۝١٤

*He created man of clay like the potter's,*

وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِّن نَّارٍ ۝١٥

*And the jinn did He create of smokeless fire.*

In order to demonstrate our belief in the Quran, not only do we need to have the Quran so that we can frequently recite it, but we also have to be able to seek guidance from the Quran. Therefore, it is a strange thing if we can read and understand 20-30 books, but we can't read, practice and try to understand our own book, The Quranul Karim which carries the message of truth and Iman. Perhaps before we conclude, we will share how the Quran was written and compiled, especially during the Medinan period. There are many sahabas who wrote the revelations from Rasulullah SAW, either in parchments, shoulder blades of animals, skins, leaves of palm trees, etc. Whereas there are some others who are capable of memorizing them vividly.

One great sahaba, Zaid Ibn Thabit, as early as more or less the age of 15 years old had begun writing the Quran under Rasulullah SAW's supervision. When many Muslims died, especially during The Battle of Murtadin (War against the apostates) under Abu Bakr, efforts were made to compile the Quran as a single coherent Book. Zaid Ibn Thabit was tasked to lead the compilation of Quran under Abu Bakr RA's time. During Uthman RA's time, a major effort in standardizing the Quran was again conducted based on the expertise of Zaid Ibn Thabit, together with many Muhajirin who followed the tongue of

Rasulullah SAW, the tongue of Quraisy as a way of reciting the Quran. The Quran that we have today is based on the Quran standardized by Khalifah Uthman RA who died in 36 Hijrah. In the later phase, when the technology of paper began to be incorporated in the Arab lands, the Quran was put in paper form, and this form is the Quran that we recite until today. May Allah SWT grant us the strength to not only read but understand the Quran. May Allah SWT grant us the strength so that we can always have tadabbur (process in understanding the Quran). With that, we end this section.

## **Session 9: Belief in Yaumul Qiamah (Judgement Day)**

May Allah SWT forgive all the mistakes that we have committed and the possible mistakes which our parents might have committed too, Aamin. We are now moving on to the next pillar of Iman, belief in Judgement Day. Before we discuss about this important topic, let us provide some of the contemporary atheists' thoughts about this concept. The concept of Judgement Day to those who do not believe in the existence of the Almighty (atheists) is at best confusing and at worst, mythical if not superfluous. Such concept is not new. In fact, the immediate target group of Prophet SAW's mission, the idolaters (musyrikun), had a similar paradigm with atheists of today. For them, there is only one life, which is this life.

Therefore, it is very important for them that mankind maximise their happiness by hook or by crook. This is the only place where we can enjoy what we want to enjoy. Therefore, for them, unleashing or releasing their desires should be without boundaries, not only believing that the idea of Judgement Day is superfluous, but even the idea of God as loving is far from sensible and logical. If God is so loving, why would there be disasters such as earthquakes, famine, epidemics, exploitations, killings and many others. This so-called conundrum should not be so tricky to us because not only is it straightforward, the solution is readily available and is also ready-made.

The fact that Judgement Day exists would imply that everything deposited here will be withdrawn on the Day of Judgement and everything withdrawn here will be deposited on the Day of Judgement. According to Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, there are more than a thousand words that carry the same meaning as Yaumul Qiamah, such as Yaumiddin (The Day of Reckoning), Yaumul Talaqi (The Day of Meeting), Yaumul Hisab (The Day of Counting), etc. The word Yaumul Qiamah (The Day of Standing) according to Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, symbolises that all the people will be scared and confused, discombobulated, panicking and no one would be able to even sit down in such a ruckus. May Allah SWT protect us from being among those people. May Allah SWT put us among those of the right with brightened faces.

Not only is the name of Judgement Day numbered in the thousands, Chapters in the Quran which contain the names of Judgement Day is also in almost all of them, including the Juz Amma. According to Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, we can find in every page of the Quran, a concept of the Yaumul Qiamah. We may have heard Surahs such as Al-Qariah, Al-Zalzalah, and others which have contents of a similar theme as the Yaumul Qiamah and in such surahs, the End of Time or Day is told in imaginable descriptions, Wallahua'lam.

For the purpose of our tazkirah, we will InsyaAllah focus and engage ourselves with surah Al-Kahf verses 47-49 as follows:

وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ بَارِزَةً وَحَشَرْنَاَهُمْ فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ أَحَدًا

*And [warn of] the Day when We will remove the mountains and you will see the earth prominent, and We will gather them and not leave behind from them anyone.*

وَعَرَضُوا عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ صَفًّا لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُونَا كَمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ أَلَّنْ نَجْعَلَ لَكُمْ مَوْعِدًا

*And they will be presented before your Lord in rows, [and He will say], "You have certainly come to Us just as We created you the first time. But you claimed that We would never make for you an appointment."*

وَوُضِعَ الْكِتَابُ فَتَرَى الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُشْفِقِينَ مِمَّا فِيهِ وَيَقُولُونَ يَا وَيْلَتَنَا مَا لِي هَذَا الْكِتَابِ لَا يُغَادِرُ صَغِيرَةً وَلَا كَبِيرَةً إِلَّا أَحْصَاهَا<sup>٥</sup> وَوَجَدُوا مَا عَمِلُوا حَاضِرًا<sup>٦</sup> وَلَا يَظْلِمُ رَبُّكَ أَحَدًا

*And the record [of deeds] will be placed [open], and you will see the criminals fearful of that within it, and they will say, "Oh, woe to us! What is this book that leaves nothing small or great except that it has enumerated it?" And they will find what they did present [before them]. And your Lord does injustice to no one.*

Before we continue, let us mention the benefits of Surah Al-Kahf, especially verses 1-10, in which whosoever recites them, Allah SWT will protect them from the fitnah of Akhiruzzaman (eschatology).

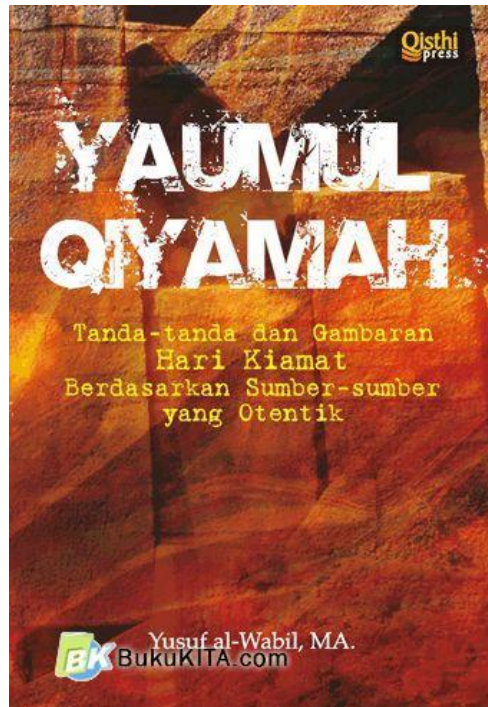


*There is nothing comparable to the disasters on the Day of the End, even when compared with meteorites and the tidal waves or tsunami all put together. However, people are still in a long slumber, thinking that it cannot be this year, nor next year, and so on. Our role as Mu'minin is not to predict the coming of The Day, but rather prepare whatever we should before it comes. Wallahua'lam.*

These fitnahs are of theology, wealth, knowledge and power. Wallahua'lam. Verse 47-49 of Surah Al-Kahf gives us, more or less, a detailed account from the beginning of the Yaumul Qiamah to the point that not even a single deed or misdeed we've committed will be left unaccounted for. Verse 47 tells us of how the world will collapse and be destroyed, and none of us will be left behind unafflicted by the destruction. The idolaters and the atheists might believe that such disasters and catastrophes will occur, but they might just see it as the end of the world without The Day of Reckoning, Wallahua'lam.

For them, no one can tell us what will happen in the future and no one will be left alive to be told of the other world. For us, it is part of our faith to believe that such things not only exist but will happen. Verse 48 tells us clearly as to how we will be resurrected and each one of us will be in queue to face Allah SWT. Although there is no specific mentioning of those who are of the right hand and will be rewarded with Jannah without Counting (Hisab) in these verses, Allah SWT tells us of the general rule so that we can benefit from them in our efforts to make serious preparations so that we can receive the reward of Allah SWT without Hisab. It should be noted that the last part of verse 48 shows that there are cases where people reject the fact that there will be a day where their deeds will be calculated. Shaykh Yasir Qadhi did mention a concept of Yaumul Taghabun, a day of feeling shortchanging in which there will be a few groups who are confused as if an unfair verdict is decided against them.

As mentioned in verse 49, Allah SWT mentions that people will be shocked when they know that there is such a book which details every single deed they had done. Those who committed sins and crimes will feel embarrassed on that particular day. We should imagine that on that day, the filthy things that we did, regardless of when we were alone, together with our friends or families, or when we were with the society, will all be shown and exposed to the public. Not a single crime that we have committed will be left unexposed. That will be the point where we appreciate even the small things we did in this world and also feel bad for the smallest of things we did as well. We have discussed as we share our knowledge on believing in Allah SWT, that one of His names is Al-Afuw (The Wiper). Allah, with His power and mercy can wipe scenes of crimes that we have committed in this world. The du'a we are asked to recite during Ramadhan "*Allahumma Innaka 'Afuwwun, Tuhibbul 'Afwā, Fa'fu 'Anni*" should always be verbalised by us so that Allah SWT may wipe away all the sins we have committed, regardless of the ones we did alone or with other people, so that there will be nothing else to be exposed or shown in the Day of Judgement.



*There are many books discussing on Yaumul Qiyamah, especially on its signs, just like this book. As part of The Arqanul Iman, if we are still slow to act on doing good things and to perform more ibadah, there is something wrong with our Iman and we should perhaps check how strong is our belief on Judgement Day if most of our judgement, especially about investments are still only for this world. May Allah SWT grant us an increase in Iman. AAmiin.*

The question which remains now is “Do we really believe in what has been said in the Quran?” If we really do believe, then it should not only be in our hearts and expressed in our tongue, but it must also be followed with our actions as well. Therefore, not only do we have to start doing good things but start doing them as early as we can. Before we end today’s tazkirah session, let us discuss the concept of “Qantara”. Imam al-Bayhaqi in his monumental book, The 70 Odd Branches of Iman, discussed every step of the occurrence of Judgement Day from the catastrophic event on the Last Day to the Day of Resurrection, the Day of Counting, etc. to the point of the Scaling (Mizan), the Bridge that leads to Jannah (Sirat).

Ulamas discussed on the concept of Qantara (mini hisab), in which, before we can enter the door of Jannah, sins among human beings will be brought up onto the table. Only when everything is settled will we be able to enter the door. Therefore, it is also very important for us not to induce bad feelings towards others and always ask for forgiveness from them. Either we “want to do” or “will do” depends on our level of Iman. The higher it is, the easier it is for us to do it. May Allah SWT raise our Iman and the Iman of our family members as well.

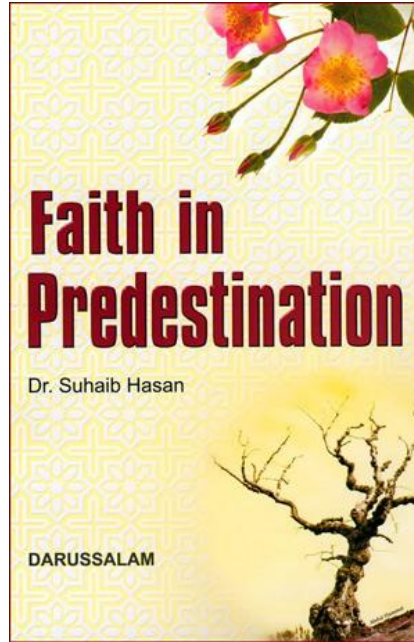


## **Session 10: Belief in Predestination (Qada' and Qadr)**

Thanks to Allah for having guided us with Iman and Islam and may we continue to be guided towards the straight path. Amin. No doubt only with the help of God Almighty would we be able to reach our discussion on the last Pillar of Iman, that is on the concept of Predestination. The word Predestination literally means that everything which happens in this world have been decided. When we say that we must believe in the concept of Predestination, we are implying that we believe in everything that happens in this world follows what had been predetermined by Allah, the Great Planner.

This concept is also called Qada' and Qadr. When everything that occurred (Qada') follows everything that has been pre-planned (Qadr). Such concept expectedly raises lots of questions and confusion - one that stands up is the question on the good reason or incentive of us doing good things or working hard if everything (past, present and future) had already been decided. Such questions are not at all new. This type of question had been asked during Rasulullah SAW's time and it had sparked philosophical debates, even prior to the pre-Socratic era in 2000 BC. Wallahua'lam.

Against such backdrop, in today's tazkirah session, we will InsyaAllah try to engage ourselves with three key issues. First of all, how, with the Quran and Sunnah, the Prophet SAW dealt with such questions? Secondly, does free will exist in the teachings of Islam and what is the benefit of believing with the concept of Predestination? During Rasulullah SAW's time, as discussed by Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, the same logic of question was also raised by Sahabas and the stories had been compiled by the great muhaddithin such as Imam Bukhari. It is said that Rasulullah SAW did not deconstruct the concept of Predestination but rather asked the Sahabas to do what we have to do as Muslims, not to ask what is in the Rabb's Qada' and Qadr. What has been predestined will definitely occur as it has been pre-decided.



*This is a unique short book that is a compilation of two articles that were published elsewhere brought together here to answer the question of Predestination, Qada' Wa Qadr [Decree and Pre-Destination] by Allah SWT. The first article brings to light the verses in the Quran and Hadith of Prophet SWS that place the importance of understanding the Free Will each of us has in comparison to the Decree of Allah. The second article completes/compliments this thought process after laying down some rules. - [dar-us-salam.com](http://dar-us-salam.com)*

The great sahaba, Ibn Abbas once said, "Whoever wants to unlock Allah's secret will end up rejecting Allah". Ibnu Abbas himself was once informed by Rasulullah on the complex meaning of the Predestination concept. Among other things, Rasulullah mentioned to Ibn Abbas, "Even if everyone decides to harm you but it is not in Allah's pre-planning, it will not happen to you and even if everyone want to benefit you, again, if it is not in Allah's pre-plan, you will not obtain benefit from them". The discussion here clearly tells us of how things have been pre-decided, and it reminds us of the small parables shed to us especially when we were still young. A story was told of a devotee and his guru about the concept of Qada' and Qadr. Below is how the story going: -

A devotee or student, confused with the Qada' and Qadr concept, asked his guru, "Does it also mean, if I refuse to take any food from now onwards, the food will still enter my body?" His guru said, "Yes, even if you refuse to eat, when Allah has decided that you eat, you will eat". The student then refused to believe in the concept of Predestination and attempted to prove that the concept was wrong. Soon, he ran into a deep jungle and climbed onto a big tree in his refusal to take any food. The tree that he climbed was treated as a sacred tree by the people in the area. As he reached the top of the tree, the

people nearby brought food such as *pulut kuning* and rendang beef and chicken to deliver them to the spirit believed to be living in the sacred tree. As the men chanted and made wishes, and to their horror, they saw the man on top of the tree and all of them ran away. Soon after, three thieves were passing by the area and one of them was starving. As the starving man saw the food, he ran to snatch the food. The leader of the gang stopped his member, believing that it must be a trap and tried to look for the person who had devised it. They discovered the confused devotee at the top of the tree. Forcing and dragging him down the tree, the leader forced him to swallow the food. In his mission to refuse the food, he stubbornly disagreed but he ended up being violently forced to swallow both the *pulut kuning* and the rendang beef and chicken. He finally realized what his guru said about Qada' and Qadr.

Although this story is just a parable, it carries a powerful message on the concept of Predestination and perhaps we want to share the story to others too if we find it necessary, Wallahua'lam.

Turning to the second question, does Predestination mean that free will does not exist in Islam? In Islam, we were told of three big groups as far as the tug-of-war between Predestination and free will concept is concerned. Those on the left end believe in absolute Predestination, to which we have no choice whatsoever. This group is known as the Jabbariah. Another opposite end believe that we have free choice or free will; we are in command of our own spaceship. This group is known as the Qadriah and some of them include the Mu'tazila. Those who stand in between believing in both, up to a certain degree, is known as Ahli Sunnah wal Jamaah, the one that we ascribe ourselves to. It is absolutely true that everything that happens in this world follows the law of primary cause, but we believe in the process that secondary causes operate them as well. What do we mean by secondary causes and how do they relate with the divide between Predestination and free will?

Let us turn our attention to Surah Al-Qadr in Juz Amma and let us recite the surah together. May Allah give us some light. Aamiin.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.*

إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿١﴾

*We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of Power:*

وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿٢﴾

*And what will explain to thee what the night of power is?*

لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿٣﴾

*The Night of Power is better than a thousand months.*

تَنَزَّلُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿٤﴾

*Therein come down the angels and the Spirit by Allah's permission, on every errand:*

سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطَلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿٥﴾

*Peace! This until the rise of morn!*

Ulamas rely on what Ibn Abbas said, whosoever wants to unlock Allah SWT's secrets will end up rejecting Allah. However, due to some genuine curiosity and concern, attempts have been made to unease the curiosity. Shaykh Yasir Qadhi discussed the five levels of Qada' and Qadr and Surah al-Qadr, which we have recited just a moment ago, might tell us one level of the Qada' and Qadr understanding. In his attempt to do so, Shaykh Yasir Qadhi mentioned that the knowledge that we have on our Qadr was written by Allah SWT when we were still in our mother's womb, and this is basically the third level of Predestination. As we move down, the decisions are skewed towards secondary causes, basically the efforts and choices that we make in this world. While the ones written when we were in our mother's womb were pre-planned in our whole life, we can still make du'a to change it when the opportunity is given once a year (during the Lailatul Qadr or the Night of Power). Angels and Jibril himself will come down during The Night to bring our request and du'a.

As we move down the level towards the fifth level, which are daily activities, it is said that we have free will to choose what is to happen next. For example, we can choose to read or not to read books, to get married or not to get married, etc. Wallahua'lam. In fact, there is a hadith indicating that Allah will increase our life span if we give sadaqah to others. Wallahua'lam As we move up to the next level, the Predestination concept becomes firmer and more stringent. At the second level, our Qada' and Qadr were written by The Pen, by Allah's ordain. All the malaikats follow their duties based on the one written by The Pen. Further up at the first level, only Allah knows what had been pre-decided and what had been pre-decided is the one that will happen. Wallahua'lam. If Allah wants to grant us Iman, he will give us. May Allah grant us with Iman.

Shaykh Yasir Qadhi once said, “We cannot use the Predestination concept to justify what is in the future”. This refers to thoughts such as “If Allah already knows that I’m going to be poor or a dropout, why should I study now?” Instead, we should use this concept of Predestination to console us on what had happened in the past. The following discussion responds to our third question, “What can we benefit from the sixth Arqanul Iman, believe in Qada' and Qadr?” First, it will make us a humble person because we know that our role is to put serious efforts to improve our future. We have no control over the outcome. Once we know the outcome, be it good or bad, it was Allah’s decision. Therefore, we should be happy with Allah’s decision.

The second benefit is to give us a sense of confidence so that we can avoid feeling anxious and sorrowful. It is said that everything is pre-decided (Qadr). Khairi (goodness), Syarri (badness), khalwihi (sweetness), “mararihi” (bitterness or distasteful) are all Allah’s Qadr. Allah knows and we know that Allah SWT is the Most Gracious and Most Merciful. If we believe in Allah Who has pre-decided all of that, we should not feel bad or have anxiety if bad things happen in our lives. Last but not least, we all know that the concept of Predestination does not make us robotic, meaning to say that it makes us follow what has been pre-programmed. The element of free will or secondary causes still operates, which tells us that within our space or limit, we are in charge of our journey and we have the powerful weapon, our du’a, which can change the Qadr of Allah within our space and limit. Hence, we can choose to work hard if we want to be a successful person. We can choose to find our future wife or husband if we really think that we want to get married. May Allah SWT grant us the strength to make efforts and to make a choice for the betterment of our lives, both in this world and the world after.

With that we end this section with the following phrase said to be mentioned by Sayyidina Ali RA.

*Raise one of your legs, whichever you choose. Now, raise the other leg. Obviously, you cannot raise both of your two legs at the same time. This is the law of the primary causes, pre-decided by Allah. The secondary causes operate because we can choose which leg to be raised first, right or left. Once you choose the right leg, the law of primary causes said we can no longer raise the left one.*



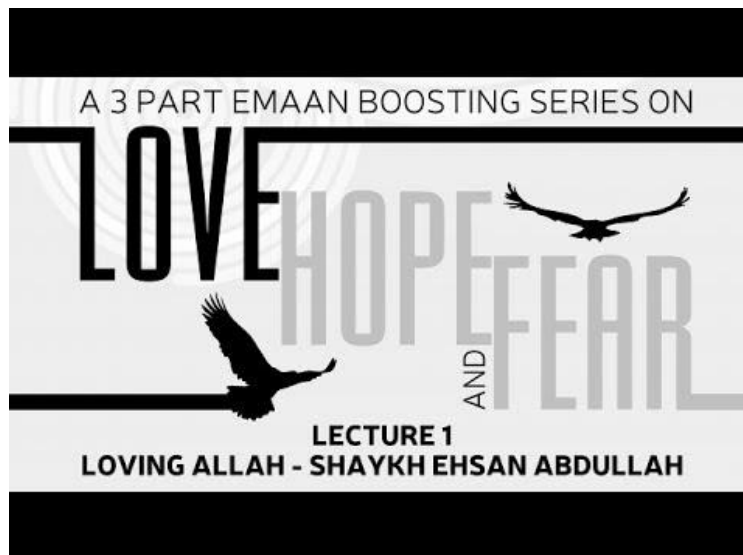
*The law of primary and secondary causes might operate as follows; We can choose whichever leg to raise (left or right) because according to the law of secondary causes, humans do have the free will to make choices. Once we decide to raise the right leg, the primary law states that we are bound to the primary causes of law, in which we cannot raise our left leg afterwards until we put our leg back down. This is part of the divide between Predestination and free will.*



## **Session 11: Love, Fear and Hope**

Thanks to Allah SWT for granting us so many things from the blessings of Iman and Islam to the blessings of many material things. May we be guided to the straight path. Amiin. Only through His rahmah we managed to reach this point and only through His rahmah as well we can continue our tazkirah session. In our previous 6 sessions, we managed to discuss the 6 Arqans of Iman, from Faith in Allah, Angels, Prophets, Books, Judgement Day and Predestination (Qada' and Qadr). As we are aware, not only these 6 were the 6 which we studied when we were kids, these 6 were the ones that were derived from Hadith Jibril mentioned in our first session.

In this section, InsyaAllah, with Allah's blessings, we will discuss how Iman can be increased. There are hundreds of ways or steps in which Iman can be uplifted, but we will only engage our discussion with the 3 interconnected concepts of Iman which are Love (Hubb), Fear (Houf and Hosyiah) and Hope (Raja'). We have mentioned in one of our previous sessions that the Halwa (sweetness) of Iman can only be tasted by those who love Allah and his Rasul first before others. This is to say that our love to our parents should be next after we give our priority to Allah and the Prophet SAW. We have also discussed on those who love their ummah more than they love themselves and those who hate to go back to past mistakes and also those who can taste the Halwa of Iman. We are going to discuss our session today in 3 parts; Love to Allah, Fear to Allah and Hopeful to Allah.



*The aspects of Iman (Love, Fear and Hope in Allah) is an important topic which deserves many lectures. They are motivational factors or psychological factors for us to worship or perform ibadah to Allah. May Allah grant us increasing Iman through the 3 aspects of Iman. AAmiin.*

Shaykh Yasir Qadhi mentioned that at the very minimum, there 5 things that we should do to demonstrate our love to Allah in order to increase our Iman. What else which is directly connected to Allah SWT if not the Al-Quran itself. Therefore, the first step to increase our Iman has something to do with the Al-Quran. To demonstrate our love to Allah, we should always do the 3 T's; Tilawah (recitation), Tadarus and Tadabbur. If we really love Allah, we should certainly be interested to know the meaning of the Quran. Let's say that we received a letter from someone we love, it would be unimaginable for us to not try to understand the meaning of the letter if it is in a different language. By doing tadabbur, InshaAllah, our Iman can be increased.

Secondly, we can also do Dhikrullah which is remembrance. A great saint of the past, Abu Yazid al-Bustami once said that those who love Allah will continue using his or her body to worship Allah. If their body gets tired, they would use their tongue instead to make dhikr and if their tongue gets tired as well, they would do it with their heart. Thirdly, Shaykh Yasir Qadhi also mentioned on the importance for us to do what is obligatory, followed by voluntary practices. Fourthly, we should always take the opportunity to be together with people who are close to Allah, the righteous people. Choosing friends is just as important as choosing a way to increase our Iman. Avoid from those who have demonic energy in them because there are verses that mention a type of Syaitan from not only Jinns but also mankind, such as in Surah An-Nas. Lastly, we can increase our love to Allah and increase our Iman as well by knowing and implementing the beautiful names of Allah (Asma' al-Husna). What we mean by implementing here is, if we know that Allah is Ar-Rahman for instance, we too have to try and be gracious as well, not only to humankind, but also to other creations as well.

What's equally important is to call Allah's name such as Al-Wahhab and Al-Ghafur when we make du'a. Al-Wahhab can be used when asking for offsprings and Al-Ghafur can be used when asking for forgiveness. Let us now turn our discussion towards the concept of fearing Allah and hoping to Allah and how these two concepts connect with the concept of love to Allah mentioned just now. Ulama usually refer to the 3 verses of Surah Al-Fatihah after Bismillah as a good way to understand the 3 concepts of Iman. Let us recite Surah Al-Fatihah, as follows:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of Allah, the Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful.*

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

*[All] praise is [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds -*

الرَّحْمَنُ الرَّحِيمُ

*The Entirely Merciful, the Especially Merciful,*

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

*Sovereign of the Day of Recompense.*

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

*It is You we worship and You we ask for help.*

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

*Guide us to the straight path -*

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

*The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor, not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray.*

The first verse (after bismillah) is the place for us to understand Allah's love, and because of His love, He sustains and administers this universe just like His name "Rabb". The concept of hoping for Allah's mercy is very clear as we approach the second verse, Ar-Rahman Ar-Rahim while in the third verse, Allah mentions about Him being the King of the Judgement Day or the Day of Reckoning, implying the concept of fearing in Him. We can continue employing the concept of fear and hope in Allah in the subsequent verses as well. In hope that we will be guided to the straight path, we also fear of not being one of them (referring to verse 4). We should have both fear and hope as we have been shown the right of those who Allah had shown the path to but not those that Allah's anger is upon.



*According to an ulama of the past, Ibn Qayyim (691-751 AH), the concept of love is just like the heart of a bird, and fear and hope are the two wings which propels the bird forward. In order for us to get closer to Allah, we should always have the heart that remembers nothing but Allah SWT and to be afraid and hope only in Allah. Everything that Allah creates are good lessons to learn from, even from a bird.*

Sayyidatina Aisha RA asked Rasulullah SAW about the type of people who fear Allah SWT, whether they are the type who drink, fornicate, etc. To her surprise, Rasulullah SAW said that those who fear Allah are actually those who pray, fast and give sadaqah. This means that those who fear Allah are among those whose Iman are uplifted by Him. Shaykh Yasir Qadhi said that it is a mistake if kids were first taught about fear of Allah or fear of the punishment from Allah. It is very important that we inculcate the value of love in Allah rather than to threaten our children. Wallahua'lam.

There are more than 30 verses in the Quran mentioning the paired concepts of Iman, fear and hope, according to Shaykh Yasir Qadhi. Ulamas also discussed whether there are any specific stages in our life where we should be focused on fear more than hope or vice versa. As a general rule, after we learned about love in Allah, we should start learning about fear and followed by hope. When we pray, especially night prayers (tahajjud), it is important for us to be hopeful for Allah's mercy and blessings. However, some ulamas mentioned that when we perhaps commit sins, that is the time where we should focus on fearing Allah SWT and whenever we want to concentrate on worshipping, then it is better for us to focus on hope. Wallahua'lam.

Before we end today's tazkirah session, let us take a look at the following hadith:

It is said that Rasulullah SAW mentioned that when Mu'minins fear Allah SWT's punishments, they will think that they will be punished in the Hellfire. Disbelievers, when they think of Allah's mercy, they will think (optimistically) that they will enter Jannah. The message is we should fear the most, more than any other Mu'minins and when we hope, we should hope for even better than the disbelievers.

With that, we end this section.

## **Session 12: The 10 out of 77 Imam al-Bayhaqi's Branches of Iman (Part 1)**

May we be guided to the straight path and may we be blessed by His rahmah. Aamiin. It is worth mentioning at this point that majority of the content of our tazkirah sessions are based on Imam al-Bayhaqi's book on The 70 Odd Branches of Iman, mentioned in the first session. 70 odds, according to the colloquial Arabic would mean 73, 75, 77 and 79 in which Imam al-Bayhaqi, in his book of 15 volumes (current form) understood 70 odds as 77. In the interest of time and space, it would be difficult for us to cover all 77 Branches of Iman as detailed by him. Even Shaykh Yasir Qadhi himself only managed to cover approximately 50 of them.

Hence, in this section, we will be a bit selective by choosing 10 Branches of Iman from Imam al-Bayhaqi's explanation, following Shaykh Yasir Qadhi's lecture. Before we discuss about them, let us recall what we have covered so far. Generally, we have discussed some basic concepts of Iman from Session 1 to Session 4, followed by each of the Six Pillars of Iman accordingly and ending with discussions on love, fear and hope in Allah SWT's mercy in our previous session. Let us start with the 10 selected branches of iman and the first of the selected ones is the importance of guarding our tongue and sexual organ. It is said that in Western countries, moral decay had unimaginably worsened in which promiscuity of sexual intercourse is nearly uncontrollable. InshaAllah, in Muslim countries, we are generally having lesser problems concerning sexual promiscuity. However, we are facing the problems of backbiting, vulgarity, etc.



*The mouth and the tongue can be used to say or verbalize both good things or harmful things. When we use it to utter bad things, backbite and say vulgar words, we use it in a bad way which only leads us to the punishment of hellfire. We can choose to use it in a good way. Why don't we use it in this way? May Allah grant us Iman to use our tongue in the most righteous of ways. Aamiin.*

There is a hadith that warns us on the importance of taking care of the one in between the cheeks and the one in between the legs. Wallahua'lam. The second chosen branch is on the importance of being trustworthy (amanah). Rasulullah SAW was said to have mentioned that there are three criterias of hypocrites; when they speak, they lie, when they make promises they break and when they are entrusted, they betray. We are responsible to be trustworthy not only among human beings but also to Allah SWT when we are entrusted to do good things and to worship Him. Third is concerning our food and drinks. We are not only asked to care about the permissibility of the food and drinks but also their cleanliness (tayyiban). We have heard ulamas such as Imam as-Syafie and others who came from parents who really care about the permissibility of the food their family consume. It is said that in one family, even the animals/poulties they feed, they would not allow the animals to eat food from their neighbors area, while another family of ulama covered their herd's mouth to make sure as they bring back the animals to their respective area, they wouldn't eat the grass from other people's land. Wallahua'lam. We have indulged ourselves with so many subahah (unclear status) foods and perhaps this is the reason why we find it very hard to memorize al-Quran. May Allah forgive us.

Number four is about our appearance, not only inward appearance but equally important, our outward appearance. This is basically about the way we dress up. It is not only about aurat or modesty but also about dignity. It is encouraged in Islam for us to wear the best clothing so that we Muslims can be looked at with integrity. There was a story of one sahaba asking Rasulullah SAW about people who wear "elegant" dresses. Among other things, the Prophet's response was: "It is allowed to wear the best (elegant) attire but the impermissible ones are those that cause arrogance and are flashy. In short, our outward appearance also demonstrates our morality, therefore, demonstrating our Iman. Number five, Iman is also about sticking in a jemaah or group. We have always heard of the phrase, "A wolf will attack a lone sheep". The question raised is, "Which group do we have to be sticking in?" Shaykh Yasir Qadhi advises us to stick in group which the followers are the majority. It is important for us to stick with righteous people. Therefore, we are recommended to make sure that there are righteous people or at least a righteous person in the group, so that we are able to get benefits from their presence. We have to be careful with sticking with groups which carry demonic energy because not only jin, but even humans can be a type of syaitan as mentioned in the last verse of Surah An-Nas. Wallahua'lam.

Number six in the selection of branches is concerning silaturrahim, our relation with our family, relatives and friends. It is said that those who cut their silaturrahim with someone else for more than three days is considered committing a huge sin and therefore they should be condemned. Wallahua'lam. In colloquial Arabic, the word "rahim" also means family. Shaykh Yasir Qadhi explained the name of Allah, Ar-Rahman, Ar-Rahim, how Allah Ar-Rahman creates rahim (family) and whosoever do bad things to their family will



not gain any blessing from Allah. Wallahua'lam. We should notice the way we communicate with others as opposed to our family members, how a husband or a wife speaks to their colleagues as opposed to their spouse, vise-versa. Next, number seven is about giving greetings, "Assalamualaikum." "As-Salam" is not just one of the beautiful names of Allah. All Muslims are in the same boat, the boat of as-Salam. The phrase as-Salam is not used in this world, but the similar phrase is also used in the seven sky (heaven). Those who have iman will find it easy to say salam to others. Can we say salam to non-Muslims? As we have already mentioned here, the word as-Salam is one of the beautiful names of Allah, therefore we should be serious when it comes to it. How about a non-Muslim sending salam to us? Shaykh Yasir Qadhi said, we don't have to answer their salam but we are advocated to make du'a for them. We ask Allah to grant hidayat to them. Aamiin.

Number eight on our list of branches of Iman is caring for our spouse (husband/wife) and children. A good husband or wife must care for each other if they are a person of Iman. Fathers and mothers should care about their children as well. To take care and to be caring is very important in a family and Rasulullah SAW once said, "Whoever takes care of their family is a good person (Iman) and I am the best person who takes care of my family". To take care should not be understood only with emotional and material things but more importantly, to care for each other so that none of us will be left behind and not be blessed by Allah and instead be punished with Hellfire. The word "don't be a busybody" should not necessarily be applicable in the Muslim community. We should be busy knowing other people's issues and problems because taking care of them is one of the branches of the seventy odd Iman, as also mentioned by Imam Al-Bayhaqi. The next branch, number nine, is about being particular for the rights of servants or people who work for us.



ToonClips.com #6861 service@toonclips.com

*We are not at all in good Iman if we do not respect the rights of slaves, servants or the people who work under us. Not only do we have to pay their wages accordingly, we have to make sure they receive it before their sweat dries up (as soon as they are done with*

*the work). The general rule is to give our servants the same quality of shirt we wear and same quality of food we eat. Wallahua'lam.*

Not only we should respect them as another Muslim equally, but we should also fulfill their rights. There is a hadith that mentions the wage for those who work under us should be given before their sweat dries up. If we have a servant or a domestic helper, there are ethics that should be followed. The general rule is to let her wear the same clothing we wear and eat the same food we eat. Anas ibn Malik used to work under Rasulullah SAW for 10 years. He said that never in his life did Rasulullah do or say harsh things to him. Abu Dardar was known to have had a slave who wore the same quality of garments which he wore. Slavery in Islam should not be understood as slavery in the non-Muslim world. There are hadiths which say, "The slave gains his/her independence automatically when he/she is beaten by his/her master".

Lastly, number ten, is having a good manner or akhlak. Akhlak should always be analogized with the way we dress. Those who have no akhlak are the same as those who have no clothing whatsoever on his/her body. Good manners are about all aspects of our image; the way we talk and the way we walk, as well as the way we dress up. Akhlak is a reflection of our heart. If we have a good heart, we should know how to be of good manners, good in the way we walk, as well as talk. Rasulullah even said that "Your religion (ad-Din) is about the way you relate with others. If we have no akhlak and have bad manners, it tells how bad our ad-Din is. May Allah protect us from such behaviour (bad akhlak and bad manners).

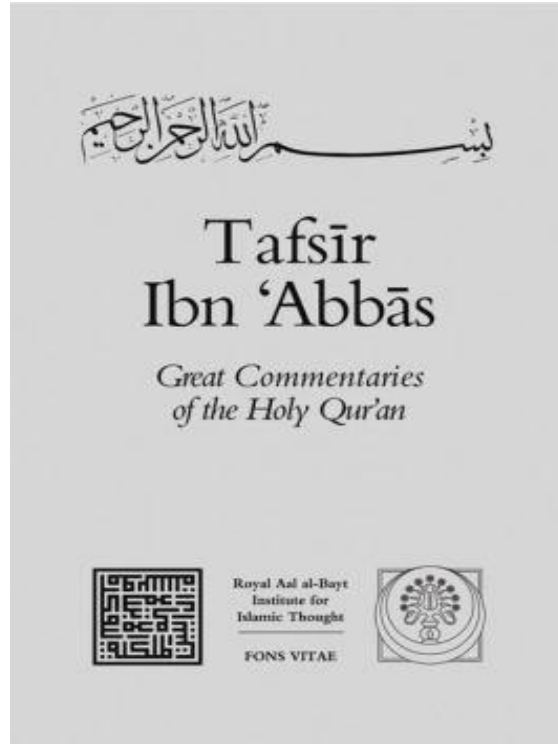
Insyallah, we have learned something from today's discussion and of course, there are more than what we have said, discussed in Imam al-Bayhaqi's book. As a man of Iman, it is not only important for us to know, but equivalently important, we have to also share it with others. May Allah grant us Iman and strength to share it with others. Aamiin. With that, we end our session for today.

### **Session 13: The 10 out of 77 Imam al-Bayhaqi's Branches of Iman (Part 2)**

Thanks, and praises be to Allah, The Lord of the Universe, The Most Merciful, The King of the Day of Reckoning. InshaAllah, in today's tazkirah session, we will engage ourselves with another 10 branches of Iman, discussed by Imam Al-Bayhaqi in his book "70 Odd Branches of Iman (*al-Jami' li Shu'ab al-Iman*)", a thousand pages of work now produced in 15 volumes. We ended our previous session discussing on akhlak or good manners as one of the branches of Iman and we learned that our ad-Din is about the way we relate ourselves with others. If we badly treat others, it is a clear sign that not only do we have bad manners, we might also belong to those who are bad in terms of religion. May Allah SWT protect us from such a filthy character. Aamiin.

We will combine a few branches of Iman in this section so we can relate one group of branches with another and save time. Let us take one, loving Rasulallah, and two, respecting him, and put them together. These 2 branches of Iman might look similar in the sense of place value, but there are many people that we love who doesn't require us to respect them, such as a newborn baby. There are also many people that we respect but do not love, such as the great leaders. However, our Iman will be in question if we choose one over the other in the case of the Prophet SAW. We have to both love and respect him together. After all, we cannot benefit from Islam without him. Being the noble exemplar, through our love and respect to him, we know how to perform solat, to pay zakat and to do haj, as well as to fast. We should love and respect him because our aqidah in actuality follows his aqidah.

Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, when discussing these 2 branches, explained how movements such as the Quraniyyun or Jamaah Al-Quran can still operate as Islamic movements even when they only absolutely using Quran as their guidance. Not only can the Quran not be easily understood correctly until and unless we understand Rasulallah SAW's sirah, but the Quran itself, according Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, contains 70 verses that mention how important Rasulallah SAW is. During Rasulallah's time, there was one sahaba who was asked by the Prophet about his preparation for the Sign of the Hour. He admitted that he prepared less but he confessed his love to Rasulallah SAW. Rasulallah then replied, InshaAllah, you will be with the one that you love in the Akhirah. Therefore, it is very important for us to follow the one that we love and respect everything he had said and done. We should also love his family and sahabas who dearly loved and respected him as well.



*A collection of the long-unavailable tafsir, or commentaries on the Qur'an, which help to properly explain and contextualize the revelation, originally written by Abdullah Ibn 'Abbas and Ibn Ya'qub al-Firuzabadi. The work avoids elaborate theological, philosophical, and grammatical explanations, making it easily accessible to non-specialists. Ibn Abbas has not only been known as a knowledgeable person, but also as a great teacher or Da'i who shares and imparts knowledge as part of his mission.*

Let us move to another 2 branches of Iman which are to be discussed together as well. #3, to learn and #4 to share knowledge. Before we deal with those, let us discuss the hadith below:

*Narrated Abdullah ibn Amr ibn Al-'As: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Knowledge has three categories; anything else is extra; a precise verse, or an established sunnah (practice), or a firm obligatory duty.*

Sunan of Abu-Dawood – Book 18 Hadith 2879

The hadith clearly teaches us on the importance of religious knowledge, without negating the importance of other knowledges. Shaykh Yasir Qadhi once said that if you are a biologist and you approach the field with Iman, you are also increasing your relationship with Allah SWT, hence improving your Iman. Whatever form of knowledge that we attempt to learn would be meaningless were we to not approach it with Iman. The next hadith is even more interesting, it is as follows: -

*Narrated Abu Musa: The Prophet (peace be upon him) said; “The example of guidance and knowledge with which Allah has sent me is like abundant rain falling on the earth, some of which was fertile soil that absorbed rain water and brought forth vegetation and grass in abundance. (And) another portion of it was hard and held the rainwater and Allah benefited the people with it and they utilized it for drinking, making their animals drink from it and for irrigation of the land for cultivation. (And) a portion of it was barren which could neither hold the water nor bring forth vegetation (then that land gave no benefits). The first is the example of the person who comprehends Allah’s religion and gets benefit (from the knowledge) which Allah has revealed through me (the Prophet) and learns and then teaches others. The last example is that of a person who does not care for it and does not take Allah’s guidance revealed through me (He is like that barren land.)”*

Sahih Al-Bukhari – Book 3 Hadith 79

We might have heard of hadiths mentioning how great the knowledge of a person is compared to that of a worshipper, their knowledge is like the moonlight eclipsing a star. A knowledgeable person is said to be able to divert the courses of history. A common aphorism for knowledge that is often heard is, “The pen is mightier than the sword”. On the importance of teaching and sharing knowledge, we are perhaps already familiar with the hadith that goes, “convey from me, even if it is one verse”. There is an unhealthy trend in the Islamic community where religion is separated from other affairs. This makes some people think that only religious people should talk about religion while others should talk about other affairs. We know that religion is everything in Islam. Therefore, anyone and everyone must speak of religion, while obviously limiting themselves to their level of knowledge.

The fifth of the Branches of Iman is about acknowledging the importance of the Quran. Our Iman will be increased not only if we read or recite the Quran, but also if we have the curiosity to know its contents through tadabbur. By memorizing the Quran, it opens a bigger chance to increase our Iman significantly. May Allah SWT grant us with such Iman, Aamiin. The sixth, according to Imam al-Bayhaqi’s order of the branches, is about the components in the Pillars of Islam. We have discussed previously about the belief in Allah SWT and Rasulullah SAW. Therefore, we do not have to discuss about that here. Four of the branches of Iman starting from #6 are based on the pillars of Islam and they are performing solat, fasting, paying zakat and doing hajj. InshaAllah, we will spend more time to discuss about solat. After all, it is through salat that other ibadah are influenced.



*Salat and Iman are 2 terms which carry intertwining meaning. When the Qibla was changed from Masjid al-Aqsa to Masjid al-Haram, some sahabas were worried of the reward of the salats they performed prior to the change. Allah SWT guaranteed them that their Iman/salat will not be wasted.*

To begin with, let us discuss how salat and Iman at certain points in the Quran are treated as a parallel. When the Qibla was changed from Masjid al-Aqsa in Baitul Maqdis to Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, some sahabas wondered on their previous action of salat. They thought all of them were meaningless. Responding to the issue, among other things, there is a verse that says your Iman (salat) will not at all be gone. We have been told at a young age that whosoever perform their salat in order, they are given easy access to Jannah because all the other ibadats such as fasting, almsgiving will follow suit based on our quality of salat and the acceptance of Allah SWT. Salat will also protect us and prevent us from indulging ourselves in Mungkar. Therefore, it is one of the important branches of Iman.

Let us now discuss a bit on Hajj. All of us must have the niat or desire to perform it, regardless of our preparation status (monetarily and physically). The Majority of the madhabs mention that it is obligatory or Wajib for us to perform hajj when all the preparations are achieved, and the prerequisites are met. May Allah SWT give us the strength so that we have no excuses at all to not perform hajj. Last but not least, the tenth branch of Iman is to always enumerate and be thankful of the Nikmahs rendered to us. There are verses that say, "O believer, remember (counting and be grateful) of the nikhmahs given to you". Those with great Iman will always ponder on the nikhmah given to him/her. Everything they see and have is a nikhmah for them. By just looking at the sun,

moon, sky, trees and other stuffs, they will know that without such things, our life will not be complete. By looking at their eyes, nose, mouth, hands, etc., they are aware that without them they will be incomplete. The most important nikmat is the nikmat of Iman and Islam itself.

According to Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, if Iman and Islam were not given to us, we will not be granted hidayah and will always be left in darkness. No matter how much effort we put to try, we will not be able to enumerate the blessings and nikmat given to us. The point is to not enumerate the blessings given to us, but to be thankful of them. May Allah SWT grant us Iman which will make us be a thankful (syukr) individual. InsyaAllah, in our next tazkirah session, we will look at 2 other important branches of iman, which is Hayak (shyness or modesty) and cleanliness, including Wudhu', before we look at other group of branches of Iman, like we did in this section and the previous ones.

May Allah SWT forgive and bless us and our family. Aamiin.



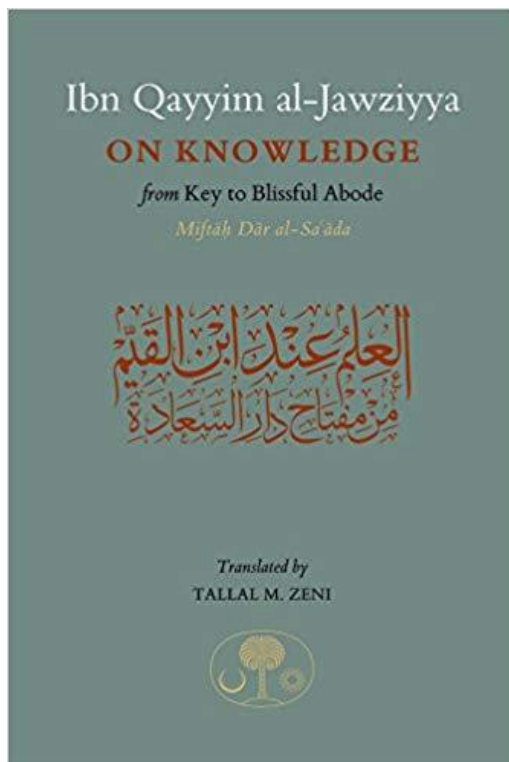
## **Session 14: Hayak, Bashfulness, Wudhu' and Purity**

Oh Allah SWT, The Most Exalted, The Most Praiseworthy and The Most Great, please guide us towards the straight path. With His blessings, we are approaching the closing part of our discussion on the 70 Odd Branches of Iman by Imam al-Bayhaqi who died in 458H. We might InsyaAllah have another 2 tazkirah sessions to deal with after today. In this section, we will discuss one of the important components of Iman from a hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah, a hadith on modesty, shyness, bashfulness or hayak. At this point, we should already be clear on the 70 Odd Branches of Iman in which a part of it is to wholeheartedly verbalize the kalimah "*Lailaha illallah*".

We then discussed on another 2 Branches of Iman, which are removing things on the side of the road and shyness. We will InsyaAllah not only discuss about the high level of Iman but also add another branch of Iman, which is on Taharah, cleanliness or purity, specifically on performing the wudhu'. The word hayak has a similar root to the word hayat which means life, except that hayak concerns about the health of the spiritual heart, whereas hayat concerns about the physical heart (body). Those who have no hayak or shyness, generally suffers from spiritual diseases. Therefore, by increasing their Iman they can cure themselves from these spiritual diseases. In current days, it is said that not just men, but more worryingly women have also lost their hayak and in some cases, they are worse than their male counterpart. This happens to women or girls not only in western countries, but worryingly even in Muslim countries. In one of Michael Sandel's lecture in Harvard University, it can be seen that the girls were found to speak with no hayak compared to the boys when the question of sex or marriage is placed on the table for discussion.

In our country, it is said that it is no longer a strange thing if girls or women bring boys or men to stay overnight in their houses, Nauzubillahi min zalik. All of these are basically symptoms of a chronic problem of the spiritual heart. Of course, men are not exceptional from such problems. When they speak, especially with another man, they will speak ugly things of women and be boastful of their manliness to women. Ulama in general have discussed on hayak and from them let us take an example of tidying up a house. It is found that in many families they would feel embarrassed if people were to know how messy their house or room is. They rush to tidy up their house as soon as they are informed of a person's arrival. This is obviously not a praiseworthy character. Such hayak will not make that person more sincere with him/herself, but it does not mean that they should just leave their house in a mess whenever guests are to visit. Such attitude is a blameworthy character. At the very least, they have to nurture hayak in themselves or be conscious on the importance of cleanliness. But, a Muslim's level of hayak is raised to a higher level of Iman if he/she were to tidy up his/her room because they know Allah SWT wants them to always be clean and tidy.

Ulamas such as Ibn Qayyim have an even more profound concept of Hayak, particularly in front of Allah SWT.



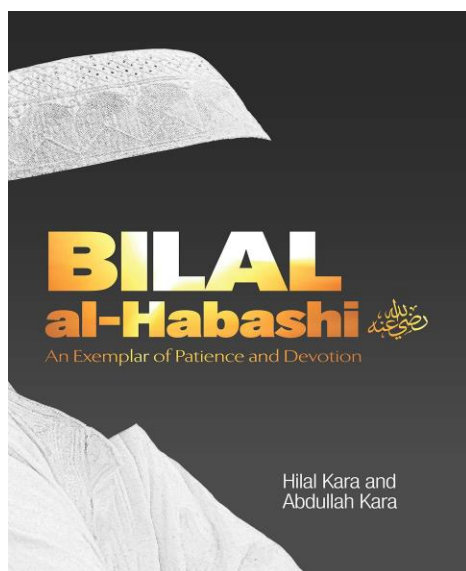
*The renowned theologian and jurist Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d.1350) wrote numerous titles, many of which are still popular today. Amongst these is “Key to the Blissful Abode” (Mifta’ Dar as-Sa’ada). In it, Ibn Qayyim focuses on the importance of knowledge and willpower, as means through which a person may attain Paradise.*

He discussed among other things about 10 different types of Hayak, including the fact that we should feel so small and shy in front of Allah SWT. He, The Almighty, had given us countless nikmah to which there is no way for us to repay it. Let us discuss Hayak as mentioned during Rasulullah SAW’s time. It is mentioned that figures such as Uthman RA, with his Hayak, alongside Abu Bakr RA and Umar RA visited Rasulullah SAW at the time he was resting. The third person who came was Uthman RA. Rasulullah SAW at the time immediately wore his garment, covering his previously exposed shin. Abu Bakr and Umar RA noticed this and asked Rasulullah SAW why he not did so when the two of them were around, but only when Uthman RA came. Rasulullah SAW replied, “Uthman is a man of Hayak, we should give respect to him”.

We should not say anything negative towards those who obviously are with his/her hayak, because there is a narration saying that those with hayak are among those with good iman. There are narrations mentioning that even the Angels also showed respect to

Uthman's hayak. One of Allah SWT's blessed name, besides al-Hayak (The Ever Living), is al-Hayyi (The Most Bashful). Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, when mentioning the blessed name of al-Hayyi, gave examples of how due to His name of al-Hayyi, He will not turn down when people make du'a to Him (Allahul Hayyiul Karim).

We shall now move to the second topic of today's tazkirah session concerning taharah (purity), especially on wudhu'. There is a hadith mentioning about the At-Taharu Sitrul Iman. "Purity is part of Iman". We have been told since we were kids that it is important to stay clean, because cleanliness is a part of Iman. According to Shaykh Yasir Qadhi, this hadith has a specific or explicit meaning. It focuses on wudhu, telling us that the benefits of wudhu' is tremendous and there are narrations saying that wudhu' is very important and it is nearly considered as another pillar of Islam or Iman, Wallahua'lam. We know the story of Bilal who is promised Jannah. Rasulullah SAW, according to some narrations, when he made the night journey (Isra' Mi'raj), or in other narrations in his dream, heard the footsteps or the flip flops of Bilal RA in paradise. When Bilal was asked as to what was his specialty that made such an event to occur, he could not recall anything except for the fact that whenever his wudhu' broke, he would perform another and perform the salah of sunat naufil.



*He possessed an unyielding belief, an honest love for Allah SWT and His Messenger, and zeal. Realizing that he was about to breathe his last on his deathbed, his wife cried out, "Woe is me!" Bilal al-Habsyi injected by saying, "Now is not the time for sorrow. It is the time for joy and jubilation, for tomorrow I shall meet the beloved Messenger and his Companions!"*

We should treat wudhu' as a serious ibadah. Once we know of the six Arqan of wudhu' (niat, touching water all over the face, washing the hands up to the elbow, wiping water

on the head, feet and doing everything in order), we should ask for Allah SWT's redha while doing so. A Mu'min is said to be one who protects his/her wudhu', Some Muslims are not serious of their wudhu'. In fact, in wedding ceremonies, family members would sometimes purposely break the wudhu' of the couple. It is a sad thing, and something must be done to overcome this. Why is wudhu' so important? It is simply because one cannot perform salah without wudhu'. Those who perform the best wudhu' and the best salah will be protected from doing bad deeds or munkar.

It is known that those who are committed with their salah will also be committed to practice other Arqans of Islam such as fasting and zakah. But it is not certain that those who fast is also committed in performing their salah. In one occasion, Rasulullah SAW made du'a together with the sahabas in the grave area of Medina, Baqi Al-Gharqat. Among other similar narrations, Rasulullah SAW said that he would like to be together with his Ikhwan (brethren) in the hereafter. The sahaba responded by saying, are we not Rasulullah SAW's Ikhwan? Rasulullah SAW replied that they were his sahabas, and the Ikhwan are the Mu'minin in the future whose love for Islam and himself (Rasulullah SAW) is very strong. The sahabas asked as to how would Rasulullah SAW recognize them. Rasulullah SAW is said to respond by saying, "Don't you know of the horse called Ghurran Muhallijin (A horse with white stripes in parts of his body such as the head or limbs)?" This means that the people (Mu'minin) are recognized by Rasulullah SAW through their wudhu', and there would be a mark upon their faces to show just how blessed their wudhu' is.

Let us summarise by taking one case of Hayak and another case of wudhu'. We should be avoiding ourselves from saying bad things or brag about our bad deeds to others. We should have the Hayak to do so and Insyallah our imans will be uplifted. Allah SWT is As-Sittir (The Concealer). He conceals our misdeeds and mistakes which could cause great embarrassment were we to reveal it. If we were to reveal our mistakes, we are among the Mujahirin, those who are condemned with such practices, knowing that Allah SWT has already covered their filthiest mistakes. As for our wudhu', we should not be lazy to perform it. It does not matter if we perform ablution or wudhu' frequently. Ibn Umar is known for his frequent wudhu'. Whenever he would feel drowsy, he would perform the wudhu' so as to continue performing his salah. In an occasion, Rasulullah SAW demonstrated how to perform the wudhu'. Not only did he show how to do so thoroughly, he also did it thrice. Rasulullah SAW said, "Whosoever is able to perform the best wudhu' will have his iman raised and rewarded with Jannah", Wallahua'lam. May Allah SWT grant us Iman so that we can keep our Hayak at a high level, and frequently perform our wudhu', Amin.

## **Session 15: Benefits of Iman and How to Keep it Uplifted**

Without Allah SWT's help and blessings, there is no way that we can reach the last part of our tazkirah session, which engages on the very crucial topic of Iman, the pre-requisite for having a good life in this world as well as the next. There is a good reason to summarize 3 main backbones of the materials used in our tazkirah sessions for this series; they are: -

1. Hadith Jibrail
2. Imam Al-Bayhaqi's 70 Odd Branches of Iman
3. Hadith narrated under the authority of Abu Hurairah concerning the 70 Odd Branches of Iman.

Winding down our series, we will briefly look at some of the benefits of Iman, ways to maintain it and also to improve it.

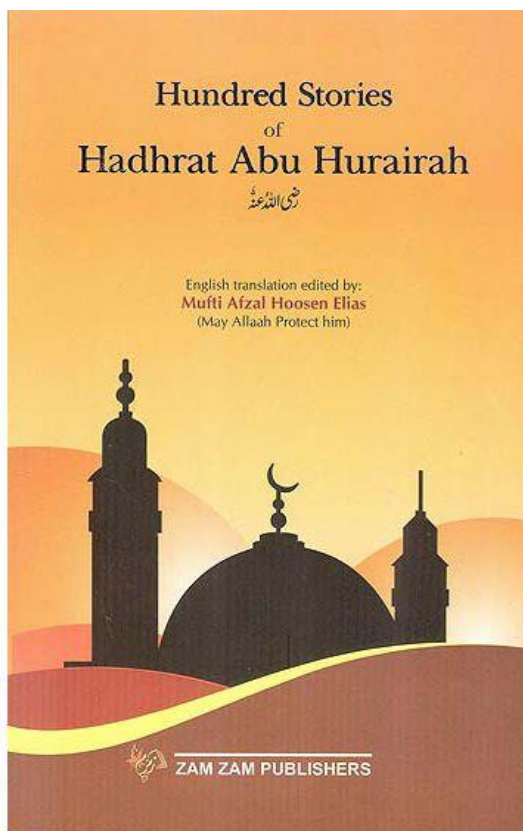
First, we should uncurse the spell over the Muslim ummah who believe that the only way of salvation and Jannah is by sacrificing this world miserably. Many of us believe that there is such dichotomy. You can gain everything in this world materially, but in the end, you will end up disastrous in the world-after, and vice-versa. Those who are with Iman are always under the blessings of Allah SWT, and those who are blessed under him are neither worse in this world nor in the world-after. This does not mean that if we read the Quran and perform solat, we can become as rich as Bill Gates overnight. But what we mean here is that it can be guaranteed that we will be content with our Iman and there is never the guarantee that billionaires are contented. Those who are with Iman are looked up to by others, not only will their presence benefit others, more often than not, people would always look forward to their wisdom and *karamah*. Obviously, Rasulullah SAW was the best model who serves as a continuous example to be followed by others. Those with Iman not only think of themselves, but they also bring benefit beyond family ties and ethnic lines. Those who are with Iman always think positively and are open-minded. Not only do they ask for people's advice, they too feel like sharing their thoughts to others.

Let's discuss the opposite of those with Iman based on the four benefits above. First, regarding advice. Those who are with low or no Iman are not only easily offended when people advise them, but they would also think that others should mind their own business. This is totally different compared to those with Iman who would always welcome and look forward to the advice of others as well as ask others to make du'a for them. Next, those with low or no Iman would always think negatively; not only would they think negatively of people's advice, but when faced with problems, they begin to exaggerate it. Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan gave an example of a family setting where a wife/husband starts accusing each other on one small problem. They start to magnify such problems, relating them to their past problems, predicting future negative problems and relate the problems

with each other's family and this would go on simply because of their negative thinking. This is obviously a sign of low or no Iman.

Furthermore, those who have little to no Iman would also be selfish. They become very self-centered and individualistic. For them, they have achieved what they earned through only their hard work without the help of others and fail to acknowledge Allah SWT's blessings. They are unable to relate the things they do with God in whatever achievement it is that they may have. Finally, those with low or no Iman do not concentrate on the world-after, neglecting Allah SWT's gifts and blessings in this world in one hand, while on the other hand, ignoring the important preparations for the world-after, and instead they would accumulate as much wealth and money as they could, enjoying the worldly things. They may speak nicely and with reverence in one hand or seem arrogant with their intellect on the other, but in truth miserable on the inside. The former might desire for more and more of the world-after, missing the worldly things while the latter enjoys the immediate enjoyment, missing the future.

So far, we have only discussed more or less the worldly benefits of Iman. Before we move to the next topic on ways to maintain the Iman, let us look into some of the benefits of Iman in the world-after, beginning from the moment of death towards the point of meeting Allah SWT.



*There are many stories concerning Abu Hurairah's countless amounts of hadith narrations which in certain accounts reaching up to 5000. The fact that Imam Al-Bayhaqi and many other ulamas quoted his narrations means that the hadith of the 70 Odd Branches of Iman is very significant. Abu Hurairah converted to Islam on the 7th Hijrah, and in the span of 3 ½ years, he devoted his life learning hadiths directly from Rasulullah SAW while taking care of his mother. He is known to be among the Ashabul Suffah, the sahabas that learn, sleep and eat right at the back of Masjid Nabawi itself.*

It is said that at the pang of death, the angel of death will come to meet those with good Iman with a smiling and calm face. He and she will also die with a smile on their faces, InsyaAllah. We hope to enter Jannah without Counting (Hisab) and only those with Iman can pass by not only the torturing of Mahsyar, but also the punishment of Hellfire. May Allah SWT grant us Iman so that we can pass the torturing and punishments. Special rewards are given to those with uplifted Iman. Not only do they pass Hellfire and are rewarded paradise without Hisab, but he/she will also receive the privilege of meeting and seeing Allah SWT, The Rabbul Jalil. It is said that Imam Syafi'e mentioned that the enjoyment of seeing Allah SWT is far superior than the rewards and blessings of Jannah itself. Those with low or no Iman will be denied of such privilege and opportunity. The azab of being denied such privilege is the worst azab, Wallahua'lam. May we be among those given the privilege.

Let us now engage ourselves with ways we can keep our Iman high and protect it from getting low. First, it is always important for us to constantly learn and teach the Quran, Hadith as well as the Sirah of Rasulullah SAW and the lives of the sahaba. Obviously, by reading the Quran we can raise our Iman through tadabbur (attempting to understand it). We cannot really understand the Quran unless we also understand the context as to when and why it was revealed. Therefore, it is equally important for us to learn and share the knowledge of the Sirah of Rasulullah SAW and hadiths.

Secondly, it is important for us to reflect on Allah SWT's creations. The natural phenomena which Allah SWT had set its laws. By reflecting on Allah SWT's creations and human activities, we can learn a lot of trends and patterns. Therefore, we can come up with rules and laws to benefit the ummah. Such reflection does not raise our Iman unless we approach it through the heart of Iman. We may be economists or political scientists who study the government or economic affairs. If we are to approach the subject with the Quran and Hadith or the lives of the sahaba, InsyaAllah not only will it benefit the ummah but more importantly keep our Iman uplifted. We should water the Iman with Amal Soleh. Iman as mentioned in our many previous sessions is like that of a tree. Definitely, it requires water and fertilizer. Salah and fasting are a form of water and fertilizer. It has to be done in proper doses and guidelines. Therefore, shari'a and fiqah are needed in order for us to raise our Iman.





*Iman is like a tree (such as that of a huge date palm tree). We have to water and fertilize it, and our amal soleh such as praying and fasting, as well as our good deeds such as helping others are the waters and fertilizers that keeps our Iman higher and the tree taller, May Allah SWT grant us with Iman, Amiin.*

Let us move our discussion into three things that might harm our Iman. The three enemies of Iman are of course firstly the Syaitan who always whispers and waits for the right moment to stray us. Surah an-Nas mentions clearly how we should ask Allah SWT's (Rabb, Malik and Ilah) refuge from the evils of Syaitan (*Minsyarril waswasil khannas*). Secondly is the love of worldly gains such as money, power and prestige; they can harm our Iman. They are all important necessities, but if we have too much love towards them, it will damage our Iman. Lastly, we should be selective with our friends. Make sure that we are together with righteous and good friends. It helps to maintain our Iman and avoid horrible influences towards our Iman.

Insyallah from our discussions, Allah SWT will bless us with more Iman. We must thank Imam al-Bayhaqi for his excellent compilation of the book on the 70 Odd Branches of Iman. We must also thank Shaykh Yasir Qadhi for giving us the opportunity of learning the many knowledge of Islam, including the Branches of Iman. May Allah SWT bless us, our families and our friends. With that, we end our session here.