



Children's Muharram Workshop

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Session 1
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Session 1
(Night of Muharram 1, 1429 / January 9, 2008)

In His Name, the Lord of Husayn(A)

I seek refuge with Allah, from Shaytaan, the Rejected One.

I begin with the name of Allah,
the Most Kind,
the Most Loving.

All praise belongs to Allah, the Lord and Sustainer of the Universes,
and may His blessings and peace be upon our beloved messenger,
Muhammad(S), and upon the pure and pure family of Muhammad(S).

May Allah's mercy be far away from those Evil ones, who harmed,
oppressed and went against Muhammad(S) and the family of
Muhammad(S), from the very first one, until the Day of Judgement.

Ameen, O Lord and Sustainer of the Universes.

In the Holy Quran, Allah says:

*"And Allah sets forth an example to those who believe the wife of
Firon when she said: My Lord! build for me a house with Thee in the
garden and deliver me from Firon and his doing, and deliver me
from the unjust people:"*

(Quran, Surah at-Tahreem) (The Banning) (Surah 66), Ayah 11)

Today, is the first night of the first month of the Islamic Calendar,
Muharram. Every year during the month of Muharram, the Shia Muslims
gather together in Masjids and Imambaras (Husayniyyahs).

Why do they do this?

Muharram for Muslims, especially Shia Muslims, is a very special month. It is the month when Imam Husayn(A) stood up against a bully, against a nasty person, who didn't want the people to listen to what Allah was saying to them.

Who was this nasty person? Who was Imam Husayn(A)?

The nasty person was Yazid(L). He was the son of Muawiyah(L), who was the son of Abu Sufyan(L), who was from the beginning of Islam a nasty person who used to bully and pick on the Muslims, simply because they were Muslim.

Imam Husayn(A), was the grandson of our beloved Prophet Muhammad(S), he was the son of Imam Ali(A) and Lady Fatema az-Zahra(A). He was the brother of Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba(A) and the father of Imam Zayn ul-Abideen(A).

He was the third Imam of the Muslims.

Imam Husayn(A) used to treat all the people with love and respect, he would always treat everyone with kindness, however, when it came to bully's, and those who wanted to harm others, like his father Imam Ali(A), Imam Husayn(A) was strong and brave.

Imam Husayn(A) was very respectful of his elders, and of those younger than him, he would always be polite with his parents and his brothers and sisters, and would never treat anyone unkindly.

Yazid(L), on the other hand, was a very brutish person, he used to openly insult people, he would use bad language and was known for being drunk all the time. He would be very rude to both men and women, and would treat the poor and the unfortunate very badly. You could say that he would rub salt into their wounds and hurt them

more.

Now, we as Muslims, have been given in Quran many pieces of advice. The verse that we recited at the start of this session - from Surah at-Tahreem - is one of those verses.

In this verse, we can see that Allah Himself is giving us an example of the wife of Firon, and he is giving us the example of something she asked Allah for:

"And Allah sets forth an example to those who believe the wife of Firon when she said: My Lord! build for me a house with Thee in the garden and deliver me from Firon and his doing, and deliver me from the unjust people:"

She asked Allah to give her a house in the garden (or heaven), and to deliver her from Firon and his actions, and to deliver her from those people who were unjust (or bad, nasty, evil).

This is a very important verse for us, and we can take a good lesson from it. The lesson we take from it, will help us to better understand the reasons why we all gather in the month of Muharram, and have majlises to remember the event of Ashura, and it will give us the understanding to be able to become true followers of Imam Husayn(A) and his companions.

Firon - who was the Pharaoh - used to treat people very badly, he would oppress them and take away their rights. In the Quran, Allah has explained to us the story of Firon, in Surah Qasas (the Narrations) (Surah 28), Ayaat 4-6:

"Surely Firon exalted himself in the land and made its people into parties, weakening one party from among them; he slaughtered their sons and let their women live; surely he was one of the mischief-

makers.

And We desired to bestow a favour upon those who were deemed weak in the land, and to make them the Imams, and to make them the heirs,

And to grant them power in the land, and to make Firon and Haman and their hosts see from them what they feared."

In this ayah of Quran, we can see that Allah is clearly explaining to us, that Firon used to be very proud and think of himself as something big and great (while forgetting that in Allah's eyes it is good deeds and love for Allah that gives one greatness).

He used to make a lot of mischief amongst the people, he would kill the young men (sons) from one group, but let their women (daughters) stay alive, thereby breaking everyone's hearts and making them very, very sad. He would cause mischief by stirring trouble between one group and another, and creates problems for the people. As Allah says himself, he was a mischief-maker.

Now, we were saying that the wife of Firon, had prayed to Allah, asking him to deliver her from Firon and his actions. What does this mean? Especially since Allah is giving us the example of this blessed lady?

It means that Allah is unhappy with someone who creates mischief and causes problems for people. That means in every way. If for example, we make problems for our parents or our teachers, then that is a bad thing and something which makes Allah unhappy with us. If however, we stand up to the bully, who is making problems for others, then this is something noble and good – provided we're not going to put ourselves in trouble.

Now, this bully, can be either inside ourselves (the little voice that tells us to be naughty), or it can be outside (a real person), who

wants to be naughty and wants us to be naughty. Our own bad habits are in-fact bully's that bully us into doing bad things. We need to think very deeply about this.

As Muslims, especially those who are lovers of Imam Husayn(A), and we'll all be doing matam shortly for Imam Husayn(A) and the Martyrs of Karbala, and we'll be remembering them and crying, we need to fight those bad habits, and bad thoughts, we need to be selective in who we spend time with, those who we call our friends. Insha Allah, we can through learning about Karbala and the event of Ashura, learn how we can be like Shah Qasim(A), Ali Akbar(A), Aun(A) and Muhammad(A), and how we can be like the young girl left behind by Imam Husayn(A), left behind in Madinah.

The reasons for Imam Husayn(A) leaving Madinah are many, and we could spend all of Muharram discussing them, but the most important reason is that Imam Husayn(A) could never give bayat (allegiance / loyalty) to someone like Yazid(L). Yazid(L) had demanded that Imam Husayn(A) give him loyalty, and become his friend.

This was something completely unacceptable to Imam Husayn(A), not only because Yazid(L) was such a nasty and evil person, but because Islamically it is wrong to side with a bully, with a nasty person who unjustly picks on others, because when you side with a bully, you are the same as a bully - especially when those who are being bullied look at you, they see just another bully. For Imam Husayn(A) this was completely unacceptable and impossible. Therefore he had no choice but to leave Madinah and go to Makkah, before moving on towards Kufa, and finally coming to a stop on the barren plain of Karbala ...

We will discuss this further insha Allah in the next session, for now, I want you all to close your eyes, and picture the scene that I am describing, think about the sorrow and pain, and remember Imam Husayn(A) and the suffering of the Ahl al-Bayt(A) of Prophet

Muhammad(S). You should know that every one of your tears is like a diamond that is gathered up by our beloved Fatema az-Zahra(A), and which are very precious to her ... so close your eyes and picture the scene:

I want you to picture a scene, imagine Madinah, the city of the Prophet(S), if you've not been there, create a picture in your minds eye of a small city, an area, perhaps somewhere like where you live.

I want you to imagine, Imam Husayn(A), visiting the graves of the Prophet(S), his mother, Fatema az-Zahra(A), and his brother, Imam Hasan al-Mujtaba(A), imagine seeing Imam Husayn(A), saying good bye to them, with a heavy heart and with tears, sad to be going away.

Imagine the mood in that town, everyone, from the workers in the market-place, to the cleaners of the Prophet(S)'s Masjid are all very sad, the women are sad, the men are sad, the young men are sad.

The women are crying and wondering who will teach them about Islam, and who will answer their questions after Zaynab(A) leaves. The young men are wondering what they will do after Abbas(A) and Ali Akbar(A) leave, who will be with them? Everyone was wondering what they would do without their beloved Imam Husayn(A)? Who would they go to for help, when they didn't have anywhere else to turn?

Imagine yourself if your dad is going away, how sad will you be, especially if you don't know when he'll be coming back? Can you imagine how sad this would be? If you take that feeling, and multiply it by a thousand, that's perhaps how the people of Madinah felt when they saw Imam Husayn(A) and his family and companions leaving Madinah, it was a very sad time.

All the people knew fully well why Imam Husayn(A) must leave, but

they still tried – just like anyone would ask their father to stay – because being away from him was just so painful.

For one young girl it was especially sad and extra painful, because for this girl, it was not just her Imam(A) leaving, it was also her beloved father, and she was very close to him. This young girl was Fatema as-Sugrah(A). She couldn't go with her father, and had to stay back in Madinah because she was very unwell.

Imagine, if everyone in your family are going away, you don't know where exactly and you don't know when they will come back, and you can't be with them, because you are very unwell, how sad would it be for you? Can you imagine the tears flowing from your eyes? This was how it was for Fatema as-Sugrah(A), the daughter of Imam Husayn(A).

As Imam Husayn(A), members of his family, and his companions left, they looked back to Madinah, and through the tears in his eyes, Imam Husayn(A) saw Fatema as-Sugrah(A) with her great grandmother Umm Salmah(A), who was hugging the young girl, as the tears continued to flow ...

Ya Husayn! Ya Husayn! Ya Husayn!

Session 1 - Exercise

We have discussed in this session, bad habits that we might have within ourselves, as we know these are very bad, and things that we need to fix and remove from ourselves.

Make a list of your bad habits, and give them each a colour.

List the ten worst habits you have (see the example list below for an idea and starting point), and then make the intention during these ten days of Muharram until Ashura, to fight each one of the ten bad habits so that by the time it's Ashura, you've removed at least ten of your bad habits:

Example List:

1. Being rude
2. Gossiping
3. Fighting
4. Cheating
5. Boasting
6. Lying
7. Swearing
8. Shouting
9. Being mean
10. Bullying

Your ten worst habits:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Now make a promise to Allah, Imam Husayn(A) and yourself, and let's try to remove these ten bad habits from yourself, insha Allah.

Remember, like Imam Husayn(A), we can only make bayat (be loyal to) Allah and goodness, and any bad habits have to be removed and treated like Yazid(L). Just like Imam Husayn(A) refused to make bayat (allegiance or loyalty) to Yazid(L), we too have to refuse to make bayat to our bad habits, and only be loyal to our good habits that bring us closer to Allah:

BAY'AT

BAY'AT

I promise to follow and obey you !

WHO DO YOU GIVE
BAY'AT TO?

