

Core Curriculum

Image not found or type unknown



7 The Legacy of the Prophet Muhammad (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as)

7.1

Islam and Knowledge: the Importance of Islamic Education

Question : What is knowledge in Islam?

Answer : It is a form of awareness that leaves an imprint in the soul. That is, it is an act of knowing that transforms a person and gets him or her closer to God.

Question : What is education in Islam?

Answer : It is rearing and nurturing a person on spiritual and moral grounds

Question : How does knowledge differ from information?

Answer : Knowledge is there to transform people's souls so that they may grow closer to God.

7.2

The Ahl al-Kisa

Question : Who are the Ahl al-Kisa?

Answer : The Prophet (s), Imam Ali (as), Fatima al-Zahra (as), Imam Hasan (as) and Imam Husayn (as).

Question : What does Kisa mean?

Answer : A cloak

Question : Why aren't the Ahl al-Kisa 14 in number? Why are only 5 mentioned?

Answer : Because only the five were living when the event of Kisa happened.

7.3

Imamah in the Qur'an

Question : Name me one example of an Imam in the Qur'an

Answer : Ibrahim (as), according to Q2:124

Question : Is every Prophet an Imam?

Answer : No

Question : Is every Imam a Prophet?

Answer : No

Question : Who is the first Imam ever?

Answer : The Prophet Ibrahim (as)

Question : What is the difference between Imamah and Prophethood?

Answer : Prophethood is where a person receives direct revelation from God in order to carry out a particular task in the world, such as conveying a message or fulfilling a specific mission. Imamah is a cosmic status, it is where a person becomes the metaphysical vehicle of guidance for all of the world and acquires power over all of creation. One does not necessarily need to be a Prophet in order to acquire this status.

7.4

Fatima al-Zahrah (as)

Question : Who was Fatima al-Zahra?

Answer : Only living child of the Prophet Muhammad (s) and wife of Imam Ali (as).

Question : Why was Fatima (as) important?

Answer : She is the mother of all the Imams, that is, all the 11 Imams, aside from her husband, were her descendants.

Question : What is the Tasbih of Fatima?

Answer : A contemplative and meditative practice with prayer beads (or counting with fingers) where one remembers and glorifies God.

Question : How did Fatima (as) die?

Answer : She was attacked in her home and sustained fatal injuries at the hands of her home invaders.

Question : What is Fadak?

Answer : Fadak was a garden which the Prophet (s) gifted to Fatima (as). It was later stolen from her from the powers-that-be after her father's death.

7.5

A Brief Look at the Lives of the Imams (Imam al-Hasan until Imam Muhammad al-Baqir)

Question : N/A

Answer : N/A

7.6

A Brief Look at the Lives of the Imams (Imam Jafar al-Sadiq until Imam Hasan al-Askari)

Question : N/A

Answer : N/A

7.7

A Brief Look at the Life and Importance of Imam al-Mahdi (aj)

Question : Why was Imam al-Mahdi hidden from public during his mother's pregnancy and during his birth?

Answer : Because the political authorities wanted to kill him.

Question : Why did the political authorities of the time want to kill Imam al-Mahdi?

Answer : Because they wanted to end the Imamah of the Ahl al-Bayt from its roots and rid themselves of an Imam before he grew into adulthood. They also feared, and rightfully so, that the 12th Imam would be a global revolutionary who would overthrow oppressors all around the world (including Muslim oppressors) and establish justice all around the world.

Question : Why did the Imam go into the minor occultation?

Answer : Because he wanted to slowly prepare the Muslim community for the major occultation which would last until the End of Days.

Question : How can a human being live for more than a thousand years?

Answer : Allah has power over all things, including life, aging and death. He can do whatever He pleases.

Question : Will Imam al-Mahdi (aj) establish global justice and overthrow evil oppressors alone, or with help?

Answer : He will do so with help, including Jesus (as) as well as a legion of 313 generals.

7.8

Salawat and Atonement in Islam

Question : What is salawat?

Answer : It is conveying blessings upon the Prophet (s) and his Ahl al-Bayt (as)

Question : How does one say the salawat?

Answer : One says: Allahumma Salli 'Alā Muhammad wa Āli Muhammad

Question : What are the effects of saying the salawat?

Answer : Allah and the angels respond by conveying their blessings upon the person who said the salawat.

Question : Is saying the salawat enough for salvation?

Answer : No, salawat must be combined with obeying God in all matters and doing good deeds.

Question : Is the salawat obligatory?

Answer : The salawat are obligatory during prayers, but they are recommended in all else.

7.9

The Companions (Sahaba) of the Prophet According to the Qur'an

Question : According to the Qur'an, are all sahaba good?

Answer : No, the Qur'an is critical of many of the Prophet's companions and casts doubt on their long term loyalty to Islam and monotheism.

Question : Did previous Prophets according to the Qur'an have their companions betray them and apostate from religion?

Answer : Yes, a good example are the companions of Musa (as) who worshiped a calf after he went away for 40 days.

Question : What is the distinction between sahabi and muttabi'?

Answer : A sahabi is a companion, a muttabi' is a faithful follower of the Prophet (s). A companion can be good or bad, but a muttabi' is always good.

Question : Why did some companions turn bad?

Answer : Because they either converted to Islam based on the belief they would get worldly gains, or because they were spies for the enemies of Islam.

Question : Did the majority of the Prophet's companions turn his back on him, like Musa (as), after he died?

Answer : Yes

7.10

Clerical Hierarchies in Muslim Communities

Question : If I want to ask a Marja questions about Islamic law, where do I go?

Answer : You can visit his official website. Most Marjas have official sites where Q&A are emailed.

Question : How can I contact my local resident Imam?

Answer : Most Islamic centers have websites where relevant contact info is provided.

Question : What are the major hawzas or seminaries in the world?

Answer : Najaf and Qum

Question : If I want to join the hawza, what can I do to enter it?

Answer : Contact your local Islamic center Imam, he may be able to arrange for you to be trained in a hawza, either within the country or abroad.

Question : Why are highly ranked scholars called Signs of God (Ayatollah), isn't this a bit sanctimonious?

Answer : Clerics usually don't refer to themselves as Ayatollahs, its usually the people who call them such. However, according to the Qur'an, all of creation is a sign of God so in this sense, there is nothing wrong or sanctimonious about the term.

7.11

Mosques in Islam

Question : What is the primary purpose of a Masjid?

Answer : Prayer

Question : Can Mosques be used for functions other than prayer?

Answer : Yes, they can be used for conducting marriages, funerals and for educational programs.

Question : Can Mosques also be used as graveyards?

Answer : Yes, many Mosques have graves in them, including the Kaba itself.

Question : Is the Kaba and its surrounding building a Mosque?

Answer : Yes

Question : What is the first and oldest Mosque in the world?

Answer : The Kaba which was built by the Prophet Abraham (as)

Question : Is a Masjid and a Mosque the same thing?

Answer : Yes, Mosque is the English equivalent of Masjid, which means "place of prostration."

7.12

The Philosophy of Karbala and Majalis

Question : What was the goal of Imam al-Husayn's (as) sacrifice at Karbala?

Answer : To instill humility and moral behavior in humankind

Question : Who is the best source to tell us about the goal of Karbala?

Answer : Imam al-Sajjad (as)

Question : What is the best source for Imam al-Sajjad's message?

Answer : Al-Sahifah al-Sajjadiyah

Question : What was the primary purpose of Imam al-Husayn (as) fighting in Karbala?

Answer : To get rid of haughtiness and pride in human beings

7.13

A Brief Biography of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (as)

Question : What is an Imam?

Answer : An Imam is a divinely appointed leader to guide humankind. The Prophet Muhammad (s) is the one who first announced who the Imam after him would be.

Question : Who was the first Imam?

Answer : Imam Ali (as)

Question : Can you be an Imam without political power?

Answer : Yes, the main function of an Imam is religious and spiritual. Political power is not a necessary condition for Imamate even though it is the sole right of an Imam.

Question : Why did people hate Imam Ali (as) so much?

Answer : The people who hated him were the rich elite. They hated him because he fought against their corruption.

Question : Aside Imam Ali (as), was anyone else born inside the Kaba?

Answer : No

7.14

The Battle of Karbala: A Brief History

Question : What made Yazid different from other corrupt rulers?

Answer : Yazid openly mocked Islam and took corruption to a level that no one previous to him had done before.

Question : Who was Yazid's father?

Answer : Muawiyah

Question : Who put Yazid in power?

Answer : Muawiyah

Question : What is the significance of Muawiyah appointing his son as the next Caliph?

Answer : It turned the Caliphate into a dynasty.

Question : Why didn't Imam al-Husayn (as) leave his family behind?

Answer : Because they would have been killed anyways and used as leverage if he had left them behind.