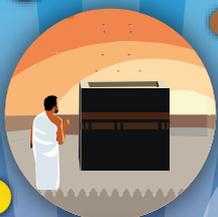


Excellent Stories

VOLUME 1



4-7 years



Preface

“We narrate to you the most excellent of stories by Our revealing to you this Qur’an; though before this you were certainly one of those who did not know.”

Qur’an – 12:3 – Suratu Yusuf: Aya 3

No matter how diverse we may be as human beings, no matter how our individual backgrounds may differ, or how accomplished we may be, moral stories inspire us to ponder and touch our lives in different ways.

Through stories which are in essence a narration of historical events, not only do we get pleasure, but we are also inspired, become hopeful, get strength and learn to recognise our own strengths and shortcomings.

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1. Hannaanaa

How the palm trunk (the trunk of the date tree) complained when they made a mimbar for the Prophet (pbuh).

Hannaanaa is the sound of distress made by a baby camel when it is separated from its mother.

You see, there were so many people who wanted to hear him and see the blessed face of the Prophet (pbuh) that the companions had to build a mimbar for him.

Then they heard the crying of the palm trunk on whom for so long the Prophet (pbuh) had leant against to talk to the people.

Gently, the Prophet (pbuh) talked to the palm trunk in clear language.

“What is the matter, dear friend! What do you want?”

It said:

“I cannot bear the parting from you. I was your support and now you have run away from me to the mimbar.”

The Prophet (pbuh) said:

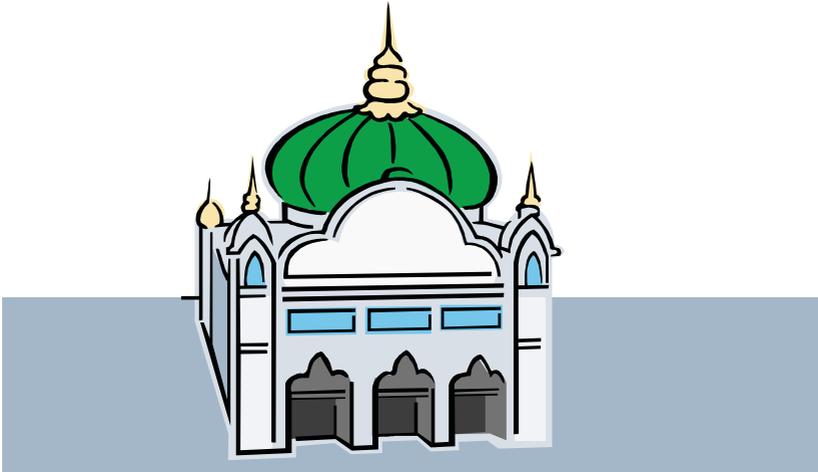
“Do you wish to be made a date-palm, so that the people of the East and the West can gather fruit from you? Or do you want Allah to make you a cypress tree in the world, so that you remain everlastingly fresh?”



It replied,
"I wish to live forever with you"

The Prophet (pbuh) assured the trunk that it would be with him in Janna.

When the palm trunk dried up and died, it was buried there and a pillar was raised in it's memory. The pillar is within the mihraab of Masjidun Nabi in Madina,



There are three types of pillars (sutun) in Masjidun Nabi:

1. Half coloured and half white – These are the pillars in Riyadhul Janna (the piece of Janna) – the area between the mimbar and the grave of the Prophet (pbuh)
2. A golden edge on the bottom half – These used to be palm trunks and were also part of the original masjid but not in Riyadhul Janna.
3. All coloured – These were added after the wafat of the Prophet (pbuh)

2. Azazeel

His name was Azazeel. He is also known as Iblees. He used to pray a lot and even used to give lectures to the angels.

One day there was a notice in the heavens which said that someone was going to be ordered out of the heavens.

All the angels were very worried because they thought it might be one of them. They went to Jibrail who was one of the most important angels to ask him whether he could do anything. Jibrail said he too was worried because it might be himself.

Jibrail suggested that they go to Azazeel because he was very clever. Azazeel told them not to worry at all for he would pray to Allah for all of them. He forgot himself thinking he was the best and it could never be him. He had kibr (pride).



Allah made the first human being - Prophet Adam (pbuh) He asked all the angels including Azazeel to do sijda to Prophet Adam (pbuh)

Iblees disobeyed Allah and refused to do sijda saying that he was better than Prophet Adam (pbuh) and so he would not do sijda.

"I am made out of fire and he is made out of earth!" he told Allah.

You see, he was only looking at the outside and not the inside and more important, He disobeyed Allah.

He was ordered out of heaven.



3. The Wise Ant

As Prophet Sulayman (pbuh) was walking through the valley of the ants, the chief of the ants warned his fellow ants of the coming of the army advising them to go into their homes to avoid being crushed.

When Prophet Sulayman (pbuh) heard the warning of the chief of the ants, he smiled and walked up to him gently lifting him on the palm of his hand.

"Don't you know that I am the Prophet of Allah and that I would not harm any of Allah's creatures?" Sulayman asked the chief ant.

"Of course I do!" said the chief

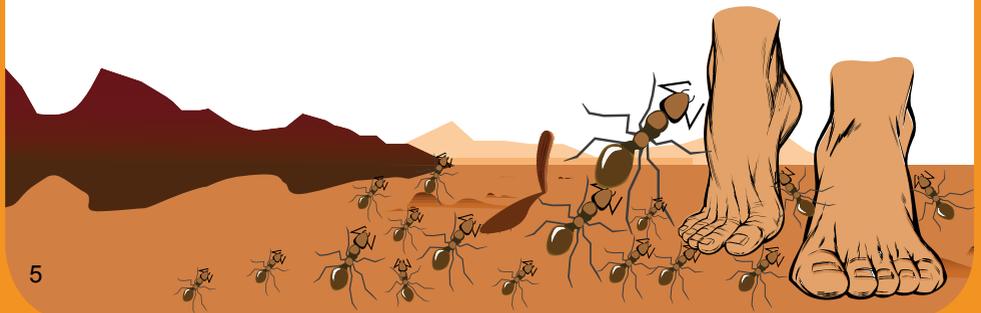
"But, I feared that if my fellow ants would see the grandeur of your army, they would underestimate the grace of Allah which they receive and may become ungrateful."

The chief ant then asked Prophet Sulayman (pbuh)

"May I ask you a question?"

"Yes!" said Prophet Sulayman (pbuh)

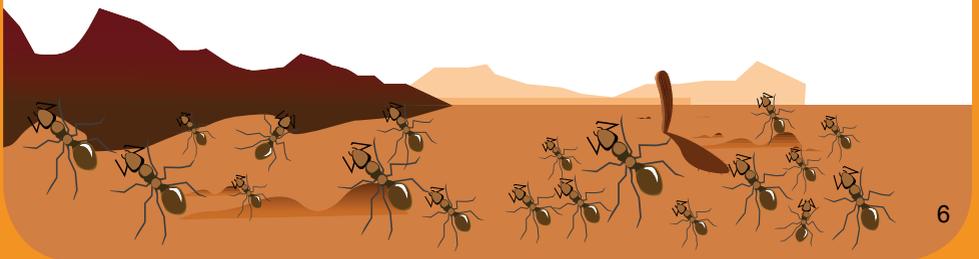
"Who is better at this moment of time?"
asked the chief ant



"Why don't you answer the question yourself!" Prophet Sulayman (pbuh) said.

The chief ant replied:

"At this moment in time, I am better than you for I am standing on the palm of a Prophet of Allah, whilst you O Prophet! are standing on the ground!"



4. Rich Man, Poor Man

One day the Prophet (pbuh) was sitting in a circle with his companions when a poor man came in. He was wearing tattered clothes. It is the akhlaq of a 'majlis' to sit where there is a vacant place and not look for a particular place.

The poor man saw a space and sat down. It so happened that the space was near a rich man who gathered his clothes and pulled them towards himself as if to create a space between him and the poor man. It seemed that the rich man was feeling a little uneasy.

The Prophet (pbuh) was watching the behaviour of the rich man. He addressed him saying:

"Did you fear that some of his poverty might stick to you?"

The rich man replied:

"No! Ya Rasulallah! "

The Prophet (pbuh) asked:

"Did you fear that something out of your wealth might be transferred to him?"

The rich man replied :

"No! Ya Rasulallah!"



The Prophet (pbuh) asked a further question:

"Did you fear that your clothes might get dirtied by touching his clothes?"

The rich man replied:

"No! Ya Rasulallah!"

"Then why did you move yourself away from him?" asked the Prophet (pbuh)

The rich man replied:

"Ya Rasulallah! I admit I made a grave mistake. I would like to make amends and I would like to give half my wealth to this Muslim brother of mine."

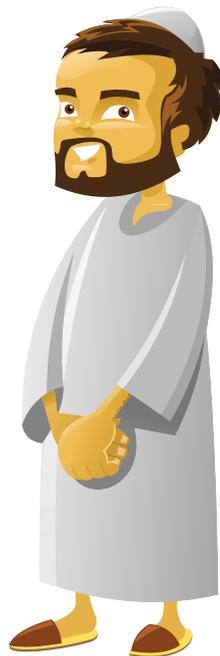
When the poor man heard his words he said:

"Ya Rasulallah! I don't want to take his offer!"

The companions who were present there were surprised and said : "Why?"

The poor man replied:

"I fear that with the wealth I am offered I too may become proud and one day may make one of my brothers in Islam feel small in the way in which he (the rich man) has treated me today."



5. *Guests are special*

A father and son were once the guests of Imam Ali (pbuh). Imam made them comfortable and sat opposite them talking to them. It was time for the meal to be served.

After food had been served and eaten, Imam's servant Qambar brought a basin and a jug of water for the guests to wash their hands.

Imam took the jug himself and asked the father to extend his hands so he could pour the water.

The guest said:

"How can it be that my Imam serves me! It should be the other way?"

Imam Ali (pbuh) replied:

"Here is your brother in Islam, eager to serve his brother and earn the pleasure of Allah. Why do you prevent it?"

The guest extended his hands.

Imam told him:

"Wash your hands thoroughly. Do not hurry thinking that I should be free of this duty quickly."

When it was the son's turn to wash his hands Imam told his son Muhammad Hanafiyya to hold the jug and wash the son's hands.

Imam then told him:

"I washed your fathers' hands. My son washed your hands. If your father had not been my guest today, I would have washed your hands myself. But Allah loves to see that when a father and son are present in a place, the father enjoys a privilege and a priority."

The Prophet (pbuh) has also said:

"A guest is a guide who leads one to the path to Janna."



6. AND MY MUM....

Zakariyya came to Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) and said:
"I was a Christian but have now become a Muslim."
"It was the Qur'an that convinced me!"

Imam told Zakariyya:
"Indeed Allah has guided you to Islam and made your heart shine with it's light."

"But my parents are not Muslims, Ya Imam!" Zakariyya said.

Imam replied:
"Take care of your mother. Be good and kind to her...."

When he returned home he looked after his mother, being even more gentle and kind to her than before. His mum noticed the change in her son's behaviour and said:
"What is the reason of you honouring me so much after you have become a Muslim?"



Zakariyya told her what Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) had said.

She replied:

"My son! Your religion is better than mine. Guide me so that I may become a Muslim."

Zakariyya taught her the basis of Islam and she became a Muslim. She offered the Dhuhr, 'Asr, Maghrib & Eisha Salaa of that day as taught to her by her son and died a Muslim at midnight on that day.



7. The Neighbour

There was once a great Mujtahid called Syed Jawad Ameli.

He was having his dinner one day when there was a knock on the door. It was a messenger from his teacher Syed Mahdi Bahrul Uloom.

"Your teacher has sent for you immediately. He refuses to eat his dinner until he sees you"

Syed Jawad left his dinner and quickly rushed to his teacher's house. When he entered the house he saw that his teacher was looking very upset. As soon as he saw Syed Jawad he said: "...Don't you feel ashamed of yourself....Do you not respect Allah...???"

Syed Jawad was confused! He did not know what he had done wrong so he asked his teacher to tell him.

Syed Mahdi said:

"It is now a whole week that your neighbour and his family are without food. Your neighbour asked a grocer for some dates saying they would pay him when they had the money but the grocer would not agree. Your neighbour returned home empty handed without any food for his family"



Syed Jawad said he did not know about this.

"That is why I am upset with you. How can you not know (not care) about your neighbour? They have had seven days of difficulty and you do not know about it! Well! if you had known and not done anything then you would not even be a Muslim" Syed Mahdi said.

Then Syed Mahdi told him to take all the food that was before him to his neighbour .

"Sit with him to eat so he does not feel shy and take this money for him and put it under a cushion or rug so he does not feel embarrassed. When you have done this let me know for I will not eat until then."



8. Big and Small Sins

Two men came to Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) and said that they would like to do Tawba (ask for forgiveness and put right) for their sins.

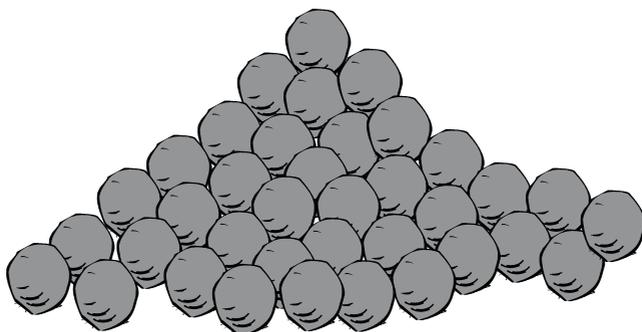
The first man said that he had done a lot of small sins whilst the second said that he had committed two big sins.

Imam told the first man to pick one small pebble for each small sin that he had committed.

He told the second man to bring a large boulder for each of his big sins.

After a while both men came back to Imam having brought what they were asked to bring.

Imam now asked both of them to put back every stone in its place.



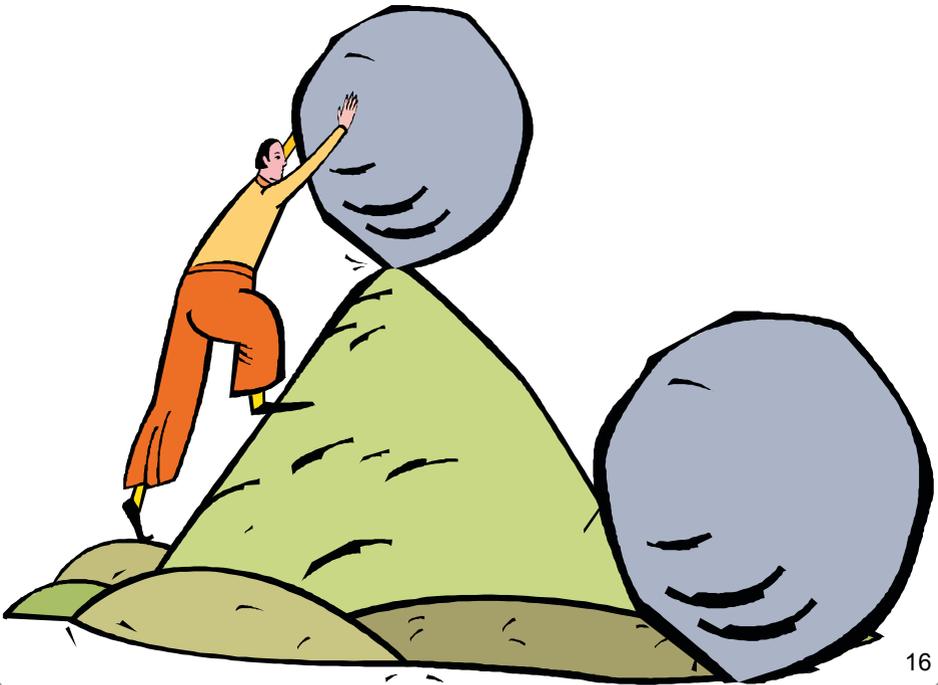
The man with the two large boulders found it difficult to carry them back in their original place but eventually he managed.

The man with the many small pebbles could not remember where he had picked all of them so he could not put them all back in their original place.

It is very difficult to do Tawba for the sins which seem small because we forget and take them for granted.

Imam Ali (pbuh) has said:

“The biggest sin is that which the doer considers the smallest.”



9. The Baby in the Box

Firaun was furious! His astrologer (a person who forecasts what will happen in the future) had just told him that a baby was to be born who would be the king of Egypt and will take the place of Firaun.

Firaun ordered his soldiers to kill all the baby boys born in the land.

The mother of Prophet Musa (pbuh) was very worried. She was going to have her baby soon. She prayed to Allah to keep her baby safe.

When Prophet Musa (pbuh) was born, his mother went to the carpenter and asked him to make a waterproof box. He made her a box out of wood and lined it so the water would not seep in. She placed Prophet Musa (pbuh) in the box and let the box float down the river. She knew that Allah would keep him safe as He had given her the idea.

Firaun's wife, Sayyida Asiya, found the box and when she opened it she saw the most beautiful baby she had ever seen. She had no children of her own and she asked Firaun if she could keep the baby as her own. Firaun agreed.



The baby however would not take milk from anyone. Prophet Musa's sister was watching all this. She went to Sayyida Asiya and said that she knew someone who was very good with children. Asiya agreed for her to bring the lady. Prophet Musa's (pbuh) sister ran back to her mother and took her to Sayyida Asiya. As soon as prophet Musa (pbuh) saw his mother he took milk from her. Sayyida Asiya asked her to look after the baby.

Allah had saved Prophet Musa (pbuh). He was brought up in the palace of Firaun, looked after by his own mother.



10. The Baby Speaks

Imran was a good man. His wife was called Hanna.

Hanna made a promise to Allah that she would give her baby to serve Allah. She asked Allah to keep her baby safe from Shaitan. When her baby was born she called her Maryam.

Hanna kept her promise and took Baby Maryam to the temple in Jerusalem. Here Sayyida Maryam was looked after by Prophet Zakariyya (pbuh) who was her uncle.

One day when she was a young lady, an angel came to her room and told her that she was to have a baby whose name would be Isa - son of Maryam. He told her that he would be a Prophet of Allah and would speak even when an infant.



Sayyida Maryam asked the angel how she could have a baby without a husband. The angel told her that Allah could do anything He wished.

After Prophet Isa (pbuh) was born, Sayyida Maryam was worried as to how she would tell the people of the town about him. She was ordered by Allah to keep silent and let the baby talk.

When the people of the town asked her about the baby she pointed to him in her arms. Baby Isa (pbuh) said:
"I am a servant of Allah; He has given me the book (Injeel) and made me a Prophet"

The book that Allah had given him is called the Injeel.

He grew up to teach the people about Allah telling them there was only one God.

He was given the miracle of curing the sick and making dead people come back to life.

11. Zam Zam

Prophet Ibraheem (pbuh) was an old man when Allah granted him a son called Ismail (pbuh). He too was a prophet.

The mother of Prophet Ismail (pbuh) was Sayyida Hajra (pbuh) She was a very good lady.

Prophet Ibraheem (pbuh) took Sayyida Hajra (pbuh) and his son Prophet Ismail (pbuh) to a place which is today called Makka.

Just as Prophet Ibraheem (pbuh) prepared to leave, Sayyida Hajra (pbuh) called out to him saying:

"O Ibraheem! Is this an order of my Rabb?"

"Yes!" said Prophet Ibraheem (pbuh)

"Then go" she said "For He will be with us."

Soon Sayyida Hajra (pbuh) found that all their food and water had finished. She went to look for water. There were two mountains called Safa and Marwa in Makka. She climbed up on the mountain of Safa first and looked around. She saw water and ran towards it until she reached the mountain of Marwa. Then she looked back and saw water again. She ran towards it until she reached Safa. She was seeing a mirage. But she did not give up! She ran back and forth seven times.



As she ran backwards and forwards, she used to glance towards her baby son Ismail to keep an eye on him.

Suddenly she saw her baby son Ismail (pbuh) with a spring of water near his feet. The spring is still there today and it is called Zam Zam which means - Stop! Stop! (As this is what Sayyida Hajra said when she saw the water for she feared that her baby would drown). It may also mean 'lots of water'.

Because of the spring of Zam Zam many people came to live there and soon Makka became the central town of Arabia.



12. Hadithul Kisaa

The Prophet (pbuh) once went to the house of his daughter Sayyida Fatima Zahra (pbuh) and asked her to give him a 'Kisaa' - which is like a blanket or a large cloak. She gave him the Kisaa and he wrapped himself with it.

There was a knock on the door. It was her son Imam Hasan (pbuh) He greeted his mother and then said that he could feel the presence of his grandfather Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) in the house. She said he was beneath the Kisaa. Imam Hasan (pbuh) went to his grandfather and asked him if he could join him beneath the Kisaa and the Prophet (pbuh) agreed.

Imam Husayn (pbuh) then knocked, greeted his mother and said that he could feel that his grandfather was in the house. His mother told him he was under the Kisaa with Imam Hasan (pbuh). Imam Husayn (pbuh) went to his grandfather and asked whether he could join them beneath the Kisaa. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) agreed and Imam Husayn (pbuh) joined them both beneath the Kisaa.

Imam Ali (pbuh) then knocked on the door and greeted Sayyida Fatima Zahra. Imam Ali (pbuh) said that he could feel that his cousin - Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was there. Sayyida Fatima Zahra (pbuh) said the Prophet (pbuh) was with their two sons beneath the Kisaa. Imam Ali (pbuh) asked the Prophet (pbuh) whether he could join them. The Prophet (pbuh) agreed and Imam Ali (pbuh) joined them all beneath the Kisaa.

Sayyida Fatima Zahra (pbuh) came up to them and asked if she could also join them under the Kisaa. The Prophet (pbuh) agreed and she did so.

The angel Jibrail asked Allah who was under the Kisaa? Allah said it was Sayyida Fatima Zahra (pbuh), her father, her husband and her two sons .

Jibrail obtained permission from Allah to join them and came down to earth and asked the Prophet's (pbuh) permission. The Prophet (pbuh) agreed. Jibrail joined them under the Kisaa.

He had brought a message of Allah which is an aya of the Qur'an in which Allah called them the Ahlul bayt (people of the House).

They are also known as Ahlul Kisaa (people of the cloak).



13. The World of Dreams

He had only one wish. To be able to see the Prophet (pbuh) with his own eyes.

Often he would see the Prophet (pbuh) in his dreams. Days would pass, and as he would tend to the camels, his mind would think about Allah.

Madina, that blessed city, where he wanted to go was far far away. Above all, he had an elderly mother to look after who did not like to be parted from him

One day, his only wish was granted. His mum sensed his wanting, and asked him herself to go for a half a day. Thus as a freed bird, with joy he went to Madina.

Eagerly wanting to meet the Prophet (pbuh) he reached Madina, and asked for the way to his house.

Soon he found himself at the door of the friend of his heart. Just as he was taught, he knocked sending salaams on those in the house. Umme Salma asked him who he was!

“Uways from Qaran” he replied

Umme Salma had heard the Prophet talk of him. But the Prophet wasn't home, nor was he to be back soon.

The shadow of sadness showed on his face. He could not stay longer for he had promised his mum and with a heavy heart he left for Yemen.

When the prophet returned from his journey, with joy of one who has found a lost one, he said "I sense the smell of my friend from Qaran", only to find out that his faithful friend has proved to be a perfect Muslim, kind and considerate to his mother, a keeper of his promises.

They never met in person, yet Uways-e- Qarani is one the companions, their meeting place was the wonderful world of dreams.

The Prophet (pbuh) said:
"You are in Yemen, yet you are near me; you are near me, yet you are in Yemen."



14. The World is an Egg

Hisham ibn Hakam was a companion of Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh). One day the famous learned atheist (one who does not believe in Allah), Abdullah Deisani, asked him: "Do you believe in a Creator?"

"Yes" replied Hisham

"Has He power over everything" Abdullah Deisani asked

"He is All-powerful" said Hisham

"Can He put the whole world in an egg is such a way that neither the egg becomes bigger nor the world smaller?"

"Give me some time to answer" asked Hisham

"You have one year to answer" said Abdullah Deisani

Hisham decided to go on a journey to meet Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh)

"O son of the Prophet, Abdullah Deisani has asked me a question and I am not able to answer him..."

Imam asked: "What is the question?"

Hisham gave the details of the question.

The Imam replied:

"O Hisham, how many physical sense do you have?"

"Five" replied Hisham

"Which is the smallest of them?"

"My eye"

"What is the size of the lens of your eyes?"

"It is just like a lentil or even smaller than that"

Imam continued:

"Look around and above you and tell me what you see?"

"I see the sky, the earth, houses, forests, hills and rivers!"

"He who is capable of putting all these things, which you are seeing, in a very small lentil or less than that, can also put the whole world in an egg, such that neither the world becomes smaller nor the egg bigger."



15. Only for Allah

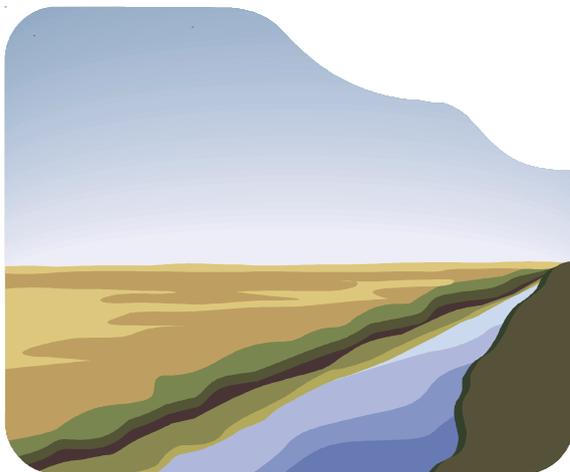
During the battle of Khandaq (ditch) the Muslims had dug a wide ditch around Madina for protection.

One of the soldiers from the enemy side called Amr bin Abdiwaad was very well known for his strength and courage. He jumped over the ditch and landed amongst the Muslims.

Everybody was terrified. Only Imam Ali (pbuh) came to fight him.

Soon Imam threw Amr on the ground and sat on him ready to kill him. Just then Amr spat in Imam's face.

All those around thought that Imam would kill him faster because of what he had done but they saw Imam Ali (pbuh) get off Amr's chest and walk away. They were surprised to see how Imam could leave such a dangerous enemy just like that.



Amr attacked again and Imam fought bravely eventually killing him.

After the battle was over people asked Imam why he had let Amr go the first time.

Imam replied:

"I wanted to kill him only for Allah. When he spat on me he made me angry. Had I killed him then I would not have killed him for Allah only but also to satisfy my anger. So I let him free. When my anger was controlled, I killed him for Allah only."

16. “But Allah Made Me Do It...”

He was a student of Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh). One day he was telling his friends about the things he did not believe in which Imam had taught him. They were : Shaitan would go to Jahannam. How could this happen when Shaitan was made of fire so how could fire burn fire?

Allah cannot be seen. How could we not see Allah when we can see everything that exists. The student believed that we will see Allah on the day of Qiyama welcoming people to Janna.

Every person is responsible for his/her own action. The student said that Allah makes people do things.

When Bahlool (a companion of Imam who pretended to be mad) heard this he picked up a lump of clay and threw it at the student's forehead. He was caught and brought before the Khalifa.

Both the student and Bahlool were present in the court.

The student was asked what complaint he had against Bahlool. He replied:

"My head hurts as a result of the lump of clay that Bahlool threw at my head."

Bahlool said:

"Show me the pain!"

The student said:

"How can I show you pain which is invisible?"

"But you yourself told your friends that what exists has to be seen by the eyes"

Bahloul continued:

"And that the lump of mud hurt you is also not true because according to your belief, how can something made of earth cause pain to man who is also made of earth?"

"You also told your friends that Allah makes a person do things so why are you complaining against me?"

The student withdrew his case and walked out of the court unable to answer Bahloul.



17. "ALLAHU AKBER"

Abu Sina was a very famous Muslim philosopher and scientist whose books were used in the Universities of the world for many years.

He had many students who admired him greatly. He had one young student who was very attached to him. His name was Bahman Yar. He was also the most clever of Abu Sina's students. Bahman Yar was so amazed by the lectures of Abu Sina that he often wondered why Abu Sina did not claim to be a Prophet.

On one of the coldest nights of the year, when there was a heavy snowfall; both Abu Sina and his student were sleeping in one room under warm thick blankets.

In the dark the student was still asking questions and the teacher replied. Bahman Yar told Abu Sina:

"With all this knowledge you have and being a master of all the sciences why do you not declare yourself a Prophet?"

Abu Sina smiled and did not say anything.

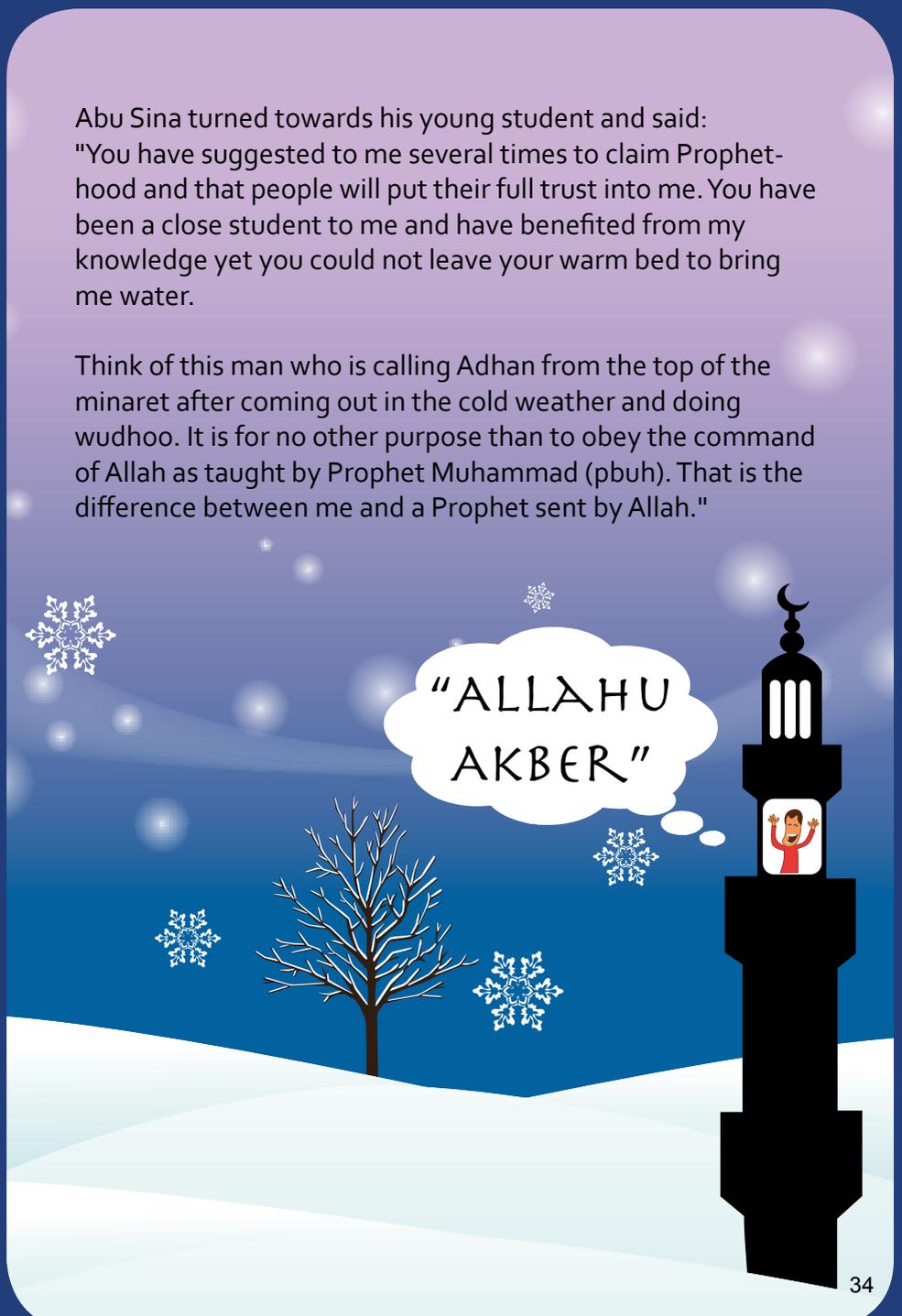
As the night progressed, the weather turned colder. Abu Sina got up feeling very thirsty. He called out to Bahman Yar to bring him some water.

Bahman Yar on seeing the snow outside made feeble excuses and went back to sleep.

A little while later the muadhin called out Adhan for Fajr salaa. Both Abu Sina and Bahman Yar heard the Adhan.

Abu Sina turned towards his young student and said:
"You have suggested to me several times to claim Prophet-
hood and that people will put their full trust into me. You have
been a close student to me and have benefited from my
knowledge yet you could not leave your warm bed to bring
me water.

Think of this man who is calling Adhan from the top of the
minaret after coming out in the cold weather and doing
wudhoo. It is for no other purpose than to obey the command
of Allah as taught by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). That is the
difference between me and a Prophet sent by Allah."



"ALLAHU
AKBER"

18. The Brain - The Guide

In a large mosque in Basra (Iraq), there was once a big crowd gathered around a man called Amr bin Ubad who was discussing Imama (divinely appointed leaders/guides after the Prophet (pbuh)). The crowd was asking him questions on the subject.

A young student called Hisham came and sat down in the first row. He asked Amr bin Ubad if he could ask some questions. He was allowed to do so and the following conversation took place:

Hisham: "May I know if you have eyes?"

Amr: "Young man! Is this a question to be asked?"

Hisham: "Whatever it may be, this is my question to which I shall appreciate your answer"

Amr: "All right! Although it is a foolish question you are free to ask. Yes! I have eyes."

Hisham: "What is their use?"

Amr: "With eyes I can see and differentiate colours."

Hisham: "And do you have a nose?"

Amr: "Yes, I do."

Hisham: "What is it's use?"

Amr: "I smell with it."



Hisham: "And do you have a mouth?"

Amr: "Yes, I do, and before you ask I can talk to people and eat and drink with it."

Hisham: "Do you have ears?"

Amr: Yes, I have two ears with which I hear"

Hisham: "And do you have a brain?"

Amr: "Yes! Allah granted me that too with which I am able to tell the difference between things which is felt and sensed by the hands, eyes, ears, mouth, nose, tongue.....With it's help can solve a lot of things"

Hisham: "So does that mean that all the other organs like the eyes, nose, mouth cannot work properly without the brain."

Amr: "No! None of them can work without the brain."

Hisham: "So from what you have said, Allah has made the brain to guide all the other organs...."

Amr: "Yes!"

Hisham: "If Allah does not even leave the bodily organs without the guidance of the brain, how is it possible that He could leave millions of his creatures without an Imam to guide and solve their problems?"

"On hearing this argument, and having no answer to give, Amr bin Ubayd kept quiet thinking about what the young man has said."

19. Who is My Neighbour in Janna?

The young man heard a knock on the door!

"Who is it?" he asked

"I am a stranger from a far away place." Came the reply. He had been taught that guests were a rahma (mercy) from Allah, so he invited the stranger in making him feel welcome.

Every now and then, the young man would ask permission to be excused for a while. He would disappear for a moment or two and would return to attend to the guest. It happened many times.

The guest asked of his excuse for these frequent disappearances. The young man told him that it was his mum who was old and not very well who he went to attend to.

The guest asked whether he could say salaam to the young man's mum.

"Of course, you can" said the young man "I'm sure she'll be very pleased."

The guest saw an old and weak woman in bed who had no strength in her. The only thing that was moving was her mouth, silently saying something he could not understand.

The guest asked the young man whether he knew what his mum was saying.

The young man nodded and said: "From a young age, she has always prayed for me, whenever I would do something for her, she would say - May Allah make your home in the neighbourhood of His messengers".

The guest smiled and said:

"Tell her that her prayer has been granted. I am Musa! I asked Allah who my neighbour would be in Janna and He gave me your address."

"I asked of him how this person becomes a neighbour of the prophets. He told me to come and see for myself."



20. I will bring the Firewood

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was once on a journey with his companions.

On the way they stopped at a place to have some food and rest. They decided to roast some meat.

Each one volunteered to do some work.

One of the companions said: "I shall slaughter the sheep!"

The other said: "I will remove the skin."

Another said: "I will roast the meat!"



The Prophet (pbuh) said: "I will collect and bring the firewood from the forest."

The companions said: " O Prophet! We will see to everything. Please do not trouble yourself."

The Prophet (pbuh) replied: "I know you can do everything but I do not wish to be favoured over you."

He said that Allah does not like people who think they are better than others.

The Prophet (pbuh) then went and fetched the firewood and did his share of the work



21. He will look after it

The king of Yemen built a beautiful church. There were beautiful silk carpets hanging on the walls and it was decorated with the best of everything. He wanted people to come to pray in Yemen rather than go to visit the Ka'ba in Makka.

In spite of all his efforts people still went to Makka.

He decided that the only solution was to destroy the Ka'ba. He chose one of his strongest and bravest men called Abraha to take an army of elephants to destroy the Ka'ba.

On the way to Makka, the army of Abraha destroyed everything in their way and stole hundreds of camels. Amongst them were some camels that belonged to Abdul Muttalib who was Prophet Muhammad's (pbuh) grandfather.

Abdul Muttalib knew that Abraha was coming to destroy the Ka'ba. He ran to the Ka'ba and prayed to Allah.

"O Allah! Save Your house and do not let them destroy it!"

Then he went to Abraha.

"Why do you wish to see me?" said Abraha.

Abdul Muttalib said he wanted his camels returned.

Abraha was shocked!!

"I have come to destroy the Ka'ba. You are the chief of Makka and the guardian of the Ka'ba and all you are worried about is your camels!"

Abdul Muttalib replied :

"The camels belong to me, and so I ask for their return. The Ka'ba belongs to Allah and He will look after it Himself"

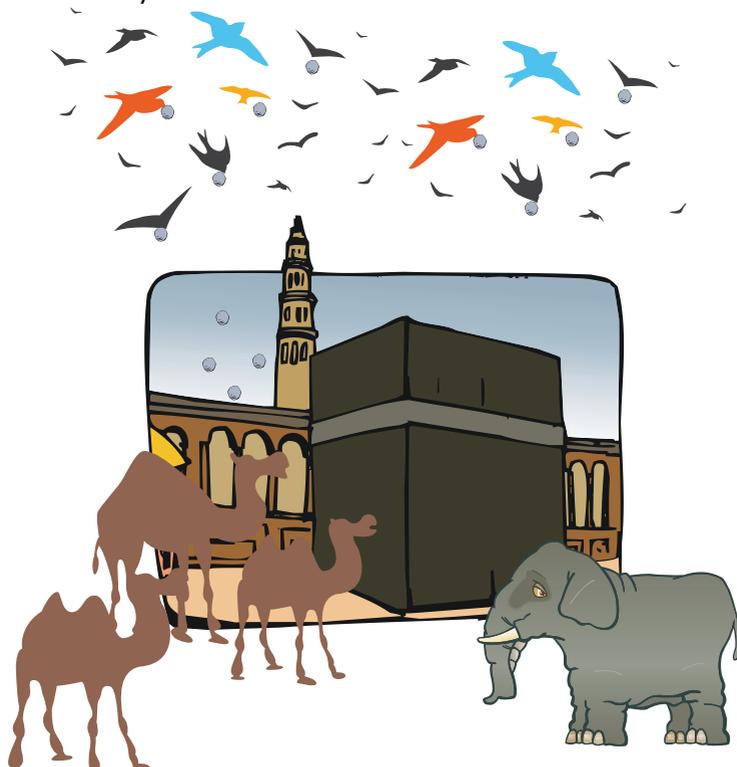
When Abraha heard this he returned the camels and marched forward to destroy the Ka'ba. Allah sent a flock of birds who flew over the army pelting them with small stones of baked clay which killed the elephants and the soldiers.

All except Abraha were destroyed and he rushed back to Yemen to tell the King what had happened. He was followed by one of the birds.

"What sort of amazing birds were these!" asked the furious King.

Abraha looked up and showed him. The bird threw a stone and Abraha died on the spot in front of the King.

It was in this year that our Prophet, Muhammad (pbuh) was born on the 17th of Rabi ul Awwal.

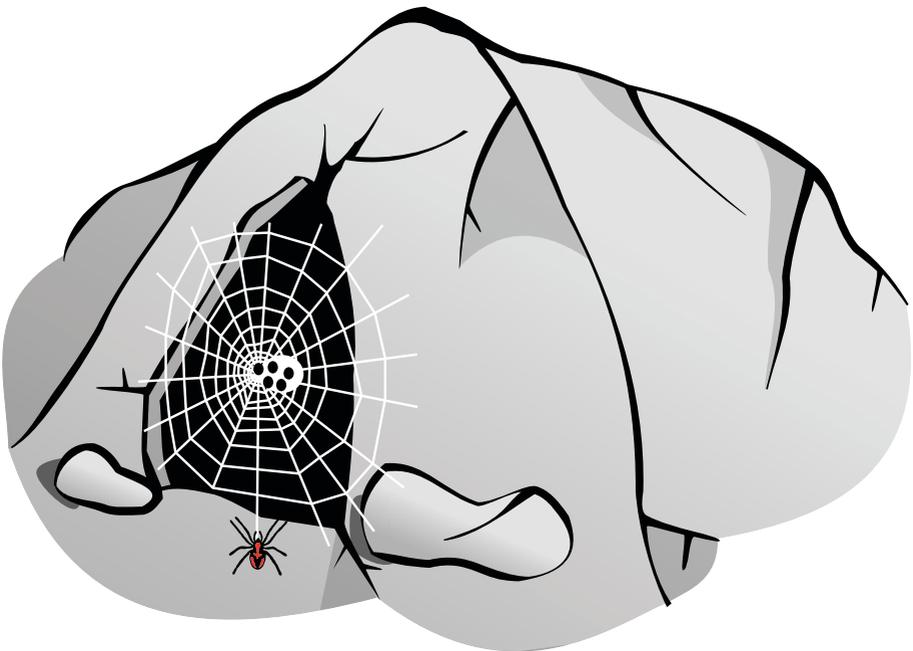


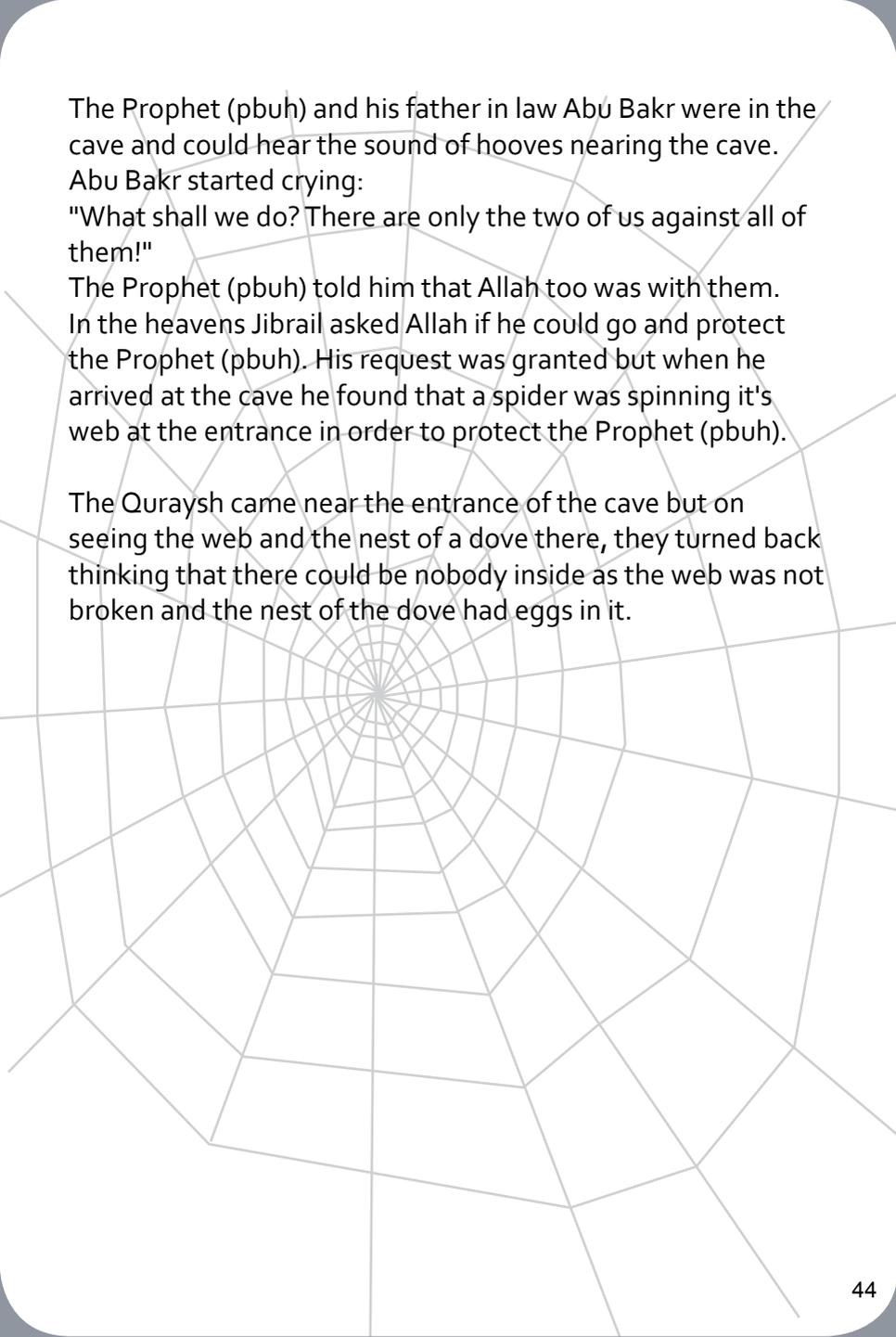
22. The Spider and Jibrail

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his father in law were exhausted. They had fled Makka where the people had tried to kill the Prophet (pbuh).

They came to some caves just outside Makka. They made their way into a cave to rest for a while.

Meanwhile in Makka the Quraysh were furious. Imam Ali (pbuh) had been sleeping in the Prophet's (pbuh) bed to fool them. Their plan of killing the Prophet (pbuh) had failed miserably. They offered a reward of one hundred camels to anyone who would bring the Prophet (pbuh) back.





The Prophet (pbuh) and his father in law Abu Bakr were in the cave and could hear the sound of hooves nearing the cave.

Abu Bakr started crying:

"What shall we do? There are only the two of us against all of them!"

The Prophet (pbuh) told him that Allah too was with them.

In the heavens Jibrail asked Allah if he could go and protect the Prophet (pbuh). His request was granted but when he arrived at the cave he found that a spider was spinning its web at the entrance in order to protect the Prophet (pbuh).

The Quraysh came near the entrance of the cave but on seeing the web and the nest of a dove there, they turned back thinking that there could be nobody inside as the web was not broken and the nest of the dove had eggs in it.

23. I need the Lamp in Front

There was once a rich old man who did not like to give his money to charity.

He had a good son who always told his dad that he should give his money in the way of Allah .

The old man told his son that he could give it all away after his death.

The son told him that it would be too late for the father, for he should give it away now to be able to get the benefits in the hereafter (grave and onwards).

The old man just would not listen.

One night the old man wanted to go out. It was very dark so he asked his son to carry a lamp and walk in front of him so he would be able to see.

The son obeyed his father but half way he started walking behind his dad.

His father said:

"Why have you gone behind me ?" I can't see ! I need the lamp in front ."

The son said:

"Father ! that's exactly what I have been telling you. If you want light in the grave you have to give away what you have in the way of Allah before you die and not after ."

The old man finally understood what his son had been trying to tell him!



24. The Ring in the Stomach of the Fish

There was once a lady who always said Bismillahirrahmaanirraheem (I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful) before she did anything. She knew that Allah would then always be with her.

One day, she put her ring in the cupboard and as usual she said Bismillahirrahmaanirraheem (I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful) before she put it away. She knew that it would be safe.

Her husband took the ring and threw it in the river. He wanted to prove to her that only saying Bismillahirrahmaanirraheem (I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful) would not keep it safe. He thought that in the evening he would ask her where the ring was and it would not be there.

Later that morning, the lady went to the market to buy some fish. When she was cleaning the fish at home she found her ring inside the stomach of the fish. She wondered how it got there but then put it back in its place in the cupboard saying Bismillahirrahmaanirraheem (I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful)

When her husband came back from work, he asked her where the ring was. She brought it from the cupboard. He was so surprised!

He told her what he had done and apologised to her. He also truly believed that Allah is with the person who says Bismillah (I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful) before he/she does anything.



25. Stop



Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) has said that on the day of judgement there will be some people who will have to go to jahannam because of their bad deeds.

However, from these people, there will be some who had the habit of saying Bismillahirrahmaanirraheem (I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful) before they did anything or entered anywhere.

Thus, when they will be taken to jahannam by the angels, they will be very sad but they will say Bismillahirrahmaanirraheem (I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful) before they enter the door of jahannam.

Allah will tell the angels – “STOP”

He will tell them that He cannot let someone who calls Him Rahman and Raheem (Kind & Merciful) enter jahannam.



26. Shaytan Vomited

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was once eating with a group of young children.

Suddenly he smiled. The children asked him why he was smiling. Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) replied:
"Shaytan has just vomited"

He then explained that there was a child amongst them who had forgotten to say Bismillahirrahmaanirraheem (I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful) and Shaytan had sat to eat with him.

The child had just remembered and said:
Bismillahirrahmaanirraheem
With the name of Allah, from the beginning to the end.

Shaytan therefore vomited and thus the Prophet (pbuh) had smiled.



27. I CAN WALK ON WATER

Syed Murtadha was a great 'aalim who lived many years ago. He had many students who attended his classes.

At one of his classes he noticed that that one of the students always came late. One day he asked the student "Why are you always late?"

The student replied that he lived across the river and always took the first ferry across but the ferry service did not start any earlier.

Syed Murtadha wrote something on a piece of paper, folded it and gave it to the student. "Keep this with you" he said "and you will be able to walk across the river from tomorrow - but do not open the paper."

The next day the student got to the river and put his foot tentatively on the water. He could not believe that he could actually walk on the water.



For the next few days, he got to the classes on time.

One day, he could not hold back his curiosity. He looked inside the folded piece of paper. On it was written Bismillahirrahmaanirraheem (I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful).

For a moment he thought – “Is this all that helps me walk on water!” He put the paper in his pocket as usual and went to the river to go to his classes. This time he could not walk on the water and had to wait for the ferry. This meant that he was late for his class.

When the class was over, Syed Murtadha called him over and said “You looked into the paper when I had told you not to!”

With Bismillahirrahmaanirraheem (I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful) you can move mountains provided you have trust and faith in Allah.

28. Where will I Live, Eat and Sleep?

When Shaytan was ordered out of heaven by Allah, he asked three questions-

Where will I live?
Where will I eat?
Where will I sleep?

Allah told him that he, Shaytan would live with the person who did not say Bismillahirrahmaanirraheem (I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful) before he/she entered his/her house.

Shaytan would eat with the person who did not say Bismillahirrahmaanirraheem (I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful) before he/she started to eat.

Shaytan would sleep with the person who did not say Bismillahirrahmaanirraheem (I begin in the name of Allah, the Kind, the Merciful) before he/she went to sleep.



29. I am going to buy a Cow

Ahmed was so happy! He had saved enough money to buy a cow of his own. Now he could have fresh milk every day.

He set off to go to the market near his town to buy a cow. On the way he met his friend Burayr.

"Assalamu Alaykum O Ahmed" said Burayr
"Alaykumus Salaam," replied Ahmed.

"Where are you going?" Burayr asked.

"I am going to the market to buy a cow," Ahmed said, his voice full of joy.

"You must always say "'Insha Allah'(If Allah wishes)," Burayr told him.

Ahmed did not think he had to say 'Insha Allah' because he had the money and he was on his way to the market. Of course he would buy the cow!

He continued on his way to the market.



Just before he got to the market a robber stopped him, and took all his money away.

Ahmed was very sad. He turned to go back home when he met Burayr again.

"Where is the cow?" asked Burayr.

Ahmed replied, " Insha Allah, on the way to the market, a robber caught me, Insha Allah he emptied my pockets, and Insha Allah he took my money."

Burayr looked at him in amazement and told him that he was saying Insha Allah at the wrong places; he should have said it before he went to buy the cow.

30. Insha Allah

One day Imam Ali (pbuh) was carrying a heavy bag filled with date seeds.

He was asked, "What are you carrying in this heavy bag?"

Imam Ali (pbuh) replied "A few date palms, Insha Allah."

Since Imam Ali (pbuh) had faith in Allah and worked for no-one but Allah, he knew that if Allah willed, the date seeds would soon become trees.

Sure enough after he had planted them and looked after them they started growing to become trees whose fruit would feed others.

With faith in Allah and hard work, anything is possible.



31. Alhamdulillah, Shukran Lillah

Prophet Isa (pbuh) asked Allah who was the most nearest to him on the earth at that moment and Allah gave him the directions where he could find her. Allah called her a Mu'mina.

Her mark was that she was a remembering 'abidah of Allah. He finds her. She is a being without legs, arms, and eyes. Homeless and destitute, she is left at the mercy of the passers by to give her something to survive on.

Yet with her tongue, she is busy thanking Allah, and praising Him calling out, "Ya Allah! Alhamdulillah. You have granted me so much, how will I ever thank You. You have granted me what You have not granted so many more. Why? I don't know. It is only a display of Your grace. Alhamdulillah...."

Prophet Isa (pbuh) greets her and she responds back with a better greeting, addressing him as Rooh Allah. He is perplexed.

He asks her, O' Mu'mina! What is it that Allah has granted you that you are so thankful for? Surely Allah is gracious. But in your case, one might see how much Allah has not given you. "

"O Rooh Allah" she responds. "He has granted me His remembrance. He has withheld from me feet that would walk on the path of haaram. He has withheld from me hands that

would act on haram. He has withheld from me eyes that would glance at Haram. Yet I do recognise you without their aid. And my tongue, He has occupied with His praise. Alhamdulillah. Tell me how many has He blessed as such?"

Thank You
Allah



32. "I can't see Allah with My Eyes!"

Once there was a farmer who was a very good man. He worked hard on his farm and prayed salaa (namaz) on time every day.

One day he saw a sick man lying on the roadside. He helped him up and took him home to look after him.

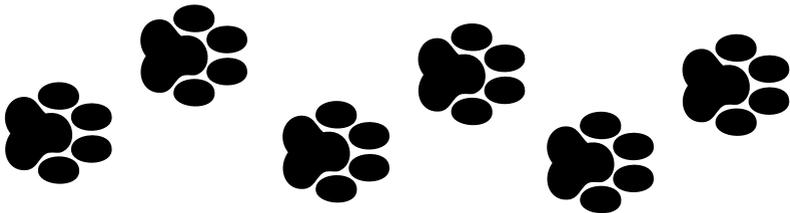
The next morning when the farmer woke up to pray salaa he woke up his guest who said he did not want to pray.

The man said that he could not see Allah so how could he pray to One whom he could not see. The farmer did not say anything.

The next day the man was feeling better and wanted to go home. The farmer walked with him across the fields. Suddenly they saw footprints. The man told the farmer that they were the footprints of a tiger.

"I don't believe that !" said the farmer . "I can't see a tiger here!"

The man looked surprised and said "Are these footprints not enough to tell you that a tiger was here?"



The farmer said, "Dear brother! When you saw the footprints you believed that a tiger had passed here; so are not the moon, the sun, the flowers, and the trees enough to make you believe that there must be One who made them?"

The man thought for a while and said, "You are right ! We cannot see Allah with our eyes but we can understand from the things he has made that He exists."



33. The Spinning Wheel

"My father Musa Al-Kadhim (pbuh) narrated to me from his father Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was once walking with his companions when he saw an old lady working at a spinning wheel; whilst she was working she was praising Allah for all that He had given her.

The Prophet (pbuh) greeted her and asked her, "Your faith is admirable; will you tell me what made you believe in Allah?"

The woman answered, "O Messenger of Allah! If I do not move my spinning wheel, it does not spin.

If a simple thing like my spinning wheel cannot turn without help how can it be possible that the whole universe can operate so efficiently without a driving force.

There must be a Great One running it.

Someone who controls every atom.

The Great One can only be Allah, Who is the Creator and Master of everything."

The Prophet (pbuh) was very pleased with the old woman's reply. Turning to his companions he said, "See how this old lady came to know about Allah through such a fine and simple way. Your faith in Allah should also be as firm as hers."



34. The Golden Hadith

"My father Musa Al-Kadhim narrated to me from his father Ja'fer As-Sadiq from his father Mohammed Al-Baqir from his father Ali Zaynul Abedeen from his father, Husayn ibn Ali from his father Ali ibn Abu Talib (pbut) saying:

"My loved one, and the pleasure of my eyes, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) told me once, that Jibrail told him from the Rabb:

"The kalima of LA ILAHA ILLALLAH is my fort; whoever says it will enter my fort; and whoever enters my fort is safe from my punishment."

Imam Ali Ridha (pbuh)

Imam narrated this hadith in the town of Nishapur in Iran on his way to Marw where Mamun had called him.

The scholars and people had lined the way and requested Imam to narrate a hadith to them. Those who wrote down the hadith numbered twenty thousand.

People started reciting the Kalima when Imam put his hand up and continued,

"Yes, the kalima is Allah's fort. It will provide you with excellent safety but on one condition only and that is that you obey and follow us - the holy Imams in the progeny of the holy Prophet (pbuh)."



35. He is Everywhere

The infants class in Madrasa were learning about Allah. One day their teacher Ummu Zaynab brought some apples for the whole class.

She gave each student an apple and asked them to eat it where no-one could see them.

Some of the children went into the store cupboard to eat the apple, some went behind the door whilst some crawled under their desks.

The class seemed empty except for Ammar who stood by his desk looking at his apple.

"Don't you want to eat the apple?" Ummu Zaynab asked.

"I cannot find a place where Allah does not see me!" replied Ammar.

Ammar was right. Allah is everywhere. Ummu Zaynab called all her students and explained to them that there was nowhere where Allah could not see them.



36. The Blind Worm

Prophet Sulayman (pbuh) was sitting by the seashore when he saw an ant carrying a grain going towards the water. He watched as a frog appeared, opened its mouth as the ant approached and entered its mouth. The frog dived into the waters.

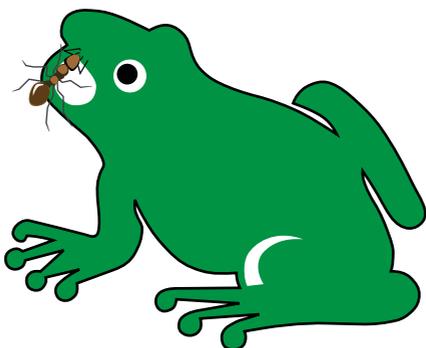
Prophet Sulayman (pbuh) was reflecting on what he had just seen when he saw the frog reappear. It opened its mouth and the ant walked out without the grain.

Prophet Sulayman (pbuh) called her and asked her where she had been.

She said, "Ya Nabiyallah! In the bottom of the sea is a hollow rock where lives a blind worm. Allah has assigned me the task of carrying its food. The frog is assigned the task of carrying me so the water does not harm me."

Prophet Sulayman (pbuh) asked her, "Do you ever hear the worm praise Allah?"

The ant replied, "Yes." The worm says, "O one who does not forget me in the depth of this rock, in the midst of this water, I plead to You by Your sustaining me not to forget Your believing ibaad (pl of abd) and to include them in Your Mercy."



37. *The Ant in the Red Sea*

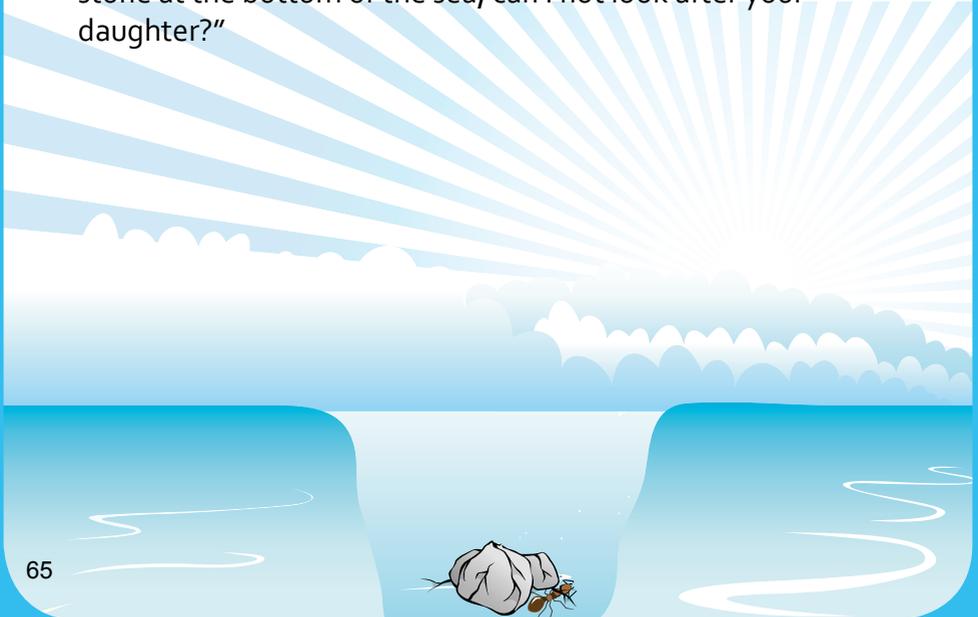
Prophet Musa (pbuh) knew that he would soon have to leave the world. As he looked at his family his attention fell on his young daughter. He thought to himself, "Who will look after her when I am gone?"

Allah sent an angel to direct him back to the Red Sea. Prophet Musa (pbuh) was asked to strike the water with his staff again. A dry path appeared. He was ordered to walk to the centre and pick up a particular stone.

"What do you see Musa?"

"I see a stone with a hole in it!" Prophet Musa (pbuh) replied "In the hole there is a tiny ant with a grain of food in its mouth"

Allah revealed to him, "O Musa! If I can look after an ant in a stone at the bottom of the sea; can I not look after your daughter?"



38. Stretching Legs

It is reported that the great 'alim, Muqaddis Ardebeli (A.R.) never stretched his legs, even when he slept. Never did he explain this peculiar habit.

In the last moment of his life, he had no choice, but to stretch his legs for one who is about to depart from this world is to have his legs outstretched, facing Qibla.

The family and friends heard Ardebeli utter this to Allah, "Forgive me, for my stretched legs are but a necessity at this time. I never stretched them before, for fear of disrespecting You, for I know that You are present, always. Forgive me, for now I must."



39. Assalamu 'Alaykum

The companions of the Prophet (pbuh) knew of the thawaabs of being the first ones to say 'Assalamu 'alaykum' to someone. The Prophet (pbuh) had said that the one who initiates salaam gets ninety nine thawaabs although it is mustahab and the one who replies would get one even though the reply is wajib.

However, the Prophet (pbuh) was always the first to greet them.

This time, the companions thought they would beat him to it. As they saw the Prophet (pbuh) approaching, they hid in the doorways of the alley towards which he was coming, hoping that as soon as he came they would surprise him and greet him first.

As soon as the Prophet (pbuh) came to the entrance of the alley, he called out in a loud voice:

"My salaams to all those in this alley way."



40. “What difference will it make?”

The fire was raging. Nobody could come near it. Even Namrud’s servants could not get near; they were forced to prepare a catapult to throw Prophet Ibraheem (pbuh) into the fire.

The lizard slithered as close to the fire as he could get. With water in his little mouth he spat it at the fire trying to douse it. The other animals around him seeing him said, “What difference will it make?”

The lizard replied:

“On the day of qiyama, when I will come before my Creator, I will say that I tried my best.”



41. “O Fire! Be Cold and Safe for Ibraheem...”

The people of the town where Prophet Ibraheem (pbuh) lived worshipped statues, the moon, the sun and the stars.

Prophet Ibraheem (pbuh) always told them not to worship these false gods but to worship the one and only God, Allah.

The people did not listen to him. One day when all the people had gone out of the town to celebrate a festival, Prophet Ibraheem (pbuh) went to the place where they kept all the statues. He broke all of them except the biggest one, and tied the axe, which he used around the neck of the biggest statue.

When the people of the town came back they were very angry and asked Prophet Ibraheem (pbuh) who had broken the other statues. He told them to ask the biggest statue which was not broken and of course the statue could not answer.

The people realised that their gods (statues) were useless because they could not even protect themselves; but they were very stubborn and still did not believe that there was no god except Allah.

They became so angry at the words of Prophet Ibraheem (pbuh) that they wanted to kill him.

A big bonfire was built and Prophet Ibraheem (pbuh) was thrown into the fire.

Allah told the fire,

".....O fire! Be cold and safe for Ibraheem.."

The ruler who was called Namrud saw from his palace that suddenly, the fire turned into a garden for Prophet Ibraheem (pbuh). But Namrud still did not believe.



42. Firaun

Prophet Musa (pbuh) and Prophet Harun (pbuh) went to see Firaun as Allah had commanded.

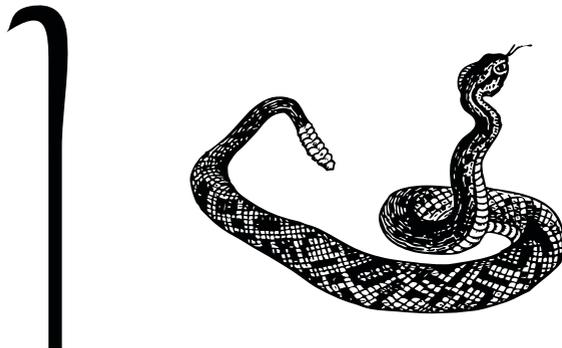
When they met Firaun they told him to believe in Allah.

"And who is the Lord of you two, O Musa?" Firaun asked. Prophet Musa (pbuh) told Firaun about Allah but Firaun just made fun of them.

Prophet Musa (pbuh) showed Firaun the miracles that Allah had given him. His staff which turned into a snake and his hand which when put under his armpit had a shining white light. Firaun still would not believe.

Firaun was very cruel to the people of Bani Israil. He was using them as slaves. Prophet Musa (pbuh) told him to let his people, the Bani Israil go but Firaun refused and made them work even harder.

Allah sent his punishment on the people of Firaun. He sent a storm of locusts, frogs and worms which got into peoples noses and clothes. The River Nile turned to blood. Every time a punishment came Firaun would agree to let the Bani Israil go but when it was over he would say, "No!"

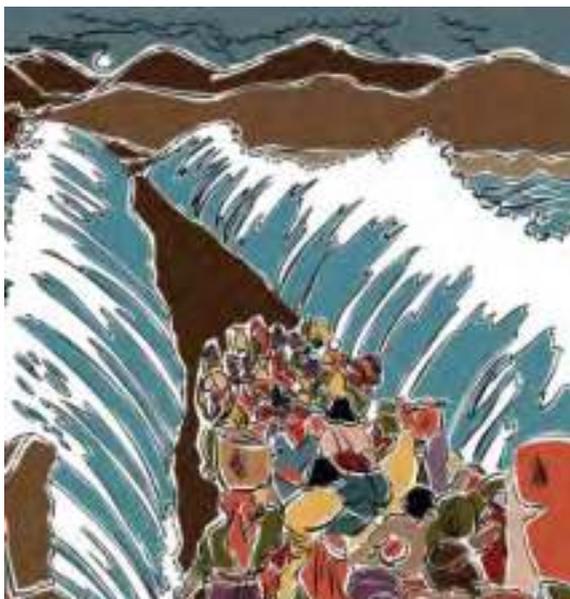


Finally Allah told Prophet Musa (pbuh) to take the Bani Israil away at night. At last, they were on their way. When they got to the Red Sea, Prophet Musa (pbuh) hit the river with his staff and twelve roads appeared for them to cross through.

Firaun and his soldiers were chasing them but when they got onto the roads in the river the waves folded over them and they were drowned.

In the final moments of his life Firaun recognised the Supremacy of Allah and he desperately offered his repentance saying. "I solemnly declare that there is no god but the Lord of Musa, and I am one of the believers". However, it was too little too late.

Firaun and his people drowned under the deep sea and Allah caused their dead bodies to be thrown onto the shore. The preserved body of Firaun can be seen in the Cairo museum even today, a lasting lesson for humankind.



43. "Why You?"

Allah inspired Prophet Musa (pbuh) saying, "Do you know, O Musa, why I chose you from among My creation to hear My word?"

"No! Ya Rabb," said Prophet Musa (pbuh)

Allah said: "From the inhabitants of the earth, I found none more humble than you."

Prophet Musa (pbuh) went immediately into sijda, and rubbed his cheeks on the earth as a sign of humility to his Rabb, the Supreme.

Allah said, "O Musa! Raise your head and pass your hand over the place where you did sijda, then wipe your face with it and whatever you can touch of your body, for this will be your security against any sickness or ailment, affliction or handicap."



44. “1 Heart & 2 Lovers?”

The little girl's eyes lit up when she saw her father. He asked her, "Zaynab! Do you love me?"

"Yes! Of course I love you" she replied.

"Do you love Allah?" he continued.

"Indeed I love Allah," she replied.

Imam Ali (pbuh) then asked his daughter,

"Zaynab! How can one heart have two loves?"

Sayyida Zaynab (pbuh) replied,

"O father! It is because I love Allah that I love you".



45. Abu Baseer Reports

On the death of Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh), Abu Baseer - a companion of Imam came to offer his condolences to Umme Hamida (Imam's wife). Both wept remembering Imam.

Umme Hamida then narrated something that had happened in the last moments of the life of Imam.

She said that he asked for all his relatives to be present. After they had all gathered there, Imam addressed them and said his last words,

"Those who take salaa lightly will never gain our shafa'at (intercession)".

Imam did not speak of those who ignore salaa altogether, for the consequence of this is obvious. What does 'taking salaa lightly' mean? It means that in spite of having time and opportunity, one postpones salaa until it is just getting qadha or prays quickly without giving the mind and soul the necessary tranquillity obtained through praying.



46. The Two Brothers

During the time of Prophet Musa (pbuh) there were two brothers who lived in flats above each other.

One believed in Allah and His Prophets and the other was an atheist (one who does not believe in God).

Both ate their meals together and for years each tried to convince the other that he was right. It is related that the brother who was an atheist was rich whilst the believing brother was not.

One day the believing brother woke up thinking, "It seems that my brother is right. I struggle so hard and pray but to no avail. He has far more than I have! I must go downstairs and tell him that he is right."

That same day the unbelieving brother woke up thinking, "My brother is right. There has to be more to life than this. I must go upstairs and tell my brother that he is right." Both brothers met half way on the staircase but before they could say a word to each other, the angel of death took their souls away.

Prophet Musa (pbuh) was advised of this by Allah and he related it to his people. The brother who had been a believer all his life died the death of a kafir whilst the brother who was an unbeliever all his life died the death of a Muslim.

We must try to recite and understand Dua e Adeela every night asking Allah to keep our faith safe.

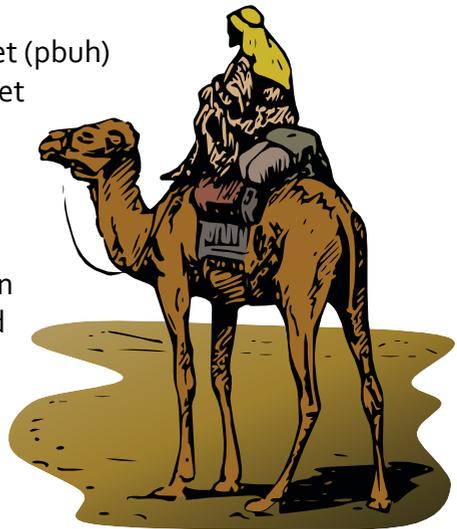
47. "Have You found Your Camel?"

A companion of the Prophet (pbuh) was once standing in between a group of women talking to them. The Prophet (pbuh) passed by, saw him and remarked on the fact that he was amidst a group of women. He made an excuse saying that he had lost his camel and was asking the women if they had seen it.

After that he met the Prophet (pbuh) a couple of times and on both occasions the Prophet (pbuh) asked whether he had found his camel. Shaking his head he would hastily walk away. He even stopped coming to pray in the masjid for he was trying to avoid the Prophet (pbuh) for fear of being asked again of the 'lost' non existing camel.

One day he came to the masjid and prayed in a corner wishing to leave before the Prophet (pbuh) saw him. However, the Prophet (pbuh) came up to him and sat down near him. He tried to lengthen his salaa in the hope that the Prophet (pbuh) would go away but to no avail.

As he finished salaa the Prophet (pbuh) greeted him. Before the Prophet (pbuh) could say anything he confessed that there was no lost camel and it was just an excuse. The Prophet (pbuh) told him that Allah had forgiven him for he had done tawba and sincerely regretted his actions.



48. Dawa and Dua

He was in pain. The hakeem (doctor) watched Prophet Musa (pbuh) climb up the Mount Sinai and realised he was in pain. "O Prophet of Allah! I can give you some medicine for your stomach ache," he said.

Prophet Musa (pbuh) said he was going to The Healer Allah, who would cure him.

Prophet Musa (pbuh) complained to Allah of his ailment. He was told that there was medicine for the pain which he was offered but had refused.

Allah told his Prophet that both 'dawa' and 'dua' were required. Both medicine and prayer were necessary. On his way down the mountain, Prophet Musa (pbuh) asked the hakeem for the medicine he had offered.

Recite Ya Shafi to cure illness and to keep illness away.



49. “Indeed We Feed You Only For the Sake of Allah...”

Imams Hasan & Husayn (pbuh) were both unwell. When the Prophet (pbuh) learnt of this he suggested to Imam Ali (pbuh) to make a 'nadh'r' of fasting for three days on the recovery of the children.

Accordingly, the whole house of Fatima (pbuh) fasted. i.e. Imam Ali (pbuh), Sayyida Fatima (pbuh), Imam Hasan (pbuh), Imam Husayn (pbuh) and Fizza.

Just as they were seated for iftaar on the first day of fasting there was a knock on the door and a man cried out: "O Ahlulbayt of the Prophet! I am a poor man, hungry with nothing to eat. Please feed me!"

Imam Ali (pbuh) opened the door and all five of them gave away their iftaar of bread that Sayyida Fatima (pbuh) had prepared. They broke their fast only with water and that night they went to sleep hungry.

The next day at iftaar an orphan knocked on the door requesting food. The house of Fatima (pbuh) gave away their iftaar and once again broke their fast with water.



The third day a prisoner knocked on the door at iftaar time requesting food. Once again they gave away all their bread and did iftaar with water.

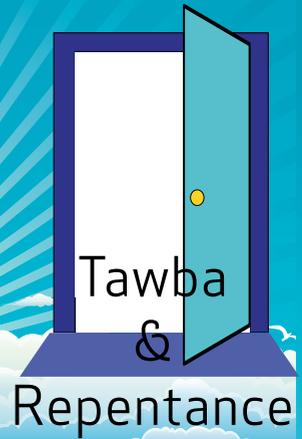
The Prophet (pbuh) on hearing this came to the house of Sayyida Fatima (pbuh) and raised his hands in dua.

Jibrail came with some food from Janna for the family and brought the revelation of Suratud Dahr.

During the life of the Prophet (pbuh) many gave away all their wealth in anticipation that an aya of the Qur'an would be revealed in their honour. In the house of Fatima (pbuh) they each gave away 3 breads and a whole sura was revealed. The essence of any action is in its niyya



50. Defence against Shaytan



Prophet Adam (pbuh) raised his hands in dua saying, "O Allah! Shaytan was able to deceive me, what defence does my progeny have?"

Prophet Adam (pbuh) was praying for all mankind who are his progeny.

Allah replied, "O Adam! I have given them the following:

- i) If they have a bad intention but do not commit the act, I will not record it.
- ii) If they commit a bad deed I will record one sin for them.
- iii) If they do a good deed, I will reward them ten thawabs for them.
- iv) If they have a good intention, I will reward them for it."

Prophet Adam (pbuh) requested more defence from Allah.

Allah said, "O Adam! The door of tawba (repentance) is always open and I always accept the tawba of my servant."

51. Dhulqarnayn

Dhulqarnayn conquered many lands. On one of his expeditions, he came to a place where the people were all very thin. He asked what illness had prevailed in the town. They replied that they were all well, and all tried to be knowledgeable and wise.

When Dhulqarnayn went to the local graveyard, he saw the headstones showed that all the dead were no more than four years old. He enquired as to why only children had died there.

The people replied that in their town, life was measured by quality and not quantity. When a man acquired understanding, his 'life' began.

Dhulqarnayn was hungry and asked for some food. He was offered silver, gold and gems on his plate. "But I want food," he said.

The people replied, "Dhulqarnayn, this is what you came here for from your land. You did not come here to share a meal with us."



52. Only for a Dog

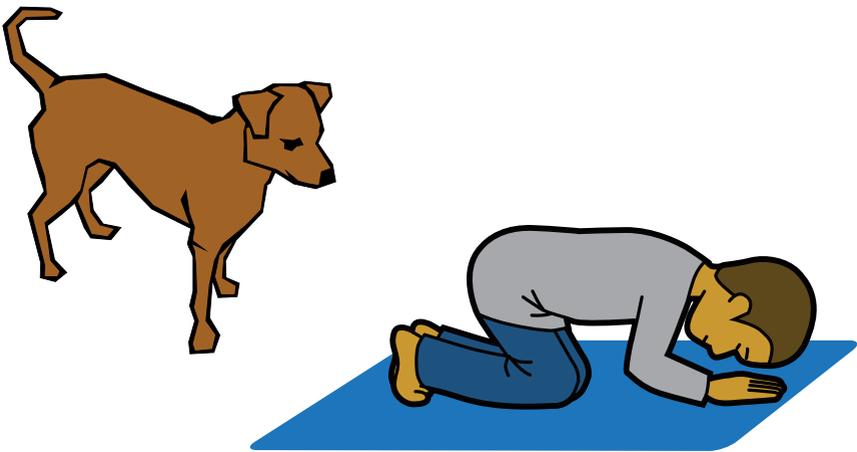
It was just after midnight and the man was alone in the masjid.

He had just begun his Salat ul Layl (Namaz e Shab) when he heard a noise behind him.

Immediately, he started praying slowly. He recited lengthy duas in a beautiful voice.

After he finished he turned around to see a dog who had come in to take shelter from the rain outside.

The man realised that he had prayed only for a dog and not for Allah.



53. "I am building a Masjid for Allah!"

Three masons were chiselling stones on a large building project. They were asked what they were doing.

"I'm chiselling stones." the first one replied

The second man said:

"I'm earning a living."

When the third man was asked, he replied:

"I'm building a masjid to glorify Allah."

These three men could just as well have been working on a car, a house, a road or any other halal product or service. Most people work to earn a living, attain success or amass wealth. For a Muslim, however, the primary niyya for doing anything must be for the pleasure of Allah.



54. “I bear witness that the horse belongs to you!”

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was once returning to Madina from a journey. On the way he met a trader on his way to sell a horse in the market of Madina.

The Prophet (pbuh) approached him, and after greeting him expressed a desire to buy the horse. A deal was struck and the Prophet (pbuh) had agreed to pay for the horse in Madina.

When they reached Madina, the trader was offered a higher price for the horse and he denied all knowledge of any deal with the Prophet (pbuh)

He asked the Prophet (pbuh) to bring witnesses to the deal if he was truthful.

By this time a large crowd of Muslims had gathered around and the Prophet (pbuh) asked each one individually if they would bear witness that he had struck a deal with the trader to buy the horse. All those standing around refused saying, "Ya Rasulallah! But we were not there and did not see or hear the deal. How can we lie?"

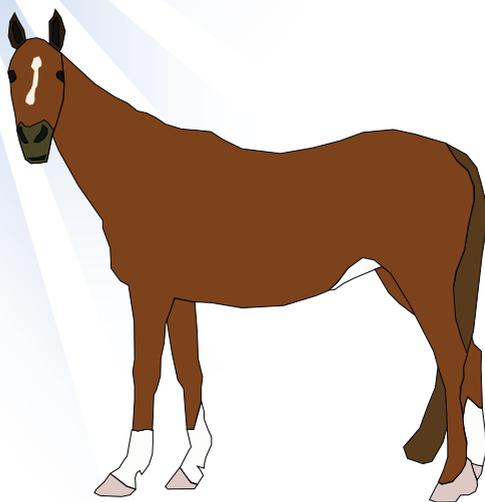
Seeing the commotion, a companion of the Prophet (pbuh) called Khuzayma ibn Thabit e Ansari (Imam Ali (pbuh) praises him in one of his sermons saying if those like him were alive then no one would have taken his right away) came to the scene. He asked the reason for the commotion and the Prophet (pbuh) explained the issue.

Immediately Khuzayma said, "I bear witness that the horse belongs to you, Ya Rasulallah"

The others protested, "Ya Rasulallah! But he was not there. How can he be a witness?"

The Prophet (pbuh) asked them to ask Khuzayma.

He replied, "Ya Rasulallah! You asked for being a witness to one horse! I have sold my soul to you. I believed in Allah, the Qur'an, your Prophethood, Qiyama...on your word. How can I not believe this. Ya Rasulallah? I would deny what my eyes saw if you said to the contrary!"

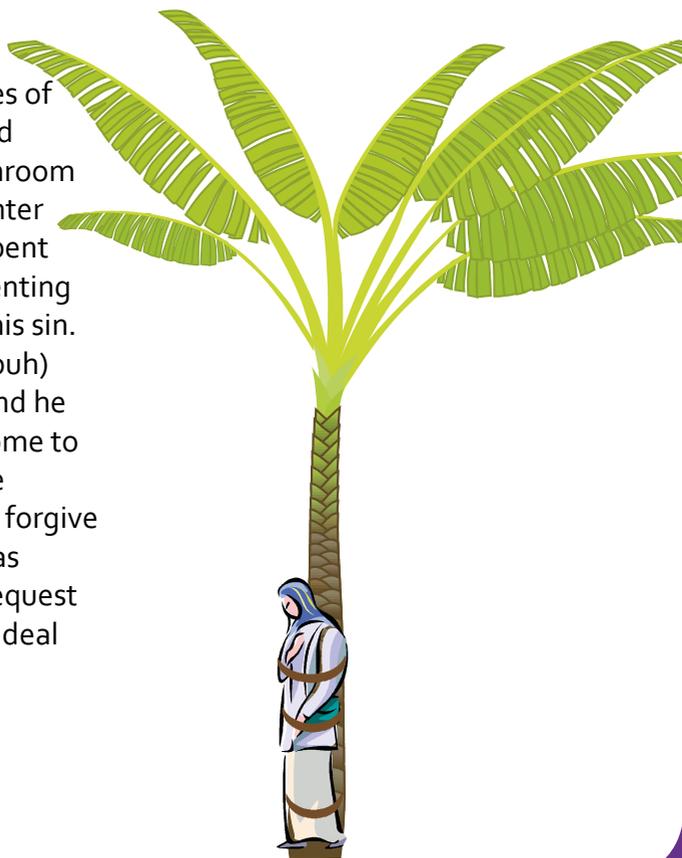


55. The Pillar of Tawba

Abu Lababa was sent for consultation to the Jewish tribe of Banu Qurayda to settle the constant treachery they displayed towards the Muslims. He betrayed his position by remarking in favour of the Jews and against the Muslims.

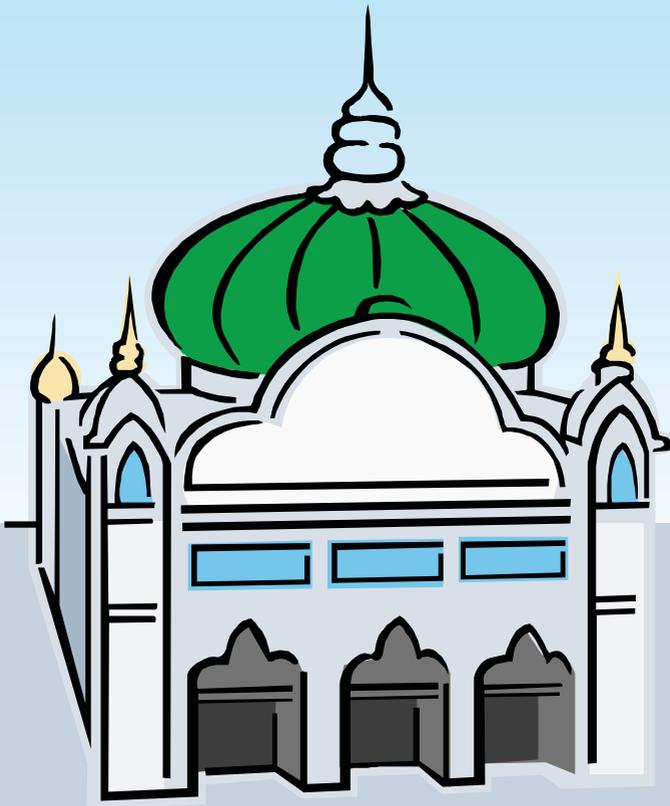
As he was returning to Madina he felt ashamed of his action. He went home to get a rope and went to the masjid of the Prophet (pbuh). There he tied himself to a pillar crying out, "O Allah! I will not untie myself until You have accepted my tawba."

Only at the times of salaa, eating and visiting the bathroom would his daughter untie him. He spent long hours lamenting and regretting his sin. The Prophet (pbuh) was informed and he said, "Had he come to me I would have begged Allah to forgive him but as he has made a direct request to Allah, He will deal with him."



A few days later, the Prophet (pbuh) was informed by Allah that Abu Lababa was forgiven. After his forgiveness, as a sign of shukr Abu Lababa offered all his wealth to be used in the way of Allah. The Prophet (pbuh) accepted a third since Abu Lababa had a duty of supporting his family as well.

The pillar to which Abu Lababa tied himself is represented in the masjid of Madina today. It is called the pillar of tawba.



56. The Pure Water

A desert traveller once found a spring of water whose freshness and purity was matchless. He decided to take some as a gift for his king.

Barely satisfying his own thirst, he filled a bottle with the pure water and carried it beneath the desert sun for many days until he reached the palace.

When he finally offered it to the king, the water had become stale and had lost its freshness. But the king would not let his faithful subject even imagine that it was not fit to be drunk. He tasted it with an expression of gratitude and sent away the loyal heart filled with gladness.

When those around the king tasted the water they expressed their surprise that the king had even pretended to enjoy it.

The king said,
"It was not the water I tasted, but the love that prompted the offering."

Many times our actions may have unintentional mistakes, but Allah first looks at the niyya.



57. Scholar or Hunter?

One day a pair of pigeons were sitting on a branch when they saw a scholar coming with a book under one arm and a stick in the other.

One pigeon told the other: "Let's fly away! There is a man coming. He might kill us."

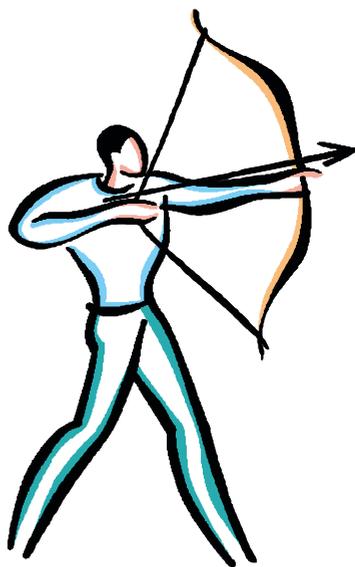
Her partner said: "He's not a hunter. He is a scholar. He will not harm us."

The scholar saw the pigeons and with his stick he struck the female pigeon. He took out his knife and made the meat halal.

Her companion came to complain to Prophet Sulayman (pbuh) who was blessed with the knowledge of the language of the birds and animals. The scholar was summoned to the court.

"What crime did I commit?" He asked. "Pigeon meat is halal." The male pigeon replied : "I know that it is halal for you, but if you came to hunt you should have come dressed as a hunter. You cheated and came as a scholar."

Our outside must match our inside.



58. The Two Streets

Once upon a time there was a town composed of two parallel streets. A wise man passed through one street and into the other, and as he reached the second one, the people there noticed that his eyes were streaming with tears.

"Someone has died in the other street!" one cried, and soon all the children in the neighbourhood had taken up the cry. What had really happened was that the wise man had been peeling onions.

Within a short space of time the cry had reached the first street. The adults of both streets were so distressed and fearful, since each community was related to the other, that they dared not make complete inquiries as to the cause of the furore.

An elder of the community tried to reason with the people of both streets, asking why they did not question each other. Too confused to know what they meant, some said: "For all we know there is a deadly plague in the other street."

This rumour, also spread like wildfire, until each street's residents thought that the other was doomed.

When some measure of order was restored, it was only enough for the two communities to decide to emigrate to save themselves. Thus it was that, from different sides of the town, both streets entirely evacuated their people.

Now, centuries later, the town is still deserted and not so far away are two villages. Each village has its own tradition of how it began as a settlement from a doomed town, through a fortunate flight, in remote times, from a nameless evil.



59. Only One More Hour

The Prophet (pbuh) was sitting in the masjid of Madina with his companions.

One of them asked: "Ya Rasulallah! If I had one more hour left of my life, what is the most worthy act to perform."

The Prophet (pbuh) replied that the best deed is to be seeking knowledge when Israil (the angel of death) visits.

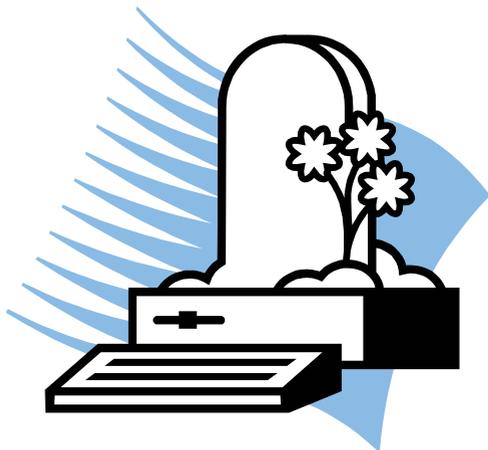
Abu Rayhan Biruni, a great Muslim mathematician, sociologist and historian was in love with knowledge, research and discoveries. He was once summoned to the court of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni and accompanied the king in his conquest. He found that there was a great treasure of knowledge in India but he did not know Sanskrit. He began learning it despite his old age. He learnt it to such a degree that he wrote a book about it which is still a source of reference for historians today.

He was on his death bed when an 'alim neighbour of his, learning of his serious illness, went to visit him. Abu Rayhan on seeing him, asked him a question of Fiqh. The 'alim was surprised that a dying man should take interest in such matters. Abu Rayhan said, "I would like to ask you; which is better - to die with knowledge or without it?"

The A'lim replied,
"Of course, it is better to know and then die."

Abu Rayhan said,
"That is why I asked you my first question."

Shortly after the A'lim reached home, he heard cries of grief from the house of Abu Rayhan indicating that he had died.



60. The stranger

Tired and exhausted with the water-skin on her back, she was gasping and going towards her house where innocent children, their eyes fixed at the door, were eagerly waiting for the arrival of their mother.

On her way, an unknown man approached her. He took the water-skin from her and placed it on his back. The door opened and the children saw their mother entering the house with a stranger. He placed the water-skin on the ground and said:

"Well, it seems you don't have anyone to fetch water for you; how come you are so alone?"

"My husband was a soldier; Ali sent him to the frontier where he was killed. Now I am alone with these small children," she replied.

The stranger said no more. Bowing down his head he went away. But the thought of the helpless widow and orphans remained in his mind. He could hardly sleep in the night. Early in the morning he picked up a basket, put some meat, flour and dates in it, and went straight to her house and knocked at the door.

"Who is it?"

"I am the man who brought your water yesterday. Now I have brought some food for the children"

"May God bless you and judge between us and Ali".

She opened the door. Entering the house he said,
"I wish to do some good acts. Either let me knead the flour and bake the bread or allow me to look after the children"

"Very well, but I can do the job of kneading and cooking better than you. You take care of the children till I finish cooking"

She went to knead the flour. He grilled some meat, which he had brought and fed the children saying to each child while putting morsels in their mouths,

"My son, forgive Ali if he has failed in his duty towards you"

The flour was ready; she called, "Please help me light the oven"

He went to light the oven.

When flames rose up, he brought his face near the fire and said,

"Taste the heat of fire. It is the punishment for those who fail in their duty towards orphans and widows."

By chance, a woman from the neighbouring house came in. Recognising the stranger, she cried out,

"Don't you recognize the man who is helping you? He is Amirul-Mu'mineen (commander of the faithful) Ali bin Abi-Talib"

The widow came forward and said,
"Forgive me"

"No," he replied.

"It is I who ask your forgiveness for I failed in my duty towards you"



61. The True Winner

The Prophet (pbuh) was once passing through a street in Madina when he saw some youths engaged in a contest of lifting a heavy stone.

The Prophet (pbuh) asked if they would like him to be the judge of who was the strongest of them all.

They eagerly agreed.

Then the Prophet (pbuh) said:

"To prove who is the strongest, there is no need to lift the stone. I can say that the strongest person is he who can control his desire to sin. Such a person is surely brave."

A story is related about Puryaye Vali who is considered a great world champion as well as a symbol of manliness and bravery. Once he visited another country for a wrestling contest with its champion.

In the street he came across an old woman who was offering people sweets as charity and asking them to pray for her son. She approached Puryaye and offered him the sweets. He asked her what they were for. She said, "My son is a wrestler who is being challenged by a champion from another country. We live on the income he gets from wrestling matches and if he loses this contest we will have nothing to live on."

Puryaye says he was at cross roads whether to show his strength or manliness at the contest the next day. Although he was far stronger than his opponent he wrestled in such a way as to let his opponent win.

He says that at that moment he suddenly felt as though his heart had been opened and he was surrounded with peace.

Imam Ali (pbuh) has said,
"The strongest person is he who has conquered his desires."



62. "You may ask whatever you like"

A Muslima came to Sayyida Fatima Zahra (pbuh) and said: "My mother, who is very old and weak, has become doubtful over some matters relating to salaa and has sent me to you to clarify her doubts."

Sayyida Fatima Zahra (pbuh) replied,
"You are welcome to ask any questions."

The Muslima asked ten questions, receiving a reply for each one. The Muslima felt embarrassed to ask any more; she said: "I do not want to trouble you any more!"

Sayyida Fatima (pbuh) replied,
"You may ask whatever you like. Do you think that if a man who is promised 100,000 dinars (a large sum of money at that time) for carrying a heavy load to the roof of a house will feel tired of the job keeping in view the handsome reward?"

The Muslima replied, "No".

Sayyida Fatima (pbuh) continued,
"As for every problem I am explaining to you, I am getting the reward for it a thousand times more than that and it is only right that I do not get fed up or tired. I have heard from my father, the Prophet (pbuh), that on the day of Qiyama,

the Muslim scholars will be given a great reward for their effort in guiding people on the right path.”



63. Fast all Your Life

Imam Ja'fer al-Sadiq (as) quotes his forefathers (as) saying that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) once asked his companions,

"Which one of you fasts the whole time?"

Salman al-Farsi, may Allah have mercy on his soul, said,

"I do, O Messenger of Allah!"

The Messenger of Allah asked them, "Which one of you says prayers the whole night?"

Salman al-Farsi, may Allah have mercy on his soul, again said,

"I do, O Messenger of Allah!"

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) asked them,

"Which one of you recites the entire text of the Qur'an every day?"

Salman al-Farsi, may Allah have mercy on his soul, for the third time said, "I do, O Messenger of Allah!"

One of the Prophet's companions became angry and said, "O Messenger of Allah! Salman is a Persian who wants to brag and demonstrate his superiority over us, we men of Quraysh. You asked us, 'Which one of you fasts the whole time?' and he said he does so, while he eats most of the time. And you asked us, 'Which one of you says prayers the entire night?' and he again said he did so, while he sleeps most of the night. And you asked us, 'Which one of you recites the entire text of the Qur'an every day?' and he for the third time said that he did so, while most of the time he is silent."

The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) rebuked that man and said, "Keep your silence, so-and-so, for how far you are from Luqman the Wise! Ask him, and he will explain to you,"

whereupon that companion turned to Salman and asked him thus:

"O father of Abdullah! You have claimed that you fast the whole time, haven't you?"

Salman answered him in the affirmative, so the companion said,

"But I have seen you eating most of the time!"

Salman said,

"It is not what you say! I fast three days in every month, and Allah, the most Exalted, the most Glorified One, says, 'Whoever does a good deed will be rewarded ten-fold' (Surat al-An'am, verse 16). And I join the month of Sha'ban with the month of Ramadan in my fast, so it is regarded as though I fast the whole time."

The man then asked him,

"But you claim that you spend your entire night offering prayers, don't you?"

Salman answered in the affirmative, whereupon that man said to him, "How so since most of your night you are in bed?"

Salman said,

"It is not as you say. I have heard my beloved Messenger of Allah (pbuh) say, 'Whoever remains in a state of tahara (purification) during his sleep will be regarded as though he spent the whole night offering prayers,' and I do remain tahir!"

The man still asked him,
"Have you not claimed that you recite the entire text of the Qur'an every day?"

Salman said,
"I have."

The man then asked him,
"But you spend most of the day silent!"

Salman said,
"It is not as you say, but I have heard my beloved Messenger of Allah (pbuh) telling Ali (pbuh): 'O father of al-Hasan (pbuh)! Your similitude in my nation is like that of Surat al-Ikhlās: whoever recites it once is considered as having recited one third of the entire text of the Qur'an, and whoever recites it twice is considered as having recited two-thirds of the Qur'an, while whoever recites it thrice will be regarded as having recited the entire text of the Qur'an; whoever loves you with his tongue completes one third of his eiman (conviction), and whoever loves you with both his tongue and heart completes two thirds of his eiman, whereas whoever loves you with his tongue and heart and assists you with his hand (i.e. physically with his might and means) perfects his eiman. I swear by the One Who sent me with the truth, O Ali! Had all people on earth loved you as those in the heavens do, nobody would have been tormented with the Fire,' and I do recite Surat al-Ikhlās thrice daily."

The man then stood up and left as if someone had filled his mouth with a rock (as the Arabs put it).

This incident is recorded on pp. 93-94, Vol. 94, of Bihar al-Anwar.



64. Al-Amin The Trustworthy One

One year, the Ka'ba was being rebuilt. The people of Makka were all working together to build it.

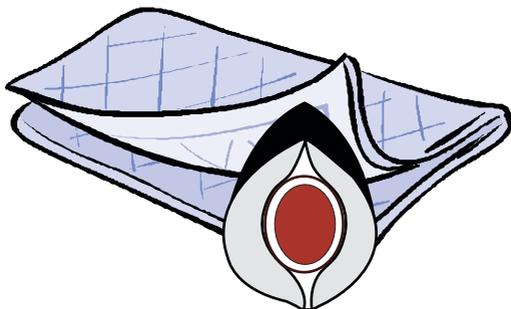
When the walls reached the level where they had to place the 'Hajar al-Aswad' (The black stone) the work stopped. Everyone wanted to place the black stone in it's position because it was so important.

There was a big argument and it seemed like there would be a civil war in Makka.

A wise man spoke out and said:

"Do not make war because it destroys homes and cities. It causes misery and hardship. Find a solution to your problem." He suggested that they choose a person who would decide what to do from themselves.

The people asked who and how they should choose. The wise man suggested that they appoint the first person who enters Masjid al-Haram through a particular door which he pointed towards.



Everyone agreed and all eyes were fixed to the door.
A young man entered. Everyone was glad for it was Muhammad Al-Amin (pbuh) (The Trustworthy One). They crowded around him and told him what had happened.

He told them:

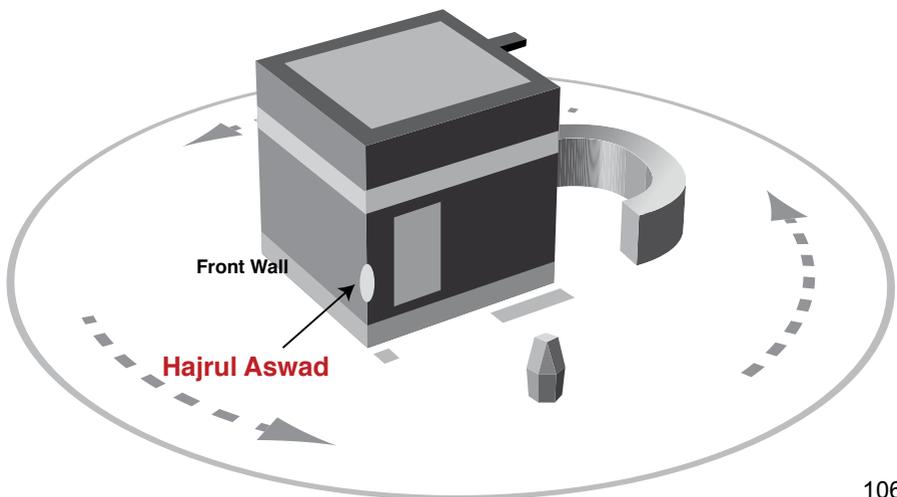
"All the leading men of Makka must share in this important work."

The people looked surprised:

"How is that possible?"

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) gave instructions for all the leaders of the tribes to be present. When they had all assembled he took of his cloak and placed the Hajar al-Aswad in the middle. He asked all the leaders to pick the cloak and bring it to the side of the Ka'ba.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) gently guided the stone to its special place. All the people were pleased. He had not then declared his prophet hood but even then the people of Makka used to turn to him to settle their differences.



65. A WINDOW FOR ADHAN

Imam Ja'fer As-Sadiq (pbuh) came up to talk to a man who was busy working at constructing a window for his house.

After greeting him, Imam asked him why he needed a window.

"Yabna Rasulillah! It is for light and fresh air that I am making this window."

Imam told him that if only his niyya had been to make a window so that the sound of Adhan could be heard, he would have not only got the benefit of light and fresh air but also the thawab of having done something to bring him closer to Allah. He would have converted a mubah act into a mustahab one i.e. an allowable act into one that merits thawab."



Allahu Akbar



66. “At least I saved this one...”

There was an elderly man on the beach holding a cane in his hand and surveying the beach that the receding tide had exposed. Every now and then he bent to pick something up and toss it into the ocean.

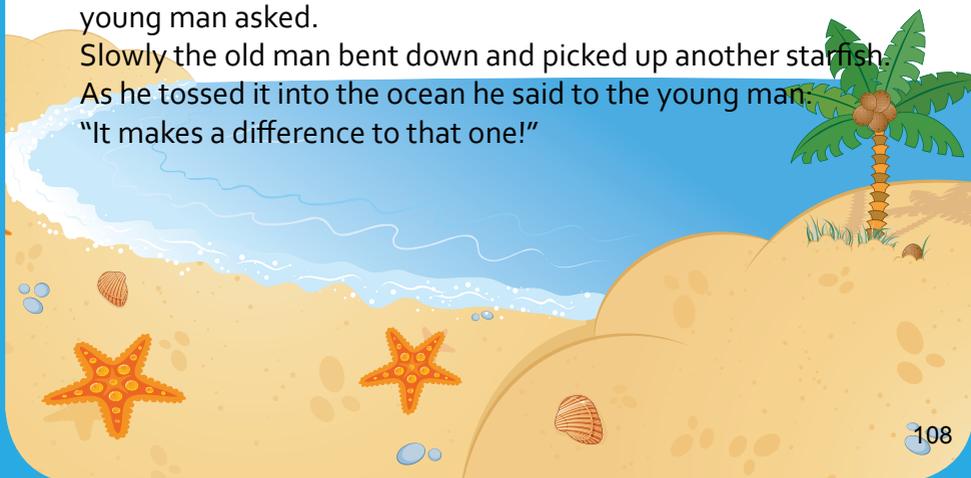
A young man who was watching him came nearer to see that he was looking for starfish. Every time the old man saw a helpless starfish who was unable to get back to the ocean on its own, he would lovingly pick it up and gently toss it into the sea.

The young man came up to him and asked him why he was doing this. The old man replied:

“The starfish are left behind after the tide goes out. If they do not get back to the ocean, they will dry up and die beneath the hot summer sun.”

“But there are endless miles of beach and there must be millions of starfish. Surely you don’t think you can save them all. What difference can your efforts possibly make?” The young man asked.

Slowly the old man bent down and picked up another starfish. As he tossed it into the ocean he said to the young man: “It makes a difference to that one!”



67. One!

The sands were burning hot. A large stone was placed on the slave's chest. Umayya, the master of the slave was heating a piece of iron. He placed the red hot iron on Bilal's leg.

Umayya said:

"Give up the belief in the Lord of Muhammad or I shall kill you slowly!"

All Bilal said was :

"Ahadun Ahad!! Ahadun Ahad!!"

(One, One, One, One.)

Every morning when the sun rose Bilal was tortured in the same way and his answer to Umayya was the same. "God is one!!"

When the Prophet heard of the torture he asked if any of the companions could go and purchase Bilal from Umayya and thus save him.

Abu Bakr did so and freed Bilal. When Bilal came in front of the Prophet he asked :

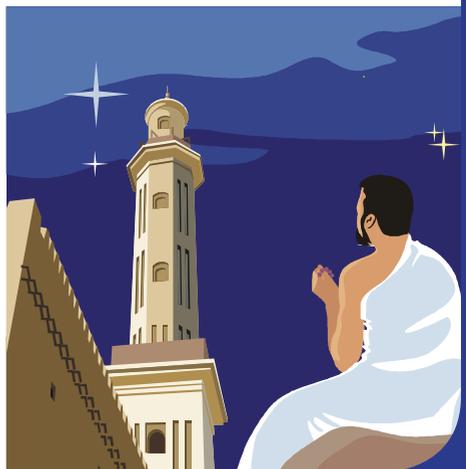
"O Prophet ! Until today I have been tortured but have been patient and I have made sure not to say anything against the pleasure of Allah"

Am I on the right path?"

The Prophet (pbuh) replied:

"Yes, you are on the right path"

Bilal became the much loved Muadhhdin of Islam.



68. “You are still holding her...”

Once upon a time, two monks were walking in silence through the forest - a younger monk and an elder monk.

Eventually their path led to a stream. There they saw a beautiful young lady, exquisitely clad, standing on the bank. She was in great distress because she wanted to cross the stream, but didn't know how, without getting her fine long robes wet. Without hesitation the elder monk scooped her up, crossed the stream, and set her down on dry ground. She thanked him and continued on her way, and the monks continued on theirs, again in silence.

The younger was uncertain, distressed, and confused. He became more and more restless until he finally spoke.

"Brother," he addressed the elder, "I don't know what to make of it. You know our order is an austere order, and we can't so much as speak to a woman. But... but... you saw that lady, you... uh... picked her up and... carried her across the stream! And yet... he continued, almost choking, "you just keep on walking as if nothing happened!"

"It's quite simple," the elder replied. "I set her down leaving her on the opposite bank, but you are still holding her."



69. The man is yourself

There is an anecdote about a man who once died and in the next world met a number of souls, some of whom he knew and liked and some he knew and disliked.

But there was one person there whom he did not know and he could not bear. Everything he said infuriated him and disgusted him- his manner, his habits, his laziness, his insincere way of speaking....and it seemed to him that he could even see the man's thoughts and feelings; in fact he could see all his life.

He asked the others who this impossible person was.

They answered: "Up here we have very special mirrors which are quite different from those in the world you came from. This man is yourself."

We must always put ourselves in the position of how others see us, hear us and experience our daily behaviour. When we do that we are seeing ourselves through their eyes.



70. I am your guest

His feet, tired of the long distance between Makka and Madina that he had walked, got a new energy by the sight of the House of his Rabb. The Ka'ba stood, quiet and lonely with its humble grace.

His steps carried him with awe, hope, fear, and Love to the Door. And there he stood, in contemplation of how to start his whisperings to the one who was All-Hearing.

The survivor of the most dreadful genocide in the history of humanity, was appropriately named the Adornment of the Worshippers (Zayn-ul 'Abideen) for his most sincere, ever returning heart that kept him occupied with his Rabb.

And here he was, standing, holding on to the cover of the wall of Ka'ba, as a destitute child holding on to the skirt of his mother, asking from the Kindest of all, the One who never refuses.

You would wonder - What would an Imam ask for?

A voice that would often be drenched in the tears of a fearful nafs would whisper:

"My Rabb, I am Your guest. Everyone greets a guest handsomely. And indeed You greet in the most wonderful manner. Please greet me with saving me from the Fire."



71. Make Allah the centre of your life

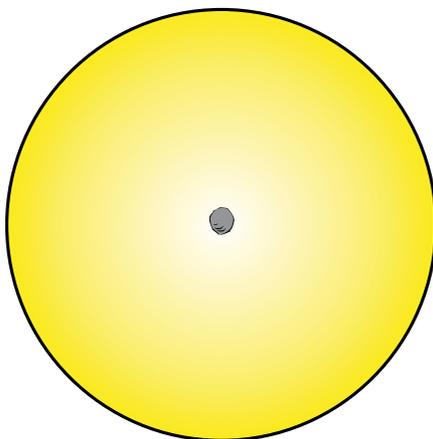
A student was sitting with his grandpa in the garden.

"I'm getting excellent grades and my tutors see a great future for me, yet I am miserable!"

"A happy and wholesome life is like a perfect circle" replied his grandpa, picking up a stone and a twig.

He placed the stone on the ground and using the twig as a compass drew a perfect circle with the stone as it's centre.

"When you have a fixed and steady centre, then your circle will be perfect." The grandfather said. "However, if the centre is constantly changing, you will never be able to draw a circle."



"Today, many people receive a good education and establish 'successful' careers, but never establish a spiritual centre around which their life's activities orbit. When you establish your centre, my son, and it is clear, all else will follow."

72. “When I hear the cry of a bird...”

Prophet Dawud (pbuh) , once on finishing the recitation of the Zaboor and performing salaa felt satisfied with his ibada to Allah.

As he left his mihrab a frog came up to him. The frog said:
"O Dawud! Is it true that you feel satisfied with yourself?

Every night I recite 1,000 tasbeehs- and in each tasbeeh I recite 3,000 praises of Allah.

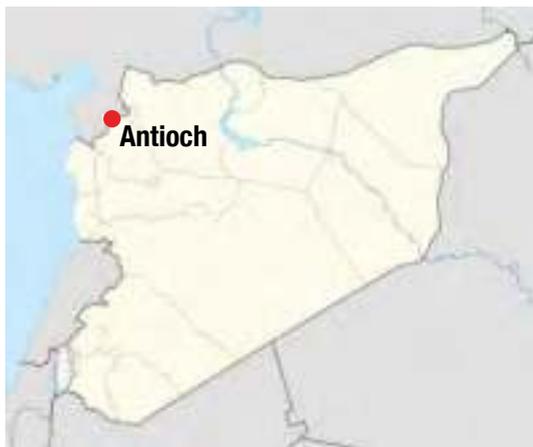
O Dawud! When I am at the bottom of the pond and I hear the cry of a bird who is hungry, I come to the surface of the water so the bird may see me and eat me as it's food. This is part of my duty that I perform towards Allah."



73. Habib Al-Najjar

Suratu Yaseen - 36:13-26

Antioch was one of the most important cities of Northern Syria . It was a Greek city founded by one called Seleuces Nicator (a successor of Alexander) in memory of his father Antiochus.



Prophet Isa (pbuh) had sent his disciples John & Jonah to deliver the message of Tawheed.

As they approached the city they saw a shepherd who asked them who they were. They introduced themselves and the shepherd asked them to prove their identity. They told him of the miracles that Prophet Isa (pbuh) performed. The shepherd took them to his sick son whom no physician could cure. The disciples prayed to Allah and the shepherd's son was cured. The shepherd accepted their message .



A lot of sick people in the city of Antioch were cured . The king who was an idol worshipper imprisoned the two disciples when he heard of their message of Tawheed. Prophet Isa (pbuh) when hearing about the imprisonment sent another of his disciples -Simon As-Safi. Simon came to the city and befriended the king by hiding his faith.

When he had enough confidence of the king he asked about John and Jonah. He told the king to ask them about their beliefs. This the king did. They related about Prophet Isa (pbuh) and the miracles that he performed.

Simon then asked the king why he did not accept the faith of John & Jonah whose God had great powers. The king accepted but his people still rejected the messengers saying that they were mere human beings like them and were lying.

They said: "Our Lord knows that we are truly messengers sent to you." "And on us is only the clear deliverance (of the message)."

The townspeople replied: "We see the bird of evil omen with you - if you do not stop we will stone you , and we will afflict you with a painful punishment."

The Arabs, because they lived in the desert had little ecology and the appearance of various animals especially birds was regarded as an omen .

The messengers said: "Your bird of evil omen is with you. What ! even if you are reminded? Nay ! but you are a wasteful (extravagant) people !"

They were told by the messengers that they were the cause of 'their evil omen'.

When the people of the city rejected the message of Tawheed, Habib Al-Najjar (Habib the Carpenter) who is popularly known as Mu'min e Aale Yaseen came running urging the people to obey the messengers.

He said:" And why should I not serve Him who brought me into existence - and to Him will you all be brought back".

"Should I take gods besides Him whose intercession could not help me in any way if the All Merciful wants to afflict me with harm, nor could they deliver me?". Indeed then I would be in clear error"

"Certainly I believe in your Lord, so hear me !" said Habib.

It was said "Enter Janna!".

He said:"O (I wish) that my people would have known" "With what my Lord has forgiven me , and placed me amongst the honoured ones*.

Habib Al-Najjar was stoned and killed by his people and then buried in the market place of Antioch. His soul was asked to enter Janna but even then he remembered his people wishing that they would recognise the knowledge of entry to Janna.

74. "I want to be the slave of Allah..."

Imam Musa ibn Ja'fer (pbuh) was passing through a market in Baghdad. He heard the sound of music and merry making from a house belonging to a man called Bashir Hafi (A well known aristocrat of Baghdad). As he was passing by it, he saw a maid from the house come out to empty rubbish. Imam asked her whether the owner of the house was a free man or a slave.

The girl was surprised at the question and said:

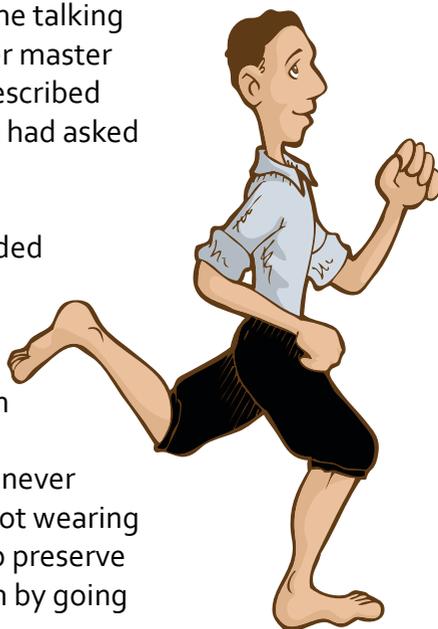
"This is the house of Bashir Hafi! He is a free man and a reputable man in the town as well!".

Imam said:

"He must be free to be engaged in such merry making. If he were a slave his conduct would be different."

As the girl had spent some time talking to Imam, she was asked by her master why she was late back. She described Imam and related what Imam had asked her about him.

He returned home and discarded all the music making instruments in his house. From then on he used to walk the streets of Baghdad in bare feet and was nicknamed "The barefooted Bashir". Whenever he was asked the reason for not wearing shoes he would say: "I want to preserve the memory of meeting Imam by going bare-footed."



75. Not even for a mountain of gold...

The early Muslims were subjected to ill-treatment and persecution just because they declared La Ilaha Illallah - There is no god but Allah.

Eighty three of them migrated to Ethiopia, led by Ja'fer ibn Abu Talib. When the Makkans learnt that the Muslims were having a comfortable refuge in Ethiopia they sent a delegation to King Najashi of Ethiopia loaded with invaluable gifts with a mission to seek the return of the Muslims.

After presenting the gifts they approached the King in his court saying that the Muslims believed in a Prophet who spoke against Prophet Isa (pbuh) - Jesus.

Turning to Ja'fer, the King asked:

"What do you say about Jesus?"

Ja'fer recited the following aya of Qur'an:

'The Messiah, Isa son of Marium was the messenger of Allah and His word which He cast to Marium and a spirit from Him'

Suratun Nisa - 4:171

King Najashi picked a piece of wood from the ground and said:

"By God! Jesus was not even a bit higher than what you have said. Not higher than even the measure of this piece of wood"

He turned to the delegation of Makkans and said:
"I am not going to harm them even if I were given a mountain
of gold. Take away all the gifts you have brought for God did
not receive any bribe from me when He blessed me with this
kingdom, nor did He pay any heed to what others said about
me when He decided to raise me to this status.



76. Nineteen Sons

Prophet Dawud (pbuh) had nineteen sons. Allah had granted Prophet Dawud (pbuh) the Zabur. He also became King of his people.

Each of his sons hoped to inherit their father's throne. Allah revealed to Prophet Dawud (pbuh) some questions to put to each of his sons. Whoever answered the questions correctly, would inherit his father's throne.

One day, Prophet Dawud (pbuh) called all his sons in the presence of all the scholars and leaders of all the tribes in his kingdom. He asked them all the following questions:

- 1) Which is the nearest thing to a human being?
- 2) Which is the furthest thing to a human being?
- 3) Which two things are attached to each other?
- 4) Which is the most shocking thing?
- 5) Which two things remain unchanged?
- 6) Which two things are always different?
- 7) Which two things are opposed to each other?
- 8) What is the action the result of which is good?
- 9) What is the action the result of which is bad?

Only the youngest son, Prophet Sulayman (pbuh) stood up and gave the following answers:

- 1) The nearest thing to a human being is the hereafter (death may come at any moment)
- 2) The furthest thing from a human being is the time which has passed away.
- 3) The two things that are attached to each other are the body and the soul.
- 4) The most shocking thing is a dead body (a body with out a soul).
- 5) The two things which remain the same are the sky and the earth.
- 6) The two things which are different are the night and day.
- 7) The two things opposed to each other are life and death.
- 8) The action, the result of which is good is patience at the time of anger.
- 9) The action, the result of which is bad is haste at the time of anger. Prophet Sulayman (pbuh) was appointed the successor to his father's throne.



77. This is Ali Bin Husayn (pbuh)

A caravan of Muslims was headed towards Makka. As it arrived in Madina, it rested a few days, and continued on towards Makka.

On their way from Madina to Makka, a man joined the group. This man noticed one of them who had the appearance of a guided person. He was eagerly busy in service of the passengers. The man recognised him. With much surprise, he asked the Hajis if they knew this man who was at their service?

"No, we don't know him. He joined us in Madina. He is a pious man. We haven't asked him for help. But he is like one of us - helping us."

"Obviously you don't know him. For if you did, you would never have allowed a man like him to be at your service."

"Who is this person?" they asked

"This is Ali bin Husayn , Zayn ul Aabideen."

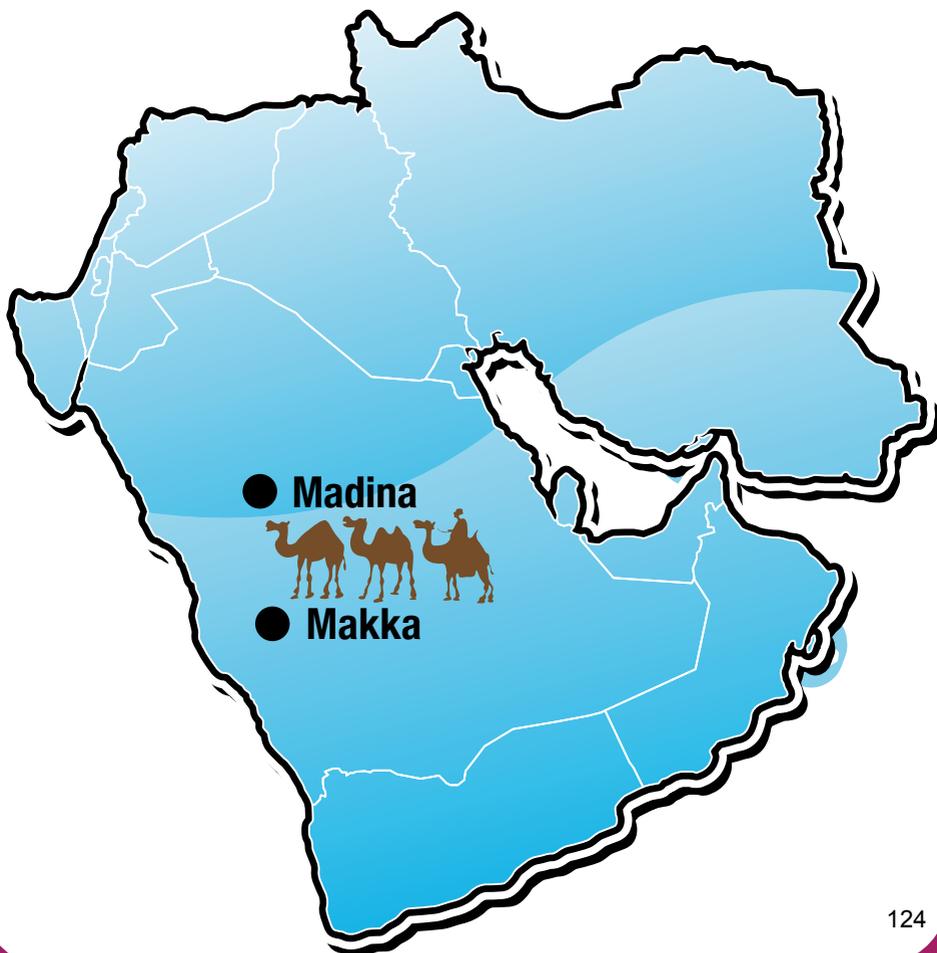
The group stood with shame and apologised to the Imam (pbuh). Then turning to Imam, they said:

"Why did you treat us as such? We may have gone beyond our bounds in our ignorance, and would have committed a big sin in being disrespectful to you."

Imam (pbuh):

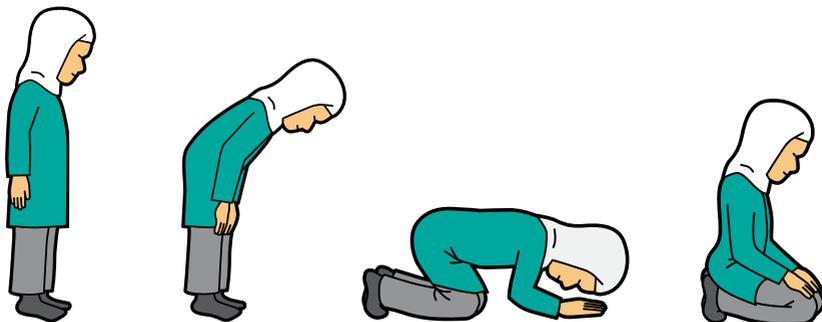
"I intentionally joined your group, for you didn't know me. When I join a group, where people know me, for the sake of the Prophet (pbuh), they are very kind to me. They don't allow me to be of some service. Thus I was eager to join a group where I would not be known so that I may have the honour of being of some service to my companions."

Bihar ul Anwaar , v.1 p.21



78. "Neighbours before ourselves"

That night, his ears were focussed on the salaa and duas of his mother, who was facing Qibla in a corner of the room. That Friday night, he was observing his mother's Ruku', Sujood, Qiyam, and Qu'ood.



Even though, he was a young child, he was aware that his mother was praying for the mu'mineen. She was naming each one and asking Allah for His mercy and grace for them.

What might she be asking for her own self?

Imam Hasan (pbuh) didn't sleep all night, and was observing his mother. He was awaiting to hear his mother's request for her own self, and what she would ask for herself from Allah.

The young Imam (pbuh) didn't even hear a word for her own self.

In the morning, he asked her:

"Dear mother! Why didn't you pray even once for your own self?"

She answered: "My dear child! Neighbours before ourselves."

Bihar al-Anwaar, v.10, p.25

79. Who do you love the most?

The two young boys were asking their mother together:
"O Mother! who do you love the most?"

Their mother looked at the lights of her eyes, and the delights of her heart and said:

"Take this tasbee and break it. The one who picks up the most beads is the one that I love the most!!"

Imam Hasan (pbuh) and Imam Husayn (pbuh) broke the tasbee and picked up the beads. Both had an equal number in their hands when they saw the last one.

Both their hands stretched towards it when Jibrail came and gently broke the last bead in half.



80. The Travelling Companion

In those days, the city of Kufa was the centre of Muslim world. In the wide territory, except for parts of Syria, all attention was towards Kufa, for orders to affect people.

A Muslim, and a person from the People of the Book met each other in the outskirts of this city. They asked each other's destination. It became apparent that the Muslim was headed towards Kufa, and the other man was heading towards a place close by there. They agreed to accompany each other as they had a certain amount of distance to go together.

The shared path passed with much discussions, and sincere sharing. As they arrived at the cross road, where they were to part, the other man was amazed that the Muslim was still coming along with him.

He asked:

"Didn't you say that you were going to Kufa?"

"Yes! I am going to Kufa"

"Then why are you coming this way? That is the way to Kufa."

"I know. I just wanted to accompany you for a short distance. Our Prophet (pbuh) said:

"Whenever two people go together for a distance, they have a right on each other. Now you have a right on me. So I am accompanying you to fulfil your right. Then I shall continue my path."

"Indeed, this wonderful character must have been the reason that your Prophet gained so much popularity, in such a short time among people."

This man's surprise doubled when he found out that his Muslim companion was Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib (pbuh), the khalifa of the time.

The man soon accepted Islam, and became one of Imam's companions, and faithful friends.

Usool-e Kafi, v 2, p. 670



81. TREAT US EQUALLY

The complainer had brought his complaint to the powerful judge of the time, Umar bin Khattab. The involved parties were to be present and the complaint to be presented. The complaint was against Amir al-Mu'mineen (pbuh). Umar called unto both people, and seated himself at the chair of judge.

As per Islamic rules, both involved parties must sit by each other, so that equality may be maintained. The khalifa called the complainer, to stand before the judge.

Then he called Imam Ali (pbuh) to stand by this person:
"O Ab-al Hasan, stand by him."

As Imam Ali (pbuh) heard this comment, signs of distress appeared on his face.

The Khalifa asked:

"O Ali, aren't you willing to stand by him?"

Imam (pbuh):

"No, my distress is not for standing by him. My distress comes from the fact that you didn't comply with demands of justice, and equality. You called me with respect, calling me Ab-al Hasan. But you called on this person with his regular name. That is the cause of my distress."



The voice of human justice, p 49.

The explanation of Nahj-al Balagha of Ibn Abi Hadeed, print of Beirut, v 4, p 18

82. "Allah Loves those who do good"

Imam Ali Zaynul Aabideen (pbuh) had a slave who once dropped a bowl of hot soup on him whilst she was serving food.

She saw that Imam was in a lot of pain.

She thought that Imam would get angry and started to recite the 134th aya of Suratu Aali Imraan.

When she recited "...and those who swallow their anger..." Imam told her he was not angry with her.

When she recited "...and those who forgive people..." Imam said he had forgiven her.

Finally, when she recited "...and Allah loves those who do good (to others)," Imam set her free.

Imam not only swallowed his anger but forgave the girl and set her free.

As the followers of Imam the least we can do is to swallow our anger when a friend, relative or another Muslim says or does something which hurts us.



83. “Even the dogs of Madina do that”

A group of people came to Imam Ali Zaynul Abedeen (pbuh) saying that they were his shias (followers).

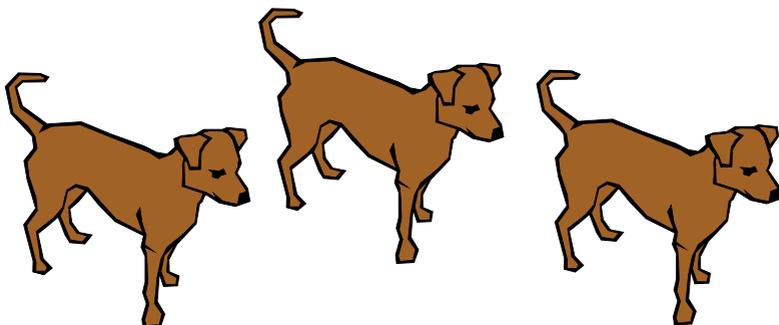
“What do you do when you get something?” he asked them.
“We say Alhamdulillah” they replied.

“What do you do when something is taken away from you?”
Imam asked
“We lament a little and come to terms with it” they replied

“What do you do when you do not receive anything” Imam asked further.
“Nothing” they replied.

“Even the dogs of Madina do that”. Imam said. “When they are given something (food), they wag their tails in shukr. When something is taken away from them, they bark a little and walk away. When they do not get anything, they walk around the streets.”

“Our shias are those who say Alhamdulillah when they receive something, when something is taken away and when they receive nothing.”



84. "It was I" said the frog

Two geese were about to go south for their annual Autumn migration, when a frog came up to them and asked if they would take him with them.

The geese agreed if the frog could work out how he would be carried by them. The frog produced a long stalk of grass, got the two geese to hold each end whilst he clung to it's middle with his mouth.

In this manner the three were making their journey when they were noticed from below by some men.

The men expressed their admiration for the device and wondered who had been clever enough to discover it.

As soon as the frog heard them he opened his mouth and said "It was I!" He lost his hold and fell to the earth.

The Prophet (pbuh):

"Even if you do not commit any sins, I fear that you may fall into something which is worse: pride! pride!"



85. "DIE BEFORE YOU DIE"

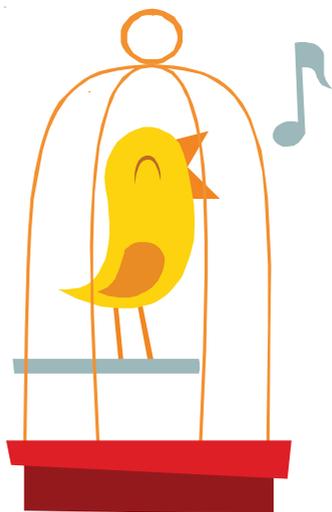
PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PBUH)

The following poem written by Rumi may help to understand the above hadith.

Once upon a time a bird in a cage sang for her merchant master. He took such delight in her song that her feelings began to matter. He grew so fond of her that he brought her water in a golden dish, And when he went on a trade journey he asked her for her wish.

"I will go through the forest where you were born, past the birds of your neighbourhood, what message shall I give them of your present good."

"Tell them I sit locked in a cage, singing my captive song,
And I hope it won't be long,
Before I fly in freedom through the trees,
That will set my heart at ease."



The merchant went on his donkey through the wood,
When he got to where the bird was from he stopped and
raised his hood.

"O birds! Greetings to you, one and all, from my bird locked in
her cage,

She sends her love and wants me to tell you of her condition
and ask your sage,

For a message to take back that will ease her heart and turn
for her life a new page."

"She is all alone with bars all around,

She wants to join her beloved and sound,

Her song through the air and be free and unbound."

Suddenly, one bird shrieked and fell from it's branch on to the
ground.

The merchant froze on the spot he stood.

He returned to his house unable to speak,

When his bird asked him what message came from their
beaks.

He stood before her cage and said "O nothing to speak of!"

"No! No" she cried I must know!!

"I told them your message" he said "and just like that one bird
fell dead"

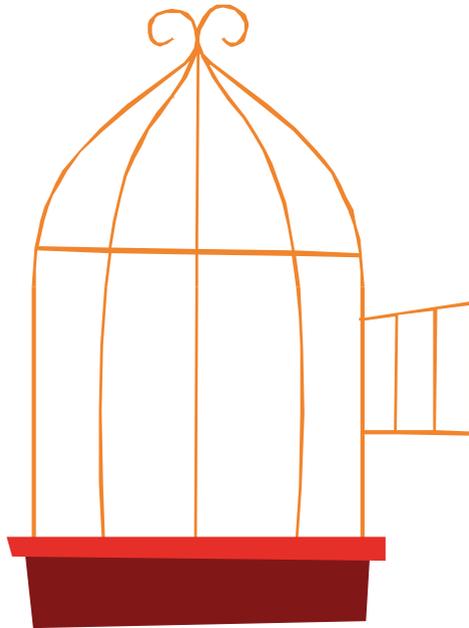
Suddenly, his own bird shrieked and fell on her head.

He let out a cry "O What have I done?"

"Now my moon has gone and so has my sun!"

"My own bird is dead, my life means nothing,
I will have to bury her, a burial fit for a king."

He opened the door of the cage and gently took her,
Careful as not to drop her.
Once, out of the cage, she flew out and away
Onto the roof in the light of the day
"Thank you! Dear Master for delivering my plea,
Those birds sent me a message that instructed me,
On how to win my freedom and fly quite free,
So now I go to my beloved who is waiting for me"
"All I had to do was die,
It's easy once you know how and why,
Good-bye, master no more,
I will fly and soar,
To return no more."



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