

Lesson 1

11-4-09 The Open School Class: Explanation of Forty *Ahadith* Text: Jalali, Sayyid Muhammad Husayn. Sharh al-Arba'in al-Nabawwiyah. Arabic edition 1987, pages 419-422.

Summary

Allah (the All-Wise) says via the **Qur'an** *inter alia*,

“O you who have faith! Save yourselves and your families from a Fire.”¹ (66:6),

Here, “families” does not only mean your kin but also encompasses anyone connected to you. The interesting point of this verse is the order in which it addresses the believer. Allah (the All-Merciful) first mentions saving one’s self, and then He mentions saving others. This makes logical sense. How can one save someone else before he saves himself? For example, if I am drowning with others, I cannot save another person who is drowning unless I prevent myself from drowning first.

In regards to saving family (*e.g.*, one’s children), there is a *hadith* (tradition) that says that *one should play with his children until the age of seven, then for the next seven years, one should teach his children manners, and then for the next seven years, one should be a friend to his children*. However, if one is to follow this paradigm, then one needs to be educated himself, which goes back to the concept that one should save himself (the first phase of salvation, while saving family and then saving society are the second and third phases, respectively).

In regards to saving one’s self, we must respect other human beings and ourselves, primarily, via manners. Allah (the All-Knowing) says via the **Qur'an (2:256)**, *inter alia*,

“There is no compulsion in religion.”

We should not force others to believe something, and we ourselves should not be forced. We should obtain and spread truth and knowledge through intellect and reasoning. This is the proper path; the path of manners and self-building. Furthermore, Allah (the All-Praiseworthy) says via the Qur’an (2:194), *inter alia*,

“So should anyone aggress against you, assail him in the manner he assailed you, and be wary of Allah.”

Meaning, do not exceed the limits. Do not be overpowered by emotion and revenge. One needs to control one’s self. Additionally, Allah (the All–Beneficent) says via the **Qur’an (24:27)**, *inter alia*,
“O you who have faith! Do not enter houses other than your own until you have announced [your arrival] and greeted their occupants.”

Meaning, one should say *salam* (peace) to others. When someone says *salam* to another human being, one is conveying that he is at peace with the other. Through basic principles (such as manners, respect, control, and desire for peace) one can grow. Following such wisdom from the Qur’an, one is able to struggle with one’s self to better and, ultimately, save one’s self. The **Qur’an** further mentions *inter alia*:

“Say, „Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah which He has brought forth for His servants, and the good things of [His] provision?” : (7:32),

inter alia:

“Those who, when spending, are neither wasteful nor tight-fisted.” (25:67),

inter alia:

“O you who have faith! Eat of the good things We have provided you, and thank Allah.” (2: 172),

inter alia:

“O mankind! Eat of what is lawful and pure in the earth.” (2: 168),

inter alia:

“So eat out of what Allah has provided you as lawful and good.” (16: 114),

inter alia:

“Allah does not task any soul beyond its capacity.” (2:286),

inter alia:

“He has chosen you and has not placed for you any obstacle in the religion.” (22:78),

inter alia:

“Allah desires ease for you, and He does not desire hardship for you.” (2: 185),

Looking at these verses and synthesizing them, one can see that Allah (the All–Wise) wants us as

individuals to perform acts to purify and better ourselves. For example, adorning Allah (the All-Praiseworthy) through *salat* (Islamic ritual prayer) and *sawn* (fasting), spending money wisely and with a good heart, and eating lawful and good foods.

By knowing what to do and then doing it, one is able to better himself. Furthermore, Allah (the All-Knowing) knows that we have limitations and that we are human, and so He does not want to burden us. He allows us to perform acts based on our capacity. However, He wants us to know what to do (at our different capacities) and apply it so that we can be just to our own souls and save ourselves. 8

¹. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are based on The Qur'an. Trans. Ali Quli Qara'i. Elmhurst, New York: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc., 2006.

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