

TAREEKH SYLLABUS - CLASS 9

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CLASS 9 - LESSON 1

IMAM ALI ZAINUL ABIDEEN (A)

Name:	Ali
Title:	Zainul Abideen (The Jewel of Worshippers)
Kunyat:	Abu Muhammad
Father:	Imam Husain (A)
Mother:	Bibi Shahr Banu (A)
Birthdate:	5th Sha'ban 38 A.H. in Madina
Imamat:	From 61 A.H. to 95 A.H.
Martyrdom:	25th Muharram 95 A.H.
Buried :	Madina, Saudi Arabia.

Imam (A) was the eldest son of Imam Husain (A). His mother was the Persian princess Bibi Shahr Banu (A), daughter of King Yazdjard II, the last pre-Islamic ruler of Iran.

He spent the first two years of his life under the care of his grandfather Imam Ali (A), and the next twelve years under the guardianship of his uncle Imam Hasan (A). In 61 A.H. he was present in Karbala, where his father, relatives and the companions of his father were mercilessly killed by the forces of Yazid. At the time, he was too ill to fight and was thus preserved by Allah to continue the line of Imamat.

Imam (A) lived 34 years after his father and all his life was passed in prayers and Du'as to Allah and in the remembrance of the tragedy of Karbala. His habit of frequent prostration in Sajdah caused him to be popularly known as Sajjad. He was also called 'Abid.

In his time, no one could equal the piety and awareness of Allah that he possessed. He was so mindful of Allah that whenever he sat for Wudhu, the colour of his face would change and when he stood for Namaaz his body would be seen trembling.

When he was asked why he became like this, he replied, "Do you not know before Whom I stand in prayers, and with Whom I talk?"

Imam (A) had a habit of going out at night with bags of money, food and even firewood. When he reached the houses of the poor and needy, he would distribute what he had without revealing his identity. It was only after his death that the people found out that their helper was actually Imam (A) himself.

Imam (A) was part of the caravan of captives that was led from Karbala to Kufa and then to Sham after the martyrdom of Imam Husain (A) and his companions.

The cruel army of Yazid chained the hands and legs of Imam (A) and made him wear an iron neckband with spikes facing inwards. The chains used to heat up in the hot desert and burn his flesh to the bone. These wounds continued to give him discomfort for the rest of his life.

In Sham, Imam (A) and the ladies and children of the party of Imam Husain (A) were imprisoned in very harsh conditions. Yazid once called Imam (A) and asked him to speak. Imam (A) gave such a powerful lecture that the feelings of the people began to be swayed towards him. Yazid was alarmed at this and ordered that Adhaan be recited so that Imam's (A) words would be cut off. At this, Imam (A) commented that he was the grandson of the same Muhammad (S) whose name they were reciting in Adhaan.

Due to the pressure of public opinion, Yazid decided to free his prisoners and let them return to Madina. But after his return, Imam (A) was again chained and sent to Sham on the order of the Bani Umayyah Caliph Abdul Malik. Later he was allowed to return to Madina.

After his return to Madina he retired from public life and was only in contact with some of the Shia who learnt from him and taught others.

Once when the Bani Umayyah Caliph, Waleed bin Abdul Malik, came for Haj, he could not get near and kiss the Black Stone (Hajare Aswad) because of the crowd of people. While he was sitting waiting for the rush to die down, he saw Imam (A) enter the Haraam and go straight towards the Black Stone. The crowds parted for him and he managed to kiss the blessed stone quite easily. Waleed was annoyed by this and asked who this man was, although he had recognised Imam (A).

A Shia poet, Farazdak, who was standing nearby, heard him and was irritated by the petty remark of Waleed. In reply to Waleed's question he composed a powerful and moving poem in praise of Imam (A). This poem exists today and is considered to be one of the masterpieces of Arabic literature.

Imam (A) was prevented by the government to preach openly so he used Du'as to guide the people. His Du'as contained a wealth of teaching and wisdom and many of them exist today. His most famous work is the book of 57 Du'as known as Sahifae Kaamilah.

Imam (A) was poisoned by Waleed bin Abdul Malik in 95 A.H. and is buried in Jannatul Baqee in Madina next to Imam Hasan (A).

CLASS 9 - LESSON 2

IMAM MUHAMMAD AL-BAQIR (A)

Name:	Muhammad
Title:	al-Baqir (One who Dissects Knowledge)
Kuniyat:	Abu Ja'far
Father :	Imam Ali Zainul Abideen (A)
Mother:	Bibi Fatimah binte Hasan (A)
Birthdate:	1st Rajab 57 A.H. in Madina
Imamat:	From 95 A.H. to 114 A.H.
Martyrdom:	7th Zilhaj 114 A.H.
Buried :	Madina, Saudi Arabia.

Imam (A) enjoys the unique position of having both paternal and maternal grandfathers as Imams. His mother, Fatimah, was the daughter of Imam Hasan (A). The Holy Prophet (S) had told his companion, Jabir bin Abdullah Ansari, that he would live to see the Fifth Imam (A) whose name would be Muhammad. He asked him to convey his Salaams to this Imam (A), which Jabir managed to do shortly before he died.

Imam (A) was brought up for 3 years by his grandfather, Imam Husain (A). He was present in Karbala at the time of martyrdom of Imam Husain (A) and his friends. He also spent a year in the prison of Damascus with his father and the rest of the children and ladies of the martyrs of Karbala. He lived for 20 years in Madina after the death of his father.

Imam (A) was left in relative peace by the rulers because the Bani Umayyah were busy in trying to control the rebellions and wars that were breaking out all over the Muslim empire. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Imam (A) set up and conducted classes on the teachings of the Holy Prophet (S) and the Ahlul Bayt (A). Under his guidance, his pupils compiled various books on different branches of science and arts. Imam (A) also began to teach new sciences like Mathematics and Chemistry for the first time in Arabia.

Imam (A) gave much importance to holding Majalis where the event of Karbala would be remembered. At the same time, practical instructions about the teachings of Islam would also be given. These meetings were also encouraged by Imam Ja'far Sadiq (A) and Imam Ali Riza (A) in later years.

One of the Caliphs at the time of Imam (A) was Waleed bin Abdul Malik. Once, the ruler of Rome wrote to Waleed saying that the Roman coins, which were also used by Muslims, would now carry anti-Islamic phrases. The Caliph decided that a new Dinar coin should be minted.

A problem arose as to what phrase should be used on the new coin. When consulted,

Imam (A) suggested that the phrase "Laa Ilaha Illallah" be printed on one side, and "Muhammadur Rasulullah" on the other. This advice was accepted, and the first Islamic coin was thus minted.

Once a Christian asked Imam (A) to give a similar example to the Muslim belief that the fruits of heaven are not reduced by eating. Imam (A) replied that it was like a lamp, no matter how many other lamps were lit by the first lamp, the original light would not be reduced.

Imam (A) continued to preach peacefully until 114 A.H. Then, the Caliph of the time, Hisham bin Abdul Malik, turned his attention to him. He had heard of the fame and following of Imam (A) and he was scared and jealous of the influence that Imam (A) had over the Muslims, especially in Madina. He therefore arranged with Zayd bin Hasan to deliver a saddle coated with poison to Imam (A).

Zayd brought the saddle with a letter from Hisham. On seeing the saddle, Imam (A) remarked that it was a pity that Zayd was involved in this terrible plan. However, demonstrating his contentment in the Will of Allah, Imam (A) rode on the saddle. The poison took effect immediately. His condition steadily grew worse for three days.

Just before his death, he called the people of Madina and told them that his son Ja'far (A) would be the Imam after him, and that he should give him Ghusl and Kafan. Imam (A) breathed his last on 7th Zilhajj 114 A.H. at the age of 57 years and was buried in Jannatul Baqee next to his father.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 3

IMAM JA'FAR AS-SADIQ (A)

Name:	Ja'far
Title:	as-Sadiq (The Truthful One)
Kuniyat:	Abu Abdillah
Father:	Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (A)
Mother:	Bibi Umme Farwa binte Qasim (A)
Birthdate:	17th Rabi-ul-Awwal 83 A.H. in Madina
Imamat:	From 114 A.H. to 148 A.H.
Martyrdom:	25th Shawwal 148 A.H.
Buried :	Madina, Saudi Arabia.

Imam (A) has the same birthdate as our Holy Prophet (S). Amongst his titles are al-Faazil (the Successful) and at-Tahir (the Pure). He was brought up in the care of his grandfather, Imam Ali Zainul Abideen (A) for 12 years and then remained under the guidance of his father, Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (A) for another 19 years.

During the lifetime of Imam (A), the Bani Abbas took over the reins of political power from the Bani Umayyah. In this period of internal wars and upheavals, he was not disturbed by the rulers. He used this opportunity to advance the work started by his father and he set up a large teaching centre.

Many students from foreign countries came to learn from Imam (A). His classes and sessions of instruction produced 4,000 scholars of Hadith and the sciences. Amongst his famous students were Hisham bin Hakam, Jaabir bin Hayyaan and Abu Hanifah. Imam (A) was responsible for organising the Fiqh (laws) of the Shia faith, which is why we are sometimes known as the Ja'fari Shia.

Once a man from Iran by the name of Sahl bin Hasan came to Imam (A) and asked him why he did not fight for his right when there were so many Shia in Iran ready to fight with him. In reply Imam (A) took Sahl to the fire place and asked him to sit in the blazing fire. Sahl began to tremble and said that he had a family to return to, and begged to be excused from this test.

Meanwhile, Haroon Makki, a close companion of Imam (A), arrived, having just returned from Haj. Imam (A) asked him to jump in the fire and he did so at once. After a while, Imam (A) asked Sahl to look in the fire place. Sahl saw that Haroon sat there, quite unharmed. Imam (A) asked Sahl how many such followers were there in Iran, to which the man replied, "None, master." Having made his point, Imam (A) asked Haroon to come out of the fire.

Once, a man falsely accused Imam (A) of plotting against the Bani Abbas Caliph, Mansoor Dawanaqi. When he was called to the court to explain his actions, Imam (A) denied the allegation and asked the man to repeat his words under oath. The man began the oath by praising Allah, but Imam (A) asked him to make his statement by saying that he was free from the protection of Allah and trusted his own strength and wisdom. When the man took the oath against Imam (A) in this way, his leg was paralysed immediately. Mansoor ordered the man to be thrown out of his court.

Once in Madina there was a shortage of wheat flour and prices of the flour were very high. Imam (A) asked his servant what their situation was. The servant replied that they had plenty of wheat and should have no problem for a long time. Imam (A) said, "sell the wheat in the market and let us face the situation along with everyone else." In this way he taught that hoarding is discouraged by Islam.

Imam (A) was once called to the court of Mansoor who was in an extremely angry mood towards him. When he came to the court, a man called Rabi saw that he was reciting something quietly.

Gradually, the anger of Mansoor died down, and by the time Imam (A) approached him, he was pleased to see him. Later, Rabi asked him what he was reciting, and he said it was the prayer to Allah which his great grandfather Imam Husain (A) used to recite as follows:

"O my Provision in time of hardship, O my Help in the face of disaster, guard me with Your Eye which never sleeps, surround me with Your impenetrable fortress."

Rabi said that he learnt this prayer and never remained in hard times after he recited it.

Towards the end of his life severe restrictions were put on Imam (A) by Mansoor, who used to torture the Shia mercilessly. Finally he sent some poisoned grapes to his governor in Madina, Muhammad bin Sulayman, with instructions to give them to Imam (A). The poison took its effect and Imam (A) breathed his last on 25th Shawwal 148 A.H. at the age of 63 years. He is buried in Jannatul Baqee next to his father.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 4

IMAM MUSA AL-KAZIM (A)

Name:	Musa
Title:	al-Kazim (One who Restrains his Anger)
Kuniyat:	Abul Hasan, Abu Ibrahim and Abu Ali
Father:	Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (A)
Mother:	Bibi Hamida (A)
Birthdate:	7th Safar 128 A.H. in Abwa
Imamat:	From 148 A.H. to 183 A.H.
Martyrdom:	25th Rajab 183 A.H.
Buried :	Kazmain, Iraq.

Imam (A) was brought up under the care of his father for 20 years. After the death of his father, he took over the responsibility of Imamate and guided the people from Madina.

At the time of the death of Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (A), some of the Shia claimed that Isma'il, his eldest son, was the Imam. This view was incorrect because Isma'il had died during the life time of his father (A) and moreover, it was against the specific instructions of the sixth Imam (A).

Imam (A) lived during the time of four Bani Abbas Caliphs, Mansoor, Mahdi, Hadi and Haroon Rashid. Although he was allowed some freedom in the beginning, it was not long before the attention of the rulers was turned on him.

When Haroon came to power in 170 A.H., he set about killing the descendants of Imam Ali (A). At first, however, he allowed Imam (A) to continue guiding the people.

Ali bin Yaqtin was the prime minister of Haroon. Unknown to Haroon, he was a Shia and followed the rulings of Imam (A). He also used to try to help the Shia secretly by using his powerful influence.

One day Haroon sent him some robes as a gift for his services. Amongst them was a costly black woollen cloak with a gold design. Ali bin Yaqtin sent the robes to Imam (A) as a gift, together with some money for Khums.

Imam (A) accepted the money and the robes, but returned the cloak with a letter saying, "Keep the cloak and do not let it leave your hands. An event will occur when you will need it."

Although Ali was disappointed that his gift had been returned, he followed Imam's (A) instructions.

Some time later, one of the servants of Ali bin Yaqtin left his service after a quarrel. He

went to report to Haroon that Ali was a secret follower of Imam (A). He also told Haroon how he had sent the cloak as a gift to Imam (A) together with money.

Haroon was furious and summoned Ali bin Yaqtin at once, demanding to see the cloak. Because of Imam's (A) advice the cloak was still in his possession and he brought it at once. Haroon was ashamed at doubting his prime minister and ordered that the servant be flogged with a thousand lashes.

Haroon began to resent the popularity and power that Imam (A) had over the Muslims. Once when Haroon went over to Madina, he approached the tomb of the Holy Prophet (S) and said, "Greetings to you, O Prophet of Allah, greetings to you, my cousin." He was trying to show the people that he was related to the Holy Prophet (S) because he was a descendant of Abbas, the brother of Abdullah. Imam (A) also approached the tomb and said, "Greetings to you, O Prophet of Allah, greetings to you, my father." Imam (A) was proving to the people and Haroon that he was a direct descendant of the Holy Prophet (S). When he heard this, Haroon's face went red in anger.

In Baghdad, information continued to reach Haroon about the growing popularity of Imam (A) and he felt threatened. In spite of the fact that Imam (A) had not criticised the government, he had him handcuffed and brought to Basra from Madina. In Basra, Imam (A) was imprisoned for one year under the care of Isa bin Ja'far. He was then moved to a prison in Baghdad, and then moved to different prisons. He was finally kept under the guard of Sindi bin Shahik. The accursed Sindi eventually killed Imam (A) by presenting him with poisoned dates. Imam (A) immediately felt the effect of the poison, and after three days of fever, he left this world.

Sindi put the body of Imam (A) on a bridge in Baghdad and invited the people to come and see the body and prove to themselves that he had not been killed by force, but had died naturally.

Imam (A) died on 6th Safar 183 A.H. after being the guide for the people for 35 years. He was buried in Kazmain, near Baghdad. The Ghusl and Kafan was performed by his son Imam Ali ar-Riza (A), who also led his funeral prayers.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 5

IMAM ALI AR-RIZA (A)

Name:	Ali
Title:	ar-Riza (One with whom Allah is Pleased)
Kuniyat:	Abul Hasan
Father:	Imam Musa al-Kazim (A)
Mother:	Bibi Ummul Baneen Najma (A)
Birthdate:	11th Zilkad 148 A.H. in Madina
Imamat:	From 183 A.H. to 203 A.H.
Martyrdom:	29th Safar 203 A.H.
Buried :	Mashad, Iran.

Imam (A) was brought up under the care of his father for 35 years. His father left behind a written document declaring his succession.

Imam (A) is also known as Imam Zaamin (A). Zaamin comes from the Arabic word Zamaanat, which means security. Whenever we start a journey, we pray to Allah to keep us safe for the sake of our eighth Imam (A). We also give some money in charity, which is in the name of Imam Zaamin (A).

When his father was poisoned in prison in 183 A.H., Imam (A) took over the great responsibility of Imamat under very difficult circumstances. Haroon Rashid, the Abbaside Caliph, made life very difficult for the followers of Imam (A).

In Madina, Imam (A) carried out his duties in a peaceful manner in the face of a very difficult period for the Shia, and it was mostly due to his efforts that the teachings of the Holy Prophet (S) and the correct interpretation of the Holy Qur'an became widespread. He had command over several languages and used to answer the questions of his followers in their own language.

Haroon Rashid died in 193 A.H., having nominated his son Amin as his successor. However, Amin was killed after ruling for 4 years only, by his brother Ma'mun, who then took over the Abbaside Caliphate.

Ma'mun was an intelligent man, and he could see that the Shia were increasing in number despite torture and oppression. He was aware of the position and power that Imam (A) held over the people. Many of Ma'mun's own ministers were Shia, and he began to get worried about the influence of Imam (A).

He decided that the only way he could hold on to power and quieten down the Shia, who were threatening to revolt, was by changing his approach.

First, he declared himself Shia also. He ordered that the descendants of Imam Ali (A) should not be harmed. Next, he invited Imam (A) to come from Madina to Marv, which was his winter capital.

On his way to Marv, Imam (A) passed Nishapoor, where thousands of people had gathered to catch a glimpse of him. Some scholars begged him to stop and address them so that they could hear his voice. Imam (A) related to them that the angel Jibraeel (A) had told the Holy Prophet (S), who had told Imam Ali (A), and each Imam (A) had told the next Imam (A), that Allah had said, "Laa Ilaaha Illallah is My fortress, and whoever enters My fortress saves himself from My punishment." Then Imam (A) went forward a little and stopped. He then informed them that there were a few conditions to entering the fortress of Allah, one of which was complete submission to the Imam (A) of the time. This report is famous and has been recorded by many historians.

On his arrival in Marv, Imam (A) was met with respect by the hypocrite Ma'mun. He admitted that Imam (A) had the right to the Caliphate, and offered it to him. Imam (A) refused and so Ma'mun insisted that he accept to become the heir to the throne.

Despite his reluctance, Imam (A) was forced to accept the position, and Ma'mun made the people pay the oath of allegiance to him. He also ordered that the royal robes would be green in the future, which was the colour of the household of the Holy Prophet (S). Ma'mun then ordered that the Dirham coin should have the name of Imam (A), and issued a royal decree saying that Imam (A) would succeed him and his title would be ar-Riza min Aale Muhammad.

Ma'mun had not given this position to Imam (A) due to any love for him, but he had done it to quieten the threat of the Shia. He had no intention of allowing Imam (A) to become his successor. When Imam (A) took up his place in the court of Ma'mun, he took the opportunity to spread the teachings of Islam further. He organised Majalis to remember the martyrs and sacrifice of Karbala, and explained to the people the moral lessons to be learnt from that tragedy.

Ma'mun's court was visited by people from all over the world. Imam (A) answered all the questions they asked to Ma'mun. They were always satisfied with his answers, used to say that they had never met a man who argued and explained in the style of Imam (A).

Ma'mun soon felt threatened by the growing popularity of Imam (A) and decided to ensure his own survival by killing him. He did this by inviting Imam (A) to a meal where he fed him poisoned grapes. Imam (A) became very ill as a result and died on 29th Safar 203 A.H. He is buried in Toos (Mashad) in Iran.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 6

IMAM MUHAMMAD AT-TAQI (A)

Name:	Muhammad
Title:	at-Taqi (One who is Mindful of Allah)
Kuniyat:	Abu Ja'far
Father:	Imam Ali ar-Riza (A)
Mother:	Bibi Khaizuran (A)
Birthdate:	10th Rajab 195 A.H. in Madina
Imamat:	From 203 A.H. to 220 A.H.
Martyrdom:	29th Zilqad 220 A.H.
Buried :	Kazmain, Iraq.

Imam (A) was brought up under the care of his father for 4 years. When the Abbaside Caliph Ma'mun forced Imam ar-Riza (A) to leave Madina for Iran, he knew that he would never see his young son again. He therefore declared Imam (A) as his successor, so that the people of Madina would be in doubt as to who was the next Imam. In 203 A.H. the cursed Ma'mun poisoned Imam Ali ar-Riza (A) and thus Imam (A) took over the duties of Imamat when he was only 8 years old.

In spite of his minor age, he demonstrated the intelligence and wisdom of his forefathers. He was bold, learned, used to forgive people and was tolerant. He was famous for his hospitality and courtesy to all and for his help to the poor, orphans and the needy. He lived a simple life and worked tirelessly to guide people to the right path.

Ma'mun received reports of the brilliance of Imam (A) in debating in matters of Fiqh, Hadith and Tafsir of the Holy Qur'an. He wanted to confirm these reports for himself so he had Imam (A) brought to his capital in Baghdad.

Although Ma'mun had shown in many instances his true enmity towards Ahlul Bayt (A) and their Shia, he welcomed Imam (A) for his own ulterior motives. He did not doubt that the young man was the Imam of the time despite his age, and he knew that the Shia would follow the rulings of Imam (A) without hesitation. In order to protect himself and the future of the Abbaside empire, Ma'mun wanted to marry his daughter Ummul Fazl to Imam (A).

The elders of Bani Abbas were very disturbed when they learnt of Ma'mun's intentions. A group of them came to Ma'mun with a view to dissuade him from this marriage. Ma'mun rejected their plea, stating that Imam (A) was a true successor to his father and commanded the same virtues and excellence in spite of his tender years. He further stated that the best scholars of the Islamic world could not hope to compete with Imam (A).

This gave the elders an opportunity to prove him wrong and they decided to appoint Yahya bin Aksam, a great scholar and juror of Baghdad, to debate against Imam (A).

Ma'mun agreed to the contest and organised a large gathering in his court, in which 900 scholars and learned men were invited to participate. News of the contest spread quickly and people wondered how a young child could contest against the veteran judge who was famous for his knowledge. When the court was assembled, Yahya confidently asked Imam (A), "What is your verdict about a man who indulges in hunting while in the state of Ehram?"

Imam (A) immediately replied, "Your question is vague and misleading. Perhaps you could clarify it by mentioning whether the man hunted within the precincts of the Holy Ka'ba or outside; whether he was literate or illiterate; whether he was a slave or a free man; whether he was Baaligh or not; whether it was for the first time or he had done it previously; whether the prey was a bird or some other creature; whether the prey was small or big; whether he hunted in the day or at night; whether the hunter repented for his action or persisted in it; whether he hunted secretly or openly and whether the Ehram was for Umrah or Haj. Unless these points are explained, no specific answer can be given to this question".

Yahya was staggered at listening to these words and the audience was dumbfounded. He acknowledged the superiority of Imam (A) and humbly requested to be told the answer. Imam (A) then gave the different verdicts for each of the possibilities listed above.

Ma'mun was overjoyed at this display of the knowledge of Imam (A) and in the same gathering, he wedded his daughter Ummul Fazl to him. After staying in Baghdad for a year, Imam (A) returned to Madina.

His marriage with Ummul Fazl was not peaceful and she was a source of constant difficulty to him. She was also jealous because he married Bibi Summana Khatoon (A), who later became the mother of the ninth Imam (A).

In Madina Imam (A) once again gave the people true guidance and taught the religion of Islam freely. People from far and wide would come to Madina to seek knowledge and truth from him.

After Ma'mun died Mu'tasim Billah came to the throne. He was a man who hated the Ahlul Bayt (A) deeply. He knew that it was difficult to act against Imam (A) in his home city of Madina, so he called him to Baghdad.

In the same year the cursed man got Imam (A) poisoned. Imam (A) passed away when he was only 25 years old, and is buried beside his grandfather, Imam Musa al-Kazim (A), at Kazmain in the suburb of Baghdad.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 7

IMAM ALI AN-NAQI (A)

Name:	Ali
Title:	an-Naqi (The Pure) and al-Hadi (The Guide)
Kuniyat:	Abul Hasan
Father:	Imam Muhammad at-Taqi (A)
Mother:	Bibi Summana Khatoon (A)
Birthdate:	15th Zilhaj 212 A.H. in Madina
Imamat:	From 220 A.H. to 254 A.H.
Martyrdom:	3rd Rajab 254 A.H.
Buried :	Samarra, Iraq.

Imam (A) was only 8 years old when his father died. Thus, like his father, he also took over the responsibility of Imamat at a very young age.

The Abbaside Caliph Ma'mun Rashid was succeeded by Mu'tasim, who ruled for 8 years. He was in turn followed by Wathiq Billah. During the 5 years of the reign of Wathiq, Imam (A) and the Shia were allowed to live peacefully. After Wathiq, his brother Mutawakkil came to power.

Mutawakkil was notorious for his free living, immodesty and intoxication. He was the first Abbaside Caliph to hold and participate openly in parties where music, drinking, vain talk and all kinds of evil were practised.

For the first 4 years of his rule, Mutawakkil was occupied in state matters, so he did not trouble Imam (A). After he was free from his affairs, he turned his attention to the activities of Imam (A).

At the time, Imam (A) was preaching to the people in Madina, guiding them to the right path and increasing their faith in Islam. The recognition of his great knowledge and attributes grew day by day. When Mutawakkil heard about his reputation and popularity, he was overcome by jealousy and felt that his own power was threatened.

Mutawakkil disguised his hatred for Imam (A) and wrote to him, respectfully inviting him to come to Samarra to meet him. He claimed that he believed in the position of Imam (A) and wanted to settle matters peacefully.

Although Imam (A) was well aware of Mutawakkil's evil intentions, he knew that the consequences of refusing would be sure death. He therefore reluctantly decided to leave Madina, the beloved city of the Holy Prophet (S). When he arrived in Samarra, Mutawakkil totally ignored him and ordered that he should be put up in an inn provided by the state for beggars and homeless people.

Mutawakkil now showed his true colours by imprisoning Imam (A) under the custody of a cruel hearted man by the name of Zarraqui. This man, however, soon changed his feelings on witnessing the manners and behaviour of Imam (A). Thereafter, Mutawakkil transferred him to the prison of another cruel man called Sayeed. Here Imam (A) remained until Fateh bin Khaqan became the prime minister of Mutawakkil. Fateh was a Shia and could not bear to see the miserable condition of Imam (A), so he used his influence to secure his release. However, Mutawakkil kept a close watch on the activities of Imam (A), trying to prove that he was acting against the government so as to have an excuse to kill him.

Although Mutawakkil was his most deadly enemy, Imam (A) did not return this enmity. Once Mutawakkil happened to suffer from a serious sickness and his own doctors declared him incurable. Mutawakkil's mother approached Imam (A) for help, and he prescribed an ointment that resulted in a spontaneous cure.

Mutawakkil made it his duty to hunt out and kill all the descendants of Abu Talib and made life so terrifying for them that they were scattered far and wide. He did not content himself with this, but also showed his disrespect for the dead by demolishing the grave of Imam Husain (A).

He prohibited anyone from going to Ziyarat to Karbala. If anyone tried, they were put into underground prisons, never to be seen again.

Mutawakkil was finally killed by his own son Muntansir, who succeeded him. He was followed by Mustain Billah and Mu'taz Billah. It was the accursed Mu'taz who decided to kill Imam (A) because he could not bear to see the devotion of the people to him. A messenger of Mu'taz came to Imam (A) and managed to poison him. Imam (A) died within a few hours. The funeral prayers were conducted by his son, Imam Hasan al-Askari (A), and he was buried in Samarra. He was only 42 years at the time.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 8

IMAM HASAN AL-ASKARI (A)

Name:	Hasan
Title:	al-Askari (One who Lives Near the Soldiers)
Kuniyat:	Abu Muhammad
Father:	Imam Ali an-Naqi (A)
Mother:	Bibi Saleel (A)
Birthdate:	10th Rabiul Akhar 232 A.H. in Madina
Imamat:	From 254 A.H. to 260 A.H.
Martyrdom:	8th Rabiul Awwal 260 A.H.
Buried :	Samarra, Iraq.

Imam (A) began his period of Imamah during the reign of Mu'taz Billah. Mu'taz was followed by Mu'tadi and then Mu'tamad. Although the Abbaside Caliphs were busy with their own political problems, they all kept a very strict eye on Imam (A), and restricted his movements. In fact Imam (A) spent the greater part of his life in the prisons of these cruel rulers.

The Abbaside Caliphs were more worried about the presence of Imam (A) because they knew that his son would be the awaited "Mahdi". The Hadith of the Holy Prophet (S) about the Mahdi was well known and the people eagerly awaited for him to come and relieve them from their difficult life under the Abbasides. As a result, the rulers inflicted all sorts of calamities on Imam (A). In spite of the fact that he had very little time with the people, he remained ever busy in guiding them to the right path by imparting his great religious knowledge. He managed to discharge his duties of Imamah with cheer and perseverance. History shows that the commentators of the Holy Qur'an have often quoted the interpretation of verses from Imam (A).

When Mu'tamad came to power he realised that the way to stop the birth of the Mahdi was to make sure that Imam (A) had no chance to marry and have a child. Accordingly, he decided to imprison him for life. Imam (A) passed very difficult times in this prison and often had to go without food or water. He used to offer his prayers by carrying out Tayammum with earth.

One day Mu'tamad decided to torture Imam (A) by putting him before wild lions. To his surprise and disappointment the beasts bowed in respect to Imam (A) and did not harm him at all.

Imam (A) had been in the prison of Mu'tamad in Baghdad for 2 years when Allah set into motion a series of events that was to lead to the birth of the Mahdi, our 12th Imam (A).

At the time, there was a drought in Baghdad and people were desperately praying for rain. A Christian came to Baghdad and claimed that he could make it rain by praying in the Christian manner. As soon as he raised his hands in prayer, it began to rain.

The people became confused and many began to listen to his teachings because of his miraculous powers.

When news of this reached Mu'tamad, he realised that he had to do something to save the situation. After all, he was ruling in the name of Islam and he knew that his power would be threatened if the Muslims began to turn to Christianity.

Not knowing what to do, Mu'tamad at last decided that there was only one person who could help and that was Imam (A). When Mu'tamad came to him, Imam (A) did not refuse to help because it was his duty to defend Islam.

Imam (A) asked Mu'tamad to gather the people and then call the Christian. When the people had assembled, he invited the Christian to demonstrate his ability. When he raised his hands to pray, some rain clouds appeared.

Imam (A) stopped him and asked a soldier to go over to the Christian and bring back what he had in his hands. The soldier returned with a bone. When the Christian was told to resume his prayers, nothing happened. Imam (A) explained to the people that the Christian was using a bone from the body of a Prophet of Allah. It was a special blessing from Allah that whenever a bone of one of His Prophets was raised to the sky, it showered with rain. Now Imam (A) told the people that he himself would pray for the rain to fall.

As he raised his hands, rain clouds appeared immediately. The people began to go to their homes in fear of being drenched, but Imam (A) told them that those clouds were not for Baghdad. Finally some clouds appeared which he said were meant for Baghdad. He told the people to go to their homes and then there were heavy rains and the water shortage in Baghdad came to an end.

The people were delighted at the actions of Imam (A). Many did not know him because he had been in the prison for most of his life. When they asked him his address, he pointed to Mu'tamad and said that he was the king's guest. Mu'tamad was too embarrassed and scared to admit to the people that Imam (A) was his prisoner, so he gave them the address of Imam Ali an-Naqi's (A) house in Samarra. The people escorted Imam (A) to his home and here he lived for a time during which our 12th Imam (A) was born.

Mu'tamad could not bear hearing about the popularity of Imam (A) and tried many times to have him killed. At last he sent a poisoned drink to him which caused the martyrdom of the Imam (A) at the age of 28 years. The funeral prayers were led by our 12th Imam (A) who was only 5 years old. Imam (A) is buried besides his father in Samarra.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 9

IMAM MUHAMMAD AL-MAHDI (A) - PART 1

The Birth of Imam Mahdi (A)

The name of the mother of Imam Mahdi (A) is Bibi Narjis Khatun (A). Her other names were Malika, Sausan and Rayhana. She was the grand-daughter of the Roman Emperor of the time. The history of her arrival into Samarra is narrated by Bashir bin Sulayman as follows:

"Once Imam Ali an-Naqi (A) called for me and said, "Since you are a descendant of our helpers and amongst our friends, I wish to assign to you a responsibility as I place full confidence in you." I asked him to issue his command as I was ready for any service. He said that he desired to purchase a female slave. He asked me to proceed to Baghdad for this purpose and upon my arrival to go to the river bank the next morning. There I would see a number of boats and some female captives for sale. I should approach one Umar bin Yazid who would have for sale a female who would be dressed in two silk clothes. She would disapprove of any buyer and would be speaking in the Roman language. He gave me 120 Dinars and said that the seller would accept only this price. He also gave me a letter written in the Roman language to hand over to the female slave.

I proceeded to Baghdad and in accordance with the signs Imam (A) had given me, I identified the lady and handed the letter to her. Upon reading the letter tears flowed from her eyes and she said to her master that she wanted to be sold only to me and that she would accept no other buyer.

So I returned to my lodging with the lady who placed the letter on her eyes and wept profusely. I asked her why she was kissing the letter and weeping, when she was a visitor from Rome and did not know the author of the letter.

She said, "I am the grand-daughter of Kaiser, the king of Rome, and my name is Malika. My father's name is Prince Yashua and the name of my mother is Shemunussafa. My grandfather had betrothed me to his nephew. One day he called to the palace all the Christian priests, ministers, leaders and courtiers. He seated his nephew on a throne studded with diamonds and asked the priest to perform my marriage with him.

No sooner had the priest commenced the recitation from the book, when the idols on the walls collapsed and the prince fell off the throne which had broken into pieces. Another attempt met with the same result. My grandfather was deeply distressed by this unexplained occurrence.

The same night Prophet Isa (A) appeared in my dreams. He was present with his companions at the same marriage ceremony. A high throne had been placed exactly where the prince's throne had been, and on it was seated an elderly gentleman with a glowing face. Soon some illuminated personages arrived and Prophet Isa (A) rose to welcome them.

I asked someone in my dream as to their identity. He informed me that they were the Prophet of Islam (S) with the eleven Imams (A) from his progeny, who were his successors.

The Prophet of Islam (S) asked Prophet Isa (A) for the hand of Malika, the daughter of Shamunussafa, for his son, pointing at the shining face of Imam Hasan al-Askari (A). (This request was made to Prophet Isa (A) as Malika was the descendant of Prophet Shamoon (A) who was the successor of Prophet Isa (A).)

Prophet Isa (A) invited the views of Prophet Shamoon (A) who instantly consented as he regarded the request a great honour, and so my marriage was performed with Imam Hasan Askari (A).

My eyes abruptly opened and I was full of joy on recalling the dream. However, overcome by fear, I did not narrate this to anyone.

Then, in a dream I saw the daughter of the Prophet of Islam (S) and rose in reverence to her and complained about my condition and my separation from Imam (A). She told me to recite the Kalima to testify to the Unity of Allah and the Prophethood of Muhammad (S) and become a Muslim and then only she would ask Imam (A) to visit me daily in my dream. I became a Muslim and since then, Imam (A) came in my dream and consoled me. Once he told me that my grandfather would send an army to attack a Muslim country and that I should change my dress and join the army as one of the attendants. The Muslims would win and I would be arrested with the others and taken as a prisoners of war."

Bashir continues, "I was overwhelmed with joy on hearing this narration and brought Bibi Narjis Khatun (A) to Samarra to Imam Ali an-Naqi (A) who welcomed her and handed her into the care of his sister Halima Khatun.

Later he arranged for her to marry his son, Imam Hasan al-Askari (A) and prophesied that they would have a son who would be the Hujjat (Proof) of Allah on earth. When the earth will have been saturated with oppression, evil and dishonesty, he would emerge to spread justice and piety."

Imam Mahdi (A) was born in Samarra at dawn on Friday, the 15th of Sha'baan 255 A.H. in the house of his father. Such a brightness shone on his face, that it penetrated through the roof of the house towards the sky. Immediately upon his birth, he first prostrated in Sajdah and raised his right index finger towards the sky and recited the Kalima. This was the practice of all our Imams (A)

During the ceremony of shaving the head of the new-born, Imam Hasan al-Askari (A) instructed his attorney Uthman bin Said Umri to distribute meat and loaves of bread to the poor.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 10

IMAM MUHAMMAD AL- MAHDI (A) - PART 2.

Name:	Muhammad
Title:	al-Mahdi (The Guided One)
Kuniyat:	Abul Qasim
Father:	Imam Hasan al-Askari (A)
Mother:	Bibi Narjis Khatun (A)
Birthdate:	15th Sha'baan 255 A.H. in Samarra
Imamat:	From 260 A.H. till today
Martyrdom:	He is still alive

Imam (A) was born in the time of the Abbaside Caliph Mu'tamad, who had tried to prevent his birth but had been unsuccessful.

Amongst the titles of Imam (A) are Al-Qayim (the Established one), al-Hujjat (the Proof), al-Muntazar (the Awaited one), al-Muntazir (the Waiting one) and Sahib uz-Zaman (the Master of this Age).

Allah granted Imam (A) with wisdom and excellence at birth. Like the Prophets Isa (A) and Yahya (A), he had the ability to speak in infancy and used to recite verses of the Holy Qur'an from the cradle. On the day just following his birth, a servant sneezed near his cradle. Imam (A) immediately said in the usual Muslim tradition, "May Allah have mercy on you" but also added, "Whoever sneezes, his life is assured for at least the next three days."

During his childhood, his father never used to let him stay in one place in the house. He used to move him to a different location every so often, so that Mu'tamad would not come to know of his existence. Imam Hasan al-Askari (A) only let a few trusted companions into the secret of his son and advised them that he would be his successor.

At the time of the death of Imam Hasan al-Askari (A), his brother Ja'far was preparing to lead the funeral prayers when Imam (A) suddenly appeared. He was only 5 years old and most people had never seen him. Imam (A) told his uncle to move aside because only an Imam (A) could lead the funeral prayers for another Imam (A). He led the prayers and then disappeared.

Mu'tamad received the news that the prayers had been led by a young boy, from whose face light shone out like the full moon. He immediately knew that he had failed in his plan and despite all his efforts, the next Imam (A) had been born.

This fact frightened him because he knew of the Hadith of the Holy Prophet (S) that the 12th Imam (A) would be the one who would fill the earth with peace and justice in the same way as it will have been filled with cruelty and injustice. Mu'tamad knew that his own rule was far from just, so he increased his efforts in locating and killing Imam (A) before any harm came to himself. In this he was unsuccessful because Allah protected His Hujjat, who had to serve mankind till the last days.

The Holy Prophet (S) has said that if one dies without knowing the Imam of his time, his death is that of an unbeliever. We must therefore realise our duties to our Imam (A), who is still alive and in Ghaybat (Concealment).

There have been two periods of Ghaybat. The first is known as Ghaybate Sughra (Minor Concealment) which took place from 260 A.H. to 328 A.H. During this time Imam (A) could not be seen by his followers, but they could communicate with him through his special deputies. In the period of Ghaybate Sughra, Imam (A) nominated four deputies. They were:

1. **Uthman bin Said.** He was the companion and attorney of the 10th and 11th Imams (A) also. He was the deputy of Imam (A) for only one and a half years. Imam (A) told him that he would soon die and to appoint his son Muhammad in his place and inform the people. His grave in Baghdad is still visited today.
2. **Muhammad bin Uthman.** He was extremely pious and served Imam (A) for 50 years. At the time of his death in 305 A.H., he was instructed to appoint Husain bin Rauh. He is also buried in Baghdad.
3. **Husain bin Rauh.** He was a man of cheerful character who got on well with the Sunnis also. He was a scholar of a very high standard. He died in 326 A.H.
4. **Ali bin Muhammad Samry.** He was the last deputy of Imam (A) and his office lasted 3 years. Just before his death, he received a message from Imam (A) that he would soon depart from the world and to announce that the period of Ghaybate Sughra would now end.

Imam (A) also told him of the two main signs of his reappearance. The first would be the rising of the army of Sufiani from Syria and secondly, a loud voice would be heard from the sky announcing the presence of Imam (A). The announcement would be understood by every person on earth, whatever language they spoke.

After 68 years the period of Ghaybate Sughra ended and the period of Ghaybate Kubra (Major Concealment) began. This is the period we are living in today.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 11

IMAM MUHAMMAD AL-MAHDI (A) - PART 3

The period of Ghaybate Sughra (Minor Concealment) of the Holy Imam (A) ended with the death of his fourth deputy in the year 328 A.H. During that time he answered the requests and questions of the Shia through his deputies. Then Allah ordered him into Ghaybate Kubra (Major Concealment) and since then he has been concealed from us. In this period there is no public appearance of the Holy Imam (A), nobody can claim to be his deputy and there is no direct way of communication with him.

In place of the special deputies, pious scholars like our Mujtahids, are regarded as representatives of the Holy Imam (A). Indeed he has said:

"Those learned in religion are its defenders. They restrain themselves from temptation and follow their Imam. It is obligatory upon the faithful to follow them because they are our representatives. Those who oppose them have opposed us and those who oppose us have opposed Allah."

Many people wonder what is the use of an Imam who cannot be seen. But just as the earth benefits from the light and heat of the sun even when it is temporarily hidden behind a cloud, so does creation benefit from the Holy Imam (A) even while he is concealed. There are many examples from history where the Holy Imam (A) has guided and assisted his followers.

About a hundred miles from Najaf there was a centre of Shia learning called Hilla where one of our greatest Mujtahids, Allama Hilli (R) lived. Once, several people asked him about a ruling regarding a pregnant woman who had died with the child still alive in the womb. They asked whether she should be buried with the child or should the child be removed from her womb. He advised that the lady be buried in the same condition. When the people were carrying the coffin to the grave, a horseman arrived saying that the Allama had ordered that the child be now removed. The living child was then safely cut away from the dead mother, who was then buried.

A few years later, Allama Hilli (R) was visited by a man with a small child. The man said that this was the same child who had been removed from his mother after the Allama had changed his instructions. The Allama was astonished to hear this because he had not sent any horseman. He immediately realised that it was the Holy Imam (A) who had come to his aid, otherwise he would have been guilty of burying a living child.

From that day he remained in his home and refused to give any rulings on matters of religion in case he made such a mistake again.

In a few days he received a letter from the Holy Imam (A) stating that he should not be concerned and continue to guide the people. If by chance he erred, the Holy Imam (A) would himself correct matters. Allama Hilli (R) went on to become one of the greatest Mujtahids, and today we are indebted to him for his valuable contributions in matters of religious jurisprudence.

In the time of the British rule in Bahrain, they appointed a Sunni Muslim as governor despite the fact that the majority of the population was Shia. There was also a particular Sunni minister who was an enemy of the Shia.

One day he brought a pomegranate (daaram) to the governor. On the pomegranate, the names of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Imam Ali (A) were found, together with the inscription that these were the four Rightful Caliphs of the Muslims. The minister claimed that this was a natural miracle and a sign from Allah that the Shia belief was incorrect. He urged that now the Shia should not be regarded as Muslims and be asked to become "true" Sunnis or be killed or made to pay the taxes of non-Muslims.

The governor was delighted at this occurrence and summoned the Shia scholars and put the three alternatives to them. The Shia were amazed when they saw the fruit and asked for three days to return with their reply. This time was granted to them and they went away wondering what to do. Finally they decided to seek help from the Holy Imam (A).

Three pious scholars were selected and each one was to go out of the city into the forest and pray for the assistance of the Holy Imam (A). On the first two nights the first two scholars spent the whole night in prayers and supplications, but with no success. On the third night, the third scholar, saw an impressive personality approach him at dawn.

The man asked him what the problem was. He replied that if he was truly his Imam then he would surely know the problem. The Holy Imam (A) then replied that he was aware of the difficulty and not to worry. He told the scholar to go with the governor to the minister's house the next day, and insist on going to the top terrace. There he would find two moulds with the false inscription printed on them. These moulds had been fitted into the growing fruit so that, as it became larger, the words were embedded in it. He further told him to ask the minister to break open the fruit and witness the power of Allah.

The next morning matters proceeded as the Holy Imam (A) had ordered. When the minister was told to take everybody on to the top terrace he went pale and began to make excuses. At the governor's insistence, he reluctantly led them to the place, where they found the articles as described by the Holy Imam (A). Eventually the governor asked the minister to break open the fruit. When he did so, black dust flew from it and smeared his eyes and beard. The minister was executed for his treachery while the Shia scholars left with honour and dignity.

These and numerous other events show that the Holy Imam (A) does come to our aid, many times without us even being aware that it is he who has helped us out of a particular difficulty.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 12

IMAM MUHAMMAD AL-MAHDI (A) - PART 4

1. Our Duties During the Period of Ghaybate Kubra

Although the Holy Imam (A) is concealed from us, he is aware of our prayers, deeds, actions and troubles. Any believer who sincerely seeks help from him receives his assistance. During the period of his concealment we are required to perform certain actions to show our true belief in his presence.

It is the duty of every believer to remember the Holy Imam (A) often, and to recite various du'as for his safety and well-being, such as Du'ae Ahad after every morning prayers, Du'ae Nudba on Fridays and Ziyarat after every daily prayer. At the same time, we should constantly ask Allah to hasten the re-appearance of the Holy Imam (A) so that he may improve the affairs of the Muslims and fill the world with peace.

While waiting for the Holy Imam (A) to reappear, we should ensure that the religion of Islam is spread far and wide and that the faith of the believers remains strong. We should open and run religious schools and publish religious books and information.

Whenever the name of the Holy Imam (A) is mentioned, one should stand up and put his right hand on his head as a mark of respect.

Just as we give charity (Sadqa) for the protection of our family, we should also give charity in the name of the Holy Imam (A) for his safety. To show the Holy Imam (A) that we are his sincere followers, we should frequently recite the Holy Qur'an and perform Haj and Ziyarat on his behalf. We should constantly remember him and send Salawat on him.

There are many ways to approach the Holy Imam (A) for his help. In times of difficulty, we can write a petition (Arizah) to him stating our needs, and deposit it into a well or river. This can be done at any time (not necessarily the 15th of Shabaan), and provided the person practises Islam, prays, fasts and restrains himself from committing sin, the Holy Imam (A) does come to his aid.

If there is fear of harm from anybody, one can seek the help of the Holy Imam (A) by praying two raka'at Namaaz, followed by a brief Ziyarat, and then reciting:

*"Ya Mawlaya, Ya Sahibuz Zamaan, ana Mustageethun Bika. Ya Mawlaya, Ikfini Sharra Man Yu'dhini." This means,
"O my Master! O Master of this Age, I need your help. O my Master! Protect me from the one who wishes to do me harm."*

One way to meet the Holy Imam (A) directly is to spend 40 Tuesday nights in the mosque of Sahla in Kufa, after which the Holy Imam (A) will approach you himself, Inshaallah.

It is important to constantly remember our Holy Imam (A) and make preparations for his appearance. Those who do this are undoubtedly blessed with faith from Allah.

The Holy Prophet (S) once told his companions:

"During the last days there will be believers whose faith will each be greater than 25 of you."

When his companions protested saying that they were his supporters and had risked their lives in the Holy Wars, he continued, saying:

"Although these Muslims will have never seen me or their Imam, they will remain true to their faith despite being surrounded by calamities and hostilities caused by their enemies."

2. The Signs Indicating the Reappearance of the Holy Imam (A)

Imam Ali (A) has said that there are some definite signs before the Holy Imam (A) will appear. These are:

1. Dajjal will emerge. He is a wicked, one-eyed creature who will invite the people to worship him, claiming to be God.
2. There will be two eclipses in the Holy month of Ramadhan, contrary to normal calculations. There will be a solar eclipse on the 15th day and a lunar eclipse on the last day.
3. The sun will rise from the west.
4. An image of a man will appear in the sky opposite the sun.
5. A loud voice will be heard from the sky announcing that the Mahdi has come and inviting the people to pay allegiance to him. This voice will be heard and understood by every human being.
6. Sufiani will rise with his army and will wage a fierce war in his attempt to destroy the Holy Imam (A). His army will be swallowed up by the earth between Makka and Madina.

There are many other signs that have been foretold, and some of them can be seen today. However, it is only when the specific events as listed above occur, that one can be sure that the Holy Imam (A) has truly reappeared.

The Holy Imam (A) will first emerge in Makka next to the Holy Ka`ba. At his invitation, 313 Muslims will proceed to Makka to swear the oath of allegiance to him. Thereafter, more Muslims will follow. Let us pray that when the time comes, we are blessed with the opportunity of being of service to our Holy Imam (A).

CLASS 9 - LESSON 13

THE EVENTS OF SAQIFA

While Imam Ali (A) was busy attending to the burial of the Holy Prophet (S), the Muhajireen of Makka and the Ansar of Madina had lost no time in contesting the matter of the Caliphate. They had gathered at a place called Saqifa bani Sa'da and each group was putting forward its merits and claiming the Caliphate.

One can only wonder at their actions, because only two months ago the Holy Prophet (S) had openly declared that Imam Ali (A) would be his successor. In their greed, these so-called Muslims even forgot that their beloved Holy Prophet (S) lay as yet unburied.

The Muhajireen claimed that they had a greater right to the Caliphate because they had been Muslims for longer and had supported the Holy Prophet (S) in Makka when he had very few friends. They also claimed to be his kin and said that they had migrated from their homes in Makka in very difficult circumstances, leaving behind all their wealth and property.

The Ansar insisted that they had a greater right to the Caliphate because they had given the Holy Prophet (S) shelter in Madina when he could live in Makka no longer. They had also protected him in his time of need and had fought at his side in battles against powerful enemies. They recalled how for 13 years he had preached amongst the Makkans and only a handful had become Muslims. They argued that it was the Ansar who had given Islam strength and consolidation.

When Umar bin Khattab and Abu Bakr bin Qahafa reached Saqifa, the arguments had almost been settled in favour of the Ansar, who had chosen Sa'd bin Ubadah to lead the Muslims. Umar did not find this acceptable at all as he had already planned to bring in a man from the Muhajireen. He urged Abu Bakr to make a speech and turn the situation. Abu Bakr rose and said that the Arabs would not accept any Caliph who was not from the tribe of Quraish, which was the tribe of the Holy Prophet (S). He also praised the merits of the Ansar to keep them quiet. The Ansar were not fooled by the clever words of Abu Bakr and while there was some silence, Abu Bakr received help from an unexpected quarter.

The two main tribes of the Ansar were the Aws and Khazraj. The old enmity between them had been settled long ago by the Holy Prophet (S), but now it came out into the open.

To stop the selection of Sa'd bin Ubadah who was the chief of the Khazraj, Bashir bin Sa'd from the tribe of Aws suddenly went forward and gave his allegiance to Abu Bakr. He was followed by three other men from Aws. Suddenly, the tables had turned and now the Muhajireen had the upper hand.

Despite protests from the tribe of Khazraj and a few followers of Imam Ali (A), Abu Bakr was elected as the first Caliph. How strange was their behaviour! While Abu Bakr and Umar sold their religion for their greed, the people of Aws sold their religion for fear that the Khazraj might come to power. The rest of the people followed like sheep, too weak or uncaring to protest. The few who did raise their voices to defend the unrecognised rights of Imam Ali (A) were ignored and outnumbered.

The members of Bani Hashim and some loyal Muslims were too occupied with the passing away of the Holy Prophet (S) to give any thought to worldly affairs. By the time they learnt of the happenings at Saqifa, it was too late to do anything.

When Imam Ali came to exercise his right to the Caliphate as per the orders of the Holy Prophet (S) at Ghadeer Khum, his claim was rejected and he was forced to return to his house. Later, Abu Bakr sent Umar to Bibi Fatimah's (A) house, where Imam Ali (A) and some friends had gathered. Umar had instructions to bring Imam Ali (A) to Abu Bakr to pay the oath of allegiance to him. When Imam Ali (A) refused to do this, Umar threatened to burn down the house. Imam Ali (A) then came out with Abbas and Zubayr. From the open door was heard the sound of Bibi Fatimah (A) weeping.

She was saying,

"O Father, how soon after your death are troubles pouring on our head at the hands of the son of Khattab and the son of Abu Qahafa. How soon they have ignored your words of Ghadeer Khum and your saying that Ali was to you as Haroon was to Musa."

Hearing these heartrending words, the companions of Umar could not keep themselves from weeping and turned back.

However Umar was bent on humiliating Imam Ali (A). He insisted that Imam Ali (A) be led to the mosque tied with a rope so that he could not escape.

The Muslims now saw an amazing sight. The Lion of Allah , the man who was the champion of Badr, Uhud, Khandaq, Khayber and Hunayn, was being led by the cowardly Umar, who had run away from the battle of Uhad when the Holy Prophet (S) was injured.

It was a measure of the patience of Imam Ali (A) that he did not use force in the interests of Islam. He knew that nothing could be gained by fighting, and a civil war would destroy the Muslims.

When Imam Ali (A) was brought in front of Abu Bakr, Umar insisted that if he did not give the oath of allegiance, he should be killed. Imam Ali (A) replied,

"Will you kill a man who is a servant of the Lord and a brother of the Apostle of the Lord?"

Umar then turned to Abu Bakr who had remained silent till then, asking him to decide Imam Ali's (A) fate. However, Abu Bakr said that so long as Bibi Fatimah (A) was alive, he would not force her husband to give allegiance to him.

After that Imam Ali (A) was released and he went directly to the grave of the Holy Prophet (S) where he stood, reflecting on how the attitude of the people had changed now that his brother had left this world.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 14

ABU BAKR - THE FIRST CALIPH

On the day after the people had given him their allegiance at Saqifa, Abu Bakr came to the mosque of the Holy Prophet (S) and seated himself on the pulpit. A large gathering was present to swear the general allegiance. Umar stood nearby, ready to prevent any trouble from the friends and followers of Imam Ali (A).

Abu Bakr then made his first address to the people, during which he said,
"I have been placed in this authority, although I do not like it. By Allah, I would have been pleased if any of you had taken it in my place. If you expect me to act like the Apostle of God, then I can not do it. He was honoured and preserved from error by the Lord, while I am an ordinary man, no better than any of you. When you see me steadfast then obey me, and when you see that I turn aside from the right path then set me aright. I have a devil that seizes me sometimes, and when you see me enraged then avoid me because at that time I will not listen to anything."

What an incredible speech by the new leader of the Muslims! In one go he admitted that he was not the right man for the task and warned that he would probably make mistakes. He knew fully well that his knowledge in religious matters was only average, so he covered any future problems by mentioning his "devil". It was not a speech to inspire any confidence and it is a wonder that he got away with such miserable and apologetic words.

Umar and Abu Bakr were so busy in securing the Caliphate that neither was present at the funeral of the Holy Prophet (S). Although Abu Bakr was now the Caliph, it was not a universally popular choice. The members of Bani Hashim and certain pious Muslims like Zubayr, Miqdaad, Salman, Abu Zar, Ammar, Barra bin Azhab, Khalid bin Sa'id, Abu Ayyub Ansari, Khazima bin Thabit and others refused to acknowledge him, believing that the position belonged to Imam Ali (A).

Imam Ali (A) was naturally grieved at the course of events, but he patiently endured this injustice for the sake of Islam. He turned his attention to collecting the Holy Qur'an and compiling it in order of its revelation.

At the time of his election Abu Bakr was 60 years of age. He was the son of Abu Qahafa. His original names were Abd al-Ka`ba and Atiq. He was one of the earliest converts to Islam, and when he became a Muslim at the age of 38, he was renamed Abdallah. After the marriage of his daughter Ayesha to the Holy Prophet (S), he was called Abu Bakr in reference to his daughter.

Abu Bakr used to trade in cloth and was also a genealogist i.e. he knew the family trees of the Arabs, especially the Quraish. After his election, Umar saw him going to the market to open his shop and said,

"Are you going to trade although you have been given the rule over the Muslims?"

Abu Bakr asked,

"How shall I feed my family?"

Umar then took him to Abu Ubaida, the treasurer of the Bait al-Maal (public treasury), who gave him a yearly allowance of 6000 dirhams, which was more than enough for his household expenses.

One of the first things Abu Bakr did as a Caliph was to contest Bibi Fatimah's (A) ownership to the land of Fadak, an action that she never forgave him for. According to her will, he and Umar were not allowed to attend her funeral.

As Abu Bakr was not recognised as a legitimate heir to the Holy Prophet (S), the various tribes around Arabia stopped paying their taxes to the Muslim state. Abu Bakr decided to stop the voices of dissatisfaction with a show of strength, so he mobilised the Muslim army under various commanders and sent them to reclaim the distant provinces.

On reaching their destination the commanders were instructed to give the Adhaan to test the faith of the local people. If they responded, they were to be asked to repent and submit to the Caliph, if they resisted they were to be attacked and their women and children made prisoners. With these instructions, the various commanders left Madina.

The man who commanded the largest division was a brilliant general named Khalid bin Walid. He was the same man who had caused the defeat of the Muslims at Uhad. Despite his later conversion to Islam, he was a cruel soldier and had no faith at all. He had been sent against Tulaiha, a man claiming to be a new prophet, in the north east. After Tulaiha ran away and the tribes of Bani Hawaazan surrendered, his task was over and his men advised him to return to Madina.

However, Khalid wanted to continue fighting and he led his men southwards to the tribe of Bani Yarb. The chief of this tribe was Malik bin Nuwaira, a noble man who was famous for his generosity, horsemanship and poetry. He also had for his wife a beautiful woman named Laila. When Malik heard that Khalid was approaching at the head of 4,500 men, he realised that it was useless to fight. When the Adhaan was given, he responded to the call with all his men.

Khalid however, would not have any of it and brutally killed Malik and married his widow the same night, despite the time limit fixed by the Holy Prophet (S) for marrying a widow. Although Khalid was later charged by the evidence of his own men, who were shocked by his inhuman conduct, Abu Bakr pardoned him.

The Caliphate of Abu Bakr is filled with incidents where he proved himself to be weak, a poor judge and inadequate in matters of religion. He finally died in 13 A.H. after ruling for 2 years and 3 months.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 15

UMAR - THE SECOND CALIPH

Umar al-Khattab was selected by Abu Bakr to succeed him and he took over the Caliphate on the day of the death of Abu Bakr. In his first address to the people he said,
"O God! Verily I am rough in temper, therefore soften me; and verily I am weak, therefore strengthen me; and verily I am miserly, therefore make me generous".
With these poorly chosen words, Umar began his rule which was to last for 10 years and six months.

Only one year after he came to power Umar made new religious laws.

1. He introduced a special prayer called Tarawih, during the month of Ramadhan. This prayer, which requires recitations of large portions of the Holy Qur'an, is still recited by Sunni Muslims today.
2. He also stated that the minor Haj (Umrae Tamattu) and the temporary marriage (Mut'a) were Haraam from that time onwards.
3. He reduced the number of Takbirs in Namaaze Mayyit from five to four.

Umar had no authority to make these changes because the Holy Prophet (S) has said that the things which he himself had taught to be Halaal and Haraam shall remain unchanged till the Day of Judgement.

Umar was once preaching from the pulpit when Imam Husain (A), who was then only a young boy, stood up and told him,

"Come down from the pulpit of my father".

Umar admitted,

"It is the pulpit of your father, not the pulpit of my father, but who told you to say this?"

Imam Ali (A) who was present, rose and said

"By Allah! No one told him what to say".

During the reign of Umar, the boundaries of the Muslim territories were expanded greatly and many foreign lands were conquered. These included Syria, Jordan, Jerusalem, Egypt and Persia.

Umar placed ill-chosen governors in many of these new lands. In particular, he was responsible for the growth of power of Muawiya bin Abu Sufyan in Syria.

By initially placing Muawiya's brother Yazid in power, Umar was the originator of the massacre in Kerbala which took place at the orders of Muawiya's evil son Yazid.

Umar's knowledge of the Holy Qur'an was weak. He used to make rounds in the streets of Madina at night with a whip in his hand. Once he passed a house where he heard someone singing. He jumped over the back wall and found a man and woman drinking wine. He shouted in anger,

"O enemies of God, did you think your sin would pass unnoticed?"

The man replied,

"O Umar, if I am guilty of one sin, then you are guilty of three wrong acts according to the Holy Qur'an".

Umar could not believe his ears and challenged the man to prove his words. The man quoted three verses of the Holy Qur'an:

1. ***O you who believe, avoid much suspicion ... and do not spy.***
Hujuraat, 49 : 12 (Part)

2. ***...It is not good that you should enter your houses from behind but the righteous one is he who guards himself against evil and enters the houses by the doors...***
Baqarah, 2 : 189 (Part)

3. ***O you who believe, do not enter houses other than your own houses until you have asked for permission and greeted those within...***
Nur 24 : 27 (Part)

On hearing this Umar was ashamed of his ignorance of the Holy Qur'an and asked for forgiveness for the intrusion. After the man promised not to touch wine again, Umar left. Many such incidents occurred and Umar was embarrassed time and time again by his poor command of the verses of the Holy Qur'an. It is a wonder that he still thought himself fit to rule the Muslims!

Numerous incidents have been noted in history where Umar made hasty and incorrect decisions which were changed by the presence and intervention of Imam Ali (A).

Once Umar ordered that a mad woman who had been found guilty of adultery should be whipped as per the prescribed punishment. As the poor woman was being dragged along on the way to be flogged, Imam Ali (A) passed by and asked what was going on. When he was informed of the situation he said,

"Do you not know that the Holy Prophet (S) has said that the order of punishment should be withheld from a mad person till they recover, because they are not in control of their actions".

Umar then ordered the woman to be released. Such incidents happened so many times that Umar used to say,

"If it was not for Ali, Umar would have been destroyed".

Umar had a rule that non-Arabs were not allowed to enter Madina. However, he relaxed the rule for one man only at the request of his friend Mughira bin Sho'iba, the governor of Kufa. The man in question was called Abu Lulu. He was not an Arab, but he was a good carpenter, blacksmith and engraver.

Abu Lulu was heavily taxed for the privilege of residing in Madina and asked Umar to increase his allowance. Umar refused and instead commissioned him to build a windmill for grinding grain.

Abu Lulu promised him that he would build him such a windmill that people would always talk about it. The way he said it made Umar wonder whether he was being threatened and his fears proved correct.

A few days later Abu Lulu ambushed Umar in the early hours of the morning and stabbed him in the stomach three times with a double-bladed dagger. One of these wounds was fatal and Umar died three days later on 26th Zilhaj at the age of 63 years.

The death of the man who was responsible for hurting the feelings of Bibi Fatima (A), when he tore her deed of ownership of Fadak, is celebrated as 'Eide Zahra. May the curse of Allah be on Umar al-Khattab for all time.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 16

UTHMAN - THE THIRD CALIPH

Just before he died, Umar nominated six companions of the Holy Prophet (S), to choose from amongst themselves his successor. The six were Abdur Rahman bin Awf, Uthman bin Affan, Ali bin Abu Talib (A), Sa'd bin Abi Waqqaas, Zubayr bin Awam and Talha bin Ubaidullah.

This was a very clever move by Umar because he had chosen people who would not readily favour Imam Ali (A). Furthermore, he had instructed that if any of these six challenged the appointment of the person who was finally declared Caliph, he should be killed.

After his death the nominees met but could not reach any conclusion. At last, Abdur Rahman said that he would forego his claim for the Caliphate if they allowed him to elect the Caliph. Uthman agreed to this but Imam Ali (A) said that he would only agree if Abdur Rahman promised not to give consideration to family but judge only on merit. He said this because Uthman was the brother-in-law of Abdur Rahman and the two were friends. Abdur Rahman accepted the condition and then talked to each of the candidates privately.

Zubayr was in favour of Imam Ali (A), Talha was not present in Madina and how Sa'd voted is uncertain. Both Imam Ali (A) and Uthman pressed their own claim. Therefore the selection narrowed down to these two men.

The next day the mosque was crowded because everyone wanted to know who their new Caliph would be. Abdur Rahman had discussed the situation with Amr al-Aas, who was a shrewd politician with no religious morals.

Acting on Amr's advice, Abdur Rahman asked Imam Ali (A) to become Caliph as long as he would agree to rule by the Holy Qur'an, the teachings of the Holy Prophet (S) and the practices of Abu Bakr and Umar.

As expected, Imam Ali (A) agreed to the first two conditions but flatly refused to follow the practices of Abu Bakr and Umar. When Uthman was given the same conditions, he agreed at once and was thus declared the third Caliph.

Imam Ali (A) told Abdur Rahman,

"It is not the first time I have been deprived of my rights, but you have not been free of self interest in your decision."

On hearing these words Abdur Rahman warned Imam Ali (A) that Umar had said that the one who defies the selection should be killed, whereupon Imam Ali (A) left the gathering in disgust.

The choice of Uthman was a bad mistake and in later years the man almost destroyed the faith and dignity of the Muslims. His first speech to the public was a very poor effort and he lamely finished by saying,

"We were never preachers but the Lord will teach us."

From the first day of his rule, Uthman began systematically replacing the governors of the major provinces with his own relatives from the Bani Umayyah.

Thus, in Kufa he appointed his drunkard brother Waleed to replace Sa'd bin Waqqaas. In Egypt he replaced Amr al-Aas with his foster brother Abdallah bin Abi Sarh, who has been cursed in the Holy Qur'an (Surae An'am, verse 93) for inventing lies and saying that he had revelations from Allah.

He recalled back to Madina Hakam bin al-Aas, who had been exiled for life by the Holy Prophet (S). Hakam was Uthman's uncle and Uthman made Hakam's evil son Marwan his secretary and gave him huge gifts from the property of the Muslims. He also gave Marwan the property of Fadak and made him his son-in-law.

As Uthman began to squander the public money on his relatives openly, resentment against him grew from all quarters. Ammar Yasir, an old and respected companion of the Holy Prophet (S) challenged Uthman's conduct and was severely beaten for his words. This action against a man like Ammar outraged the people.

In Syria, another great companion of the Holy Prophet (S), Abu Zar Ghifari, was going around warning the governor Muawiya and the people against their evil ways. Muawiya sent Abu Zar to Madina where Uthman had the bad manners to insult him. He then cruelly banished the old man to Rabazha, in the desert of Najd, where he died of neglect two years later.

Uthman's high-handed behaviour and the cruelties and excesses of his worthless governors caused unrest throughout the empire. Riots broke out everywhere. In Madina itself there were calls to remove Uthman.

The Caliph was beset from all sides and turned to Imam Ali (A) to appeal on his behalf. Imam Ali (A) agreed, provided Uthman publicly apologised for his mistakes. In despair, Uthman mounted the pulpit and with a voice broken by sobs and tears he begged the forgiveness of Allah and assured the public that he was repentant. Because of his sorry state and the intervention of Imam Ali (A) the people were quietened.

However, the Egyptians insisted that their cruel governor Abdallah bin Sarh be replaced by Muhammad the son of Abu Bakr. He was a pious man who had been raised from his infancy by Imam Ali (A), who had married Abu Bakr's widow.

Uthman agreed to this demand, but secretly sent a letter to his brother in Egypt warning him of the situation and advising him to kill Muhammad bin Abu Bakr on his arrival. Unfortunately for Uthman, this messenger was intercepted on the way to Egypt by Muhammad himself. The Egyptians were outraged by the Caliph's treachery and returned to Madina in a furious mood. The news of his actions spread and finally Uthman had to take refuge in his palace which was then surrounded by people calling for his blood.

After a siege of 40 days the palace was broken into and Uthman was killed by repeated stab wounds. His body was buried in the graveyard of the Jews. He was 82 years old and had ruled for 11 years.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 17

THE CALIPHATE OF IMAM ALI (A)

After the murder of Uthman, there was great unrest in the city of Madina due to the absence of any government. The main citizens of the city called for the immediate election of a Caliph to end the danger of a civil war. Two men had ambitions to become Caliph. They were Talha and Zubayr, both brothers-in-law of Ayesha, the widow of the Holy Prophet (S). However, to the great disadvantage of these two candidates, she was in Makka for pilgrimage at the time.

The people of Madina, however, wanted Imam Ali (A) to be their Caliph. He was a man admired by his friends and enemies alike for his courage, piety, eloquence, wisdom and kinship to the Holy Prophet (S). After having been ruled by weak men the people now turned to the man who had been nominated to lead them in the first place. However, Imam Ali (A) refused their offer and said that he would rather remain as an advisor to any Caliph they elected.

The people of Madina insisted that they would follow none but him and at last he reluctantly agreed. He said,

"I must say frankly at the outset that I shall deal with you according to the Holy Qur'an and to the best of my knowledge and judgement."

This condition was accepted, but Imam Ali (A) asked that his nomination be made in public so that if anyone had anything to say, they would have an opportunity to do so.

Next day in the mosque of Madina most of the Muslims were present to pay allegiance to Imam Ali (A), including Talha and Zubayr. Imam Ali (A) thus took over as the fourth Caliph of the Muslims.

After a few days Talha and Zubayr and a few others came to Imam Ali (A) asking that the murder of Uthman be avenged. Imam Ali (A) knew fully well that some of these same people had been responsible for the riots that led to Uthman's death, and now they just wanted to stir up trouble. However, he told them that he had called Uthman's wife Naila and his secretary Marwan and asked them if they could identify the culprits since they had been with Uthman at the time of his death. Marwan did not come and Naila said that Uthman was killed by two men who she did not recognise. Under the circumstances Imam Ali (A) could do nothing more unless further evidence came to light.

Meanwhile, the members of Bani Umayyah, most of whom had not paid allegiance to Imam Ali (A), began to leave Madina. Imam Ali (A) knew that they were up to no good and in anticipation of future trouble, he began to secure the good will of the Quraish and Ansar in Madina.

The first matter that Imam Ali (A) attended to was replacing the worthless governors of Uthman. Most of the governors took over their new posts but the governor to Kufa was stopped from entering that city while the governor to Syria was stopped by Muawiya's men and both had to return to Madina.

The Bani Umayyah, with the help of their leader Muawiya, began to stir up trouble for Imam Ali (A) and his government. In the mosque of Damascus, Muawiya displayed the blood-stained shirt of Uthman and the chopped-off fingers of his wife Naila, to incite the anger of the people. They swore that they would take revenge for Uthman's death and Muawiya began to blame Imam Ali (A) for doing nothing to bring the murderers to justice.

When his governors returned from Kufa and Syria, Imam Ali (A) wrote letters to Abu Musa Ash'ari in Kufa and Muawiya in Syria demanding that they give way to the new governors.

Abu Musa wrote back from Kufa, stating that the Kufans were at the service of the new Caliph, but Muawiya did not send a reply for three months. Finally, his messenger arrived with a letter. When Imam Ali (A) opened the letter it contained no words at all and was a gesture of outright defiance. In addition the messenger informed him that Muawiya had gathered 60,000 men ready to avenge the murder of Uthman on Imam Ali (A).

This news astonished Imam Ali (A) and he said,

"I call God to witness that I am not guilty and that it is a false charge."

The cunning Muawiya had managed to rouse the hatred of the people of Syria against Imam Ali (A) by using Uthman's murder as an excuse. However, Imam Ali (A) declared that only the sword would decide matters between Muawiya and himself and he gave orders for an army to be gathered to march to Syria.

Meanwhile, Talha and Zubayr had plans of their own and proceeded to Makka on the excuse of performing Umrah. On the way they joined Ayesha the widow of the Holy Prophet (S) who was also using the death of Uthman to create trouble for Imam Ali (A), whom she had always hated.

Thus, Imam Ali (A) was faced with a double threat to the security of his government - from Ayesha in Makka and from Muawiya in Syria.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 18

THE BATTLE OF JAMAL

Ayesha, the widow of the Holy Prophet (S), was in Makka for the pilgrimage when Uthman was killed. She had always expected either Talha or Zubayr to succeed him and when she heard of Imam Ali's (A) appointment as Caliph, she was very upset.

Ayesha was a jealous and cunning woman, one who had caused the Holy Prophet (S) a lot of annoyance. Now she declared herself as the avenger of the murder of Uthman and prepared to wage war against Imam Ali (A), whom she had always hated.

She managed to recruit the support of the powerful clan of Bani Umayyah, to whom Uthman had belonged. The ex-governors of Uthman, who had been replaced by Imam Ali (A), also joined her and the ex-governor of Yemen provided her with the means of financing her war by giving her the treasure he had stolen from Yemen when he was deposed. Talha and Zubayr also joined her, in spite of their oath of allegiance to Imam Ali (A). A large number of aimless drifters were also paid to enlist in the army.

The preparations of war having been completed, Ayesha's army proceeded to Basra. Before leaving, she had asked Umme Salma, a faithful widow of the Holy Prophet (S), to accompany her. Umme Salma had indignantly refused, reminding Ayesha that the Holy Prophet (S) had said that Imam Ali (A) was his successor and whoever disobeyed him, disobeyed the Holy Prophet (S) himself. She also reminded her of the time when he had addressed all his wives saying that the dogs of Hawab would bark at one of his wives, who would be part of a rebellious mob. She then warned Ayesha not to be fooled by the words of Talha and Zubayr who would only entangle her in wrong deeds. This advice had a sobering effect on Ayesha, who almost gave up her plan. However, her adopted son, Abdallah bin Zubayr, convinced her to go ahead.

Ayesha mounted on a litter on the camel al-Askar, and marched from Makka at the head of 1,000 men. On her right was Talha and on her left, Zubayr. On their way many more joined them, swelling their numbers to 3,000.

On the way to Basra, the rebel army received news that Imam Ali (A) had come out of Madina in their pursuit. They decided to leave the main road and proceed to Basra through a different route. When they passed through the valley of Hawab the dogs of the village surrounded Ayesha's camel, barking loudly. She was immediately worried and asked for the name of the place. When she was told it was Hawab, she was shocked and she despairingly cried,

"Alas! Alas! I am the wretched woman of Hawab. The Prophet of Allah had already warned me against this."

She got off her camel and refused to go any further. Talha and Zubayr tried to convince her that the place was not Hawab and even brought 50 witnesses to testify to this lie, but in vain.

Finally, they raised a cry that Imam Ali (A) was approaching, and Ayesha, struck with terror, quickly remounted and the march was resumed.

The army reached Basra and camped in the suburbs. Ayesha, Talha and Zubayr began talks with the leading citizens of Basra, trying to get their support for their cause. In this they failed and were subjected to ridicule.

Finally, some of them entered the city and during the congregational prayers, they treacherously captured Imam Ali's (A) governor, Uthman bin Huneif, after killing 40 of his guards. Fighting broke out in the city and many of Imam Ali's (A) supporters were killed before Ayesha gained control of Basra. The governor, Uthman, suffered the indignity of having his eyebrows, moustache and beard plucked out, hair by hair, before being turned out of the city.

Meanwhile, Imam Ali (A) had received information about Ayesha's plans from Umme Salma, and news of the disturbances in Makka and Basra also came through.

Imam Ali (A) made immediate plans to march towards Basra but could only raise 900 men with difficulty. This was because the people were reluctant to fight Ayesha, who was considered to be the Mother of the Faithful by virtue of being the widow of the Holy Prophet (S). Also, Muawiya had succeeded in making people think that Imam Ali (A) was somehow involved in the murder of Uthman.

In Kufa, Imam Hasan (A) raised 9,000 men, and other units arrived as well, all joining Imam Ali (A) at his camp at Zhi-Q'ar. Meanwhile, Uthman bin Huneif arrived with fresh news from Basra. Imam Ali (A) smiled and said to him that he had left them as an old man but had returned as a beardless youth.

Imam Ali (A) wrote letters to Ayesha, Talha and Zubayr, warning them against the unwise steps they had taken, but his words were ignored. Finally he marched to Basra at the head of 20,000 men.

Ayesha's forces numbered 30,000 but they were mostly raw recruits, while Imam Ali's army was full of battle veterans.

In Basra, the sight of Imam Ali's (A) men in battle formation filled Ayesha and her comrades with terror. Imam Ali (A) talked at length with Talha and Zubayr, negotiating for peace. He reminded them of the words of the Holy Prophet (S) regarding his authority, which they both admitted they had heard. Zubayr was ashamed of his deeds and left the scene but Talha remained doubtful. Ayesha was furious at the conduct of the two and ordered a raid at night time to end the chance of peace.

The next morning Ayesha mounted her camel al-Askar and urged her troops to prepare for battle. Thus began the unfortunate Battle of Jamal (Camel), where Muslims fought

each other for the first time. Although outnumbered, Imam Ali (A) and his soldiers were too skilled to be defeated. Soon victory began to incline towards Imam Ali (A). Talha was wounded and later died. Ayesha's camel was brought down and Imam Ali (A) ordered his adopted son Muhammad bin Abu Bakr to take care of Ayesha who was his half-sister.

After that, the battle was soon over, and Imam Ali (A) declared a general amnesty for all the rebels.

Ayesha's plans had come to nothing and 10,000 men lay dead as a result of her jealousy. In this battle Imam Ali (A) restrained his men from taking any war booty and all property found on the battle ground was gathered in the mosque of Basra, from where the owners could claim their possessions.

CLASS 9 - LESSON 19

THE BATTLE OF SIFFIN

After the battle of Jamal was over, Imam Ali (A) returned from Basra to Kufa in Rajab of 36 A.H. He decided to set up the capital of his government in Kufa because it was more centrally placed in the Muslim Empire, and he could halt Muawiya's progress into Iraq.

Before marching towards Muawiya, Imam Ali (A) tried to settle matters peacefully by sending Jarir, the governor of Hamdan, to Syria as an envoy. However, Jarir became so engrossed in the entertainment that Muawiya put his way, that he wasted his time in Syria. He finally returned three months later with the useless message that peace could only be negotiated if the murderers of Uthman were brought to justice.

Imam Ali (A) decided that matters could be only decided by war, so he marched without delay through the Mesopotamian desert to Riqqa at the banks of the Euphrates. After crossing the river by constructing a bridge they came across the Syrian outposts at Sur al-Rum. There were a few skirmishes between the armies but the Syrians gave way and in the month of Zilhaj of 36 A.H., the army of Imam Ali (A) came into sight of Muawiya's main forces, which had already camped at Siffin.

At Siffin, Muawiya had stationed his general, Abul Awr, with 10,000 men on the river to stop the access to water for Imam Ali's (A) army. Imam Ali (A) sent a message to Muawiya that this action was not necessary because, after all, the people whom he was refusing water were also Muslims. He further assured Muawiya that if the situation had been reversed, the river would have been open to both armies. However, Muawiya sent back a message that the murderers of Uthman had not allowed him any water when they had laid siege to his palace, and Muawiya was avenging that action.

Imam Ali (A) knew that this situation would be intolerable and he launched an attack under Malike Ashtar. The brave commander secured the river after heavy fighting and Abul Awr was dislodged from its banks. Having control of the river, Imam Ali (A) kept to his word and allowed unlimited access to Muawiya's side.

Imam Ali (A) divided his army of 90,000 men into seven units each commanded by brave warriors. Muawiya similarly divided his army of 120,000 men into seven columns. Everyday one column from each army would engage one another in combat.

The battles were mostly restricted to single combats or small groups fighting because Imam Ali (A) was trying to avoid the serious loss of Muslim lives that would have resulted from a full scale battle. The month of Zilhaj ended in this manner and the month of Muharram, in which fighting is forbidden, set in. During this month, Imam Ali (A) tried hard to resolve the crisis by negotiation, but to no avail. He pointed out that he was ready to punish the murderers of Uthman if Muawiya would point them out.

However, Muawiya did not wish the matter to end so easily, because it was the issue of Uthman's unavenged death that had enabled him to gather such a large army.

In the month of Safar fighting was resumed. For a week, fierce battles raged all day. Everyday the conflict got more severe and bitter. In the second week Imam Ali (A) came to the battlefield for the first time. After a series of single combats, in which he overcame every opponent with his awesome skill, no body would come to fight him.

He was forced to disguise himself to get anybody to challenge him. On one such occasion, an unsuspecting warrior from Muawiya's side attacked Imam Ali (A). The man was struck with a single sweep of Zulfiqar with such force by Imam Ali (A) that the upper half of his body was severed from the lower half. Those who watched thought that the blow had missed, and it was only when the horse moved and the two halves fell to the ground, that people realised what had happened.

Day after day the loss of lives increased, especially in the ranks of Muawiya. However, Imam Ali (A) also lost several distinguished Companions of the Holy Prophet (S) from his side. Amongst them were Hashim bin Utba and Ammar Yasir.

Ammar, who was 93 years old, had been informed by the Holy Prophet (S) that he would die fighting rebels and enemies of Islam. This was well known by all, and when he died there was some commotion in Muawiya's army. He managed to quieten them down by saying that, since Ammar had been brought to fight by Imam Ali (A), it was he who was the cause of his death. He said that Imam Ali (A) therefore was the rebel that the prophecy talked about, and not Muawiya. This incredible argument was accepted by his men and war continued until the 13th night.

On that day the commander-in-chief of Imam Ali's (A) army, Malike Ashtar, attacked the enemy ferociously. His shout of Allahu Akbar, every time he killed a man, was heard no less than 400 times.

The hero of the battle began to bring on victory when Amr al-Aas on Muawiya's side said,

"Call the enemy to the Word of God."

Muawiya eagerly accepted these words and his men raised 500 copies of the Holy Qur'an on their spears, saying that the Holy Book would decide their differences. This trick had a strange effect on some people in the army of Imam Ali (A), who dropped their weapons and agreed that the Holy Qur'an should decide the matter.

Imam Ali (A) stepped into the battlefield urging his men to continue fighting and ignore the tricks of Muawiya, but they disobeyed. The war thus came to an unsatisfactory end, and it was decided that one representative from each side should meet to reach a final decision.

Imam Ali (A) wanted Abdullah bin Abbas or Malike Ashtar to represent him, but his men insisted that Abu Musa Ash'ari be chosen instead. Muawiya appointed Amr al-Aas to represent him. Abu Musa had neither wit nor tact and was no match for the cunning Amr al-Aas.

In the meeting that took place some months later, Abu Musa was badly tricked by Amr into giving up the rights of Imam Ali (A).

Muawiya thus managed to escape certain defeat at Siffin. The damage done at the battle was great. Muawiya lost 45,000 men and 25,000 men were killed on the side of Imam Ali (A).

CLASS 9 - LESSON 20

THE BATTLE OF NAHRAWAN

After the unsatisfactory conclusion to the Battle of Siffin, Imam Ali (A) returned with his army back to Kufa on the 13th of Safar 37 A.H. During the march, a group of 12,000 men kept themselves at a distance from the main part of the army.

The group was furious at the way things had ended at Siffin. These were the Kharjites (Kharjite means one who rebels against religion). They were the same people who had put down their weapons on the battlefield. Now they said that Imam Ali (A) had betrayed Islam by agreeing to the truce and should have referred judgement to the Holy Qur'an alone or continued to fight. They demanded that he repent for this great sin.

When the army neared Kufa, the Kharjites camped at a village named Harura. They started saying that all Muslims were equal and nobody could rule over the other. In this way, they denounced both Imam Ali (A) and Muawiya and said that their belief was in "*La Hukma Illa Lillah*", meaning, "*No Rulership except by Allah alone.*"

Imam Ali (A) went to their camp and tried to explain to them that they were misunderstanding the words "*La Hukma Illa Lillah*", and that in accepting the arbitration (peace talks) at Siffin, he had not gone against the teachings of the Holy Qur'an.

He pointed out that they themselves were at fault, because they should never have laid down their arms and forced him to call back Malike Ashtar, who was at the point of securing victory. He reminded them that they had pressed for the arbitration and had forced him to appoint Abu Musa Ash'ari as their representative. He told them that he found their present behaviour very strange, considering their involvement in Siffin. To this they admitted that they had sinned but now they had repented for it and he should do the same.

Imam Ali (A) replied that he was a true believer and did not have to repent because he had not committed any sin.

The Kharjites refused to accept the words of Imam Ali (A) and awaited the decision of Amr al-Aas and Abu Musa Ash'ari. When they learnt of the decision they decided to revolt, and they set up their headquarters at Nahrawan, a few miles from Baghdad. Some people came from Basra to join the rebels.

Meanwhile, Imam Ali (A) received news that trouble was brewing in Nahrawan. He was involved in raising another army to march against Muawiya and wrote to the Kharjites that it was high time they joined his army. However, the Kharjites insultingly wrote back that they would think about it when he repented for his mistake at Siffin.

Imam Ali (A) had already started towards Muawiya when he received the news that the Kharjites had raided the town of Mada'in but had been repelled back to their camp. They were now committing horrible crimes around Nahrawan and killing all those who did not accept their viewpoint.

There was a danger that the Kharjites might attack Kufa while Imam Ali (A) and his men were marching towards Muawiya, so Imam Ali (A) decided to stop them. He changed his course eastward, crossed the river Tigris and approached Nahrawan.

Imam Ali (A) sent a messenger to the Kharjites demanding that those people who had murdered innocent Muslims around their camp should be surrendered. The Kharjites replied that they were all equally responsible for killing these sinners.

There was some reluctance in the army of Imam Ali (A) to fight the Kharjites, because they had been their companions against Muawiya at Siffin. Imam Ali (A) himself did not desire the bloodshed of these misguided fanatics, so he placed his battle standard outside their camp and announced that all those who gathered around it or returned to their homes would be safe.

This announcement had the desired effect and most of the Kharjites began to leave. In the end, only a core of 1,800 die-hards were left under the command of Abdallah bin Wahab. These Kharjites swore that they would fight Imam Ali (A) at any cost.

The Kharjites attacked Imam Ali's (A) army with desperate courage. However, they did not stand a chance against the superior army that faced them and they were all killed except nine men. These nine managed to flee to Basra and elsewhere, where they spread the fire of their hatred and recruited more followers. Three years later, in 40 A.H., it was the Kharjites who sent out three assassins to kill Imam Ali (A), Muawiya and Amr al-Aas. The latter two survived but Imam Ali (A) was martyred following Ibne Muljam's cowardly attack in the mosque of Kufa.

Having disposed of the Kharjites at Nahrawan, Imam Ali (A) resumed his march to Syria. However, the chiefs of his followers urged him to stop at Kufa to let the men rest before the long journey and to enable the army to repair their weapons and armours. Imam Ali (A) agreed to this request and camped at Nukhayla outside Kufa. The soldiers were allowed to leave the camp for a day.

On the next day, hardly any men returned and at length, Imam Ali (A) entered Kufa and gave a stern sermon to the people. However, nobody came forward and finally, Imam Ali (A) turned away from them in disappointment. The Syrian expedition was abandoned, never to be resumed.