

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allah, most Kind, most Merciful



Surah Aal-Imran 3:191

الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ
قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ
وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا
سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth [and say]: 'Our Lord, You have not created this in vain! Immaculate are You! Save us from the punishment of the fire.'

Learning Objectives

- To explain the concept 'We are from Allah and to Him we will return'
- To demonstrate that everyone has a unique relationship with Allah
- To value both the formal and informal modes of communication with Allah

Key Words

قُرْبَةً إِلَى اللَّهِ *Qurbatan ilallah*
seeking closeness to Allah
رَجَاءَ *Raja'*
hope
تَسْلِيمَ *Taslim*
submission

our relationship with Allah



al-Asma al-Husna
The 99 Beautiful Names of Allah

الأوّل **AL-AWWAL**
THE FIRST

Allah has no beginning and no end.
He has always been there.



al-Asma al-Husna
The 99 Beautiful Names of Allah

الأخِر **AL-AKHIR**
THE LAST

Allah is not bound by time. He created time. He was there when nothing existed, and He will continue to exist infinitely.

Complete dependence on our worldly relationships will lead to disappointment. Whether those relationships are with family, friends, or just people we know; all people, like ourselves, make mistakes and are constantly striving towards perfection. We are all in this world temporarily, and one day our lives will end. There is only one being that is stable, constant, and perfect, and that is Allah. His is the only true relationship that should define our self-worth, and the only source from which we should seek our ultimate happiness, contentment, and security.

Allah is *al-Awwal* (the First) and *al-Akhir* (the Last). The reality of our existence is that we are from Allah and to Him we shall return. This is the foundation of our relationship with Allah. Working towards *al-Akhir* with a constant awareness of this foundation in our daily lives is the reason we are here.

Each individual's relationship with Allah is personal and unique. There are several ways in which we connect with our Creator, and the *Ahlul Bayt* (a) have given us valuable advice on how we can develop this relationship with Allah.



REFLECTION...

In *Du'a Arafah* Imam Husayn (a) says:

"He who has found you, what has he lost? And he who has lost you, what has he found?"

What is the most precious thing in your life that if you don't have it you feel you have nothing?

As Allah is our Creator, we always have to be careful not to disobey Him. The best way to develop a relationship with Allah is to reciprocate His love. The best proof that Allah loves us is that He has created us. So why shouldn't we love Him?

In the whispered prayer of the Lovers, Imam Zayn al-Abidin (a) says:

My God, who can have tasted the sweetness of your love, then wanted another in place of You? Who can have become intimate with your nearness, then sought removal from You?

How can we connect with Allah?

When we love someone, we want to spend time with them. We think of them all the time and constantly want to talk to them. We also like to do things that make them happy. By spending time with our loved ones we develop our relationship with them and slowly become closer.

We all love Allah. Just like our relationships with our family and friends, our relationship with our Creator also develops through communication. Allah talks to us through Qur'an, but has also arranged daily meetings with us through *salah*. This is a special time for us to talk to Him. *Du'a* is another way of talking to Allah. There are so many beautiful *du'as* from our *a'immah* (a), who have taught us the respect we should have when we address our Lord, and how we should always turn to Allah first. Both *du'a* and *salah* are formal ways of communicating with Allah, because there are certain rules and *adab* that must be followed in these 'meetings'. *Salah*, for example, must be performed in Arabic, and we must be in *wudhu* before we pray. Allah says in the Qur'an:



Surah Taha 20:14

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

Perform *salah* to remember Me

We can also talk to Allah informally, in our own way, language, wherever we are, and whenever we want. In *ayah* 3:191 of the Qur'an, Allah tells us that we can connect with Him at all times, whether we are sitting, standing, or resting.

There are no words to describe the overwhelming feeling of peace when we make time during the night or early hours of the morning to sit and talk to our Lord. As the rest of the world sleeps, He is there, and He loves us to call on Him. We can talk to Him by opening our hearts to Him and sharing our secrets, worries, and desires. We can thank Him for all that He has given us and continues to bless us with. We can sit back, take out our *tasbeih* and do *dhikr* of His beautiful names! Whichever way we choose to connect with Allah is up to us.

Allah should be the focal point of all our activities, and we should remember Him and recognise His blessings throughout the day. We should wake up with a smile on our faces and *alhamdulillah* on our lips, ready to embrace the new day that Allah has blessed us with. We can spend the rest of our day living in the way that makes Allah happy.

However, our relationship with Allah is not restricted to talking, remembrance, or *dhikr*. Our general actions are just as important in developing and strengthening our connection with Allah. It is not enough to say: 'O Allah I trust you'; our actions must back up our words!



Read the story of Mujtaba and Nur on the next page and circle the different ways they connect with Allah during their day from the list below.





As the sun peaks through the curtains, Mujtaba rubs his eyes and jumps out of bed. Stretching his arms out as far as he can, he smiles and says, “*Alhamdulillah*, thank you Allah for another day!”

After breakfast, Mujtaba and his mum leave for football. Mujtaba loves football! All set on the pitch waiting for the referee to blow his whistle,

Mujtaba whispers, “*Bismillah*, I begin in the name of Allah, the Most Kind, Most Merciful. He will give me the strength to play to the best of my ability, *inshallah*.”

In the afternoon, while Mujtaba is working on his school project, his baby sister Zahra scribbles over the pictures he has drawn so carefully.

Mujtaba exclaims, “Oh no!”

From over her newspaper, his mum says,

“Mujtaba, remember what you should do when you become angry.”

Mujtaba runs to the bathroom, and says “I should be patient and do *wudhu* to calm down.”

He hugs his baby sister and she smiles, “It is alright Zahra, you’re only a baby. Allah doesn’t like those who become angry, and so I won’t be angry Zahra; shall we go play outside?”

Mujtaba and Zahra run off to play in the garden.

In the evening, Mujtaba prays *Maghrib salah* with his grandfather. As they are sitting on the *musalla*, Nur comes running into the room, saying:

“Dada, Dada...here’s your glass of water! Sorry I forgot earlier.”

Nur is Mujtaba’s other little sister. Her grandfather replies,

“Thank you, dear.”

Mujtaba asks, “Dada, whom does Allah love more, me or Nur?”

His grandfather replies, “You are both the same in the eyes of Allah.”

Mujtaba exclaims, “But I prayed *salah*!”

Waving her little hands around, Nur says,

“So? I brought water with my own hands!”

They both look at their grandfather eagerly, eyes twinkling.

He says, “We are all the same to Allah, even me, except for those who have *taqwa*. That’s the only difference between everyone in the world.”

Nur asks, “What’s that? How can I get some?”

STORYTIME!



Mujtaba says, “*Taqwa* means piety, right dada?”

Their grandfather says,

“Yes. *Taqwa* is being mindful of Allah at all times and only doing those things that He has allowed us and that make Him happy. Some people describe it as God-consciousness. Remember that Allah always looks at your intention behind your actions. So it doesn’t matter whether we do good by praying *salah* or giving others water, Allah will reward us for both these good acts as long as our intention is pure. If we are not praying *salah* to make Allah happy but only to show off to others, it won’t be accepted. For our actions to be accepted our intention must be for the pleasure of Allah only, *qurbatan ilallah*.”

Mujtaba sneaks out of bed at night and creeps to the window. “*Subhanallah*,” he says, looking at the twinkling stars. He closes his eyes and makes a special *du’a*, “*Ya Allah!* Dad has been away for work for two whole weeks and I miss him a lot! Please send him back home soon! Thank you Allah.”

Mujtaba’s bedroom door opens and his mum comes in, “You are awake, Mujtaba?”

Mujtaba says, “Sorry mummy, I was just talking to Allah. It’s a secret though, between me and Him.”

His mum says, “Okay, but let’s get you back into bed.” She tucks him in.

Mujtaba asks, “Mummy, Allah will make my wishes come true when they are good for me because He loves me and I love Him too!”

His mum replies, “Yes *inshallah* He will, good night Mujtaba.”

His mum smiles and closes the door.



In this beautiful world around us, Allah has created many things we like, and with them there are some things we may not like. There is happiness and sorrow, success and failure, loss and gain, health and illness. These things are there as a test from Allah. The meaning of test is that by our reactions to these events our soul and personality would develop to its perfection. It is through these tests that we can know ourselves and strengthen our connection with Allah. When something happens that we do not like, we should not be upset and complain. We should trust Him (*tawakkul*) and accept His decision (*taslim*). Allah is All-Knowing, He knows what is best for us.

In the Qur'an, Allah says:



Surat al-Baqarah 2:216

وَعَسَىٰ أَن تَكْرَهُوا شَيْئًا
وَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَىٰ أَن
تُحِبُّوا شَيْئًا وَهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

It may be that you dislike something while it is good for you, and it may be that you love something while it is bad for you, and Allah knows and you do not know.



One sunny afternoon, Mujtaba and his dad were busy building a tree-house in the garden. Mujtaba was very excited! It was almost the weekend and he was looking forward to playing with his friends Imran and Abdullah in his new tree-house! As they sat carving the windows, the weather started to change. Mujtaba asked, “Baba please can we carry on? It is only a little rain.”

They continued carving the wood. Suddenly, the sky became dark and a strong gust of wind was followed by heavy rain. Mujtaba’s father said, “Quick, Mujtaba, let’s go inside.” They crossed the garden and went into the house.

Mujtaba’s face fell as he sat by the window and watched the completed half of the tree-house come crashing down. His dad put his arm around Mujtaba, and said, “Don’t worry son, we will build it again after the storm.”

Mujtaba replied, “But we checked the weather! It wasn’t supposed to rain! The weather lady got it wrong!” He was very upset.

His dad hugged him lovingly and explained that:

“The weather forecast sometimes goes wrong because we cannot predict everything.”

Mujtaba was still not convinced; he said with a moaning tone,

“But we spent half our day on it. Why did Allah send rain while He knew we were working on it?”

His father smiled and said, “We are not the only people living on this planet my son. Consider while we were praying for a clear sky, there may have been many people who were praying for rain, because perhaps their livelihood depended on it.

Allah manages not only us but the whole world and He knows what is the best for all. The only thing we have to do is to trust Him and be happy with His decrees. We planned to build the tree-house today, but Allah planned otherwise and we can now enjoy our time together indoors. Maybe Allah wants us to spend more time together too! That’s why He’s giving us another chance to build the tree-house!”



Nabi Ayyub had good health, ten pious children, a loving wife, a beautiful house, and lots of wealth and land. He was very grateful and was always seen thanking Allah for all these blessings.

Shaytan believed that Nabi Ayyub was only grateful to Allah because of these blessings, and that if they were taken away then he would stop doing *shukr*.

Shaytan said, “O Allah, when You take away the human being’s health, wealth, and children, they will question Your existence. I never question Your existence, I only question Your creation.”

So Allah tested Nabi Ayyub to show Shaytan that he was wrong. Nabi Ayyub lost his health, wealth, and his children. Shaytan even burnt his land. When Shaytan went to see Nabi Ayyub he found him in *sujud*, saying,

“*Shukran lillah, Alhamdulillah.*”

Shaytan was shocked and couldn’t believe his eyes! He asked, “By the power of Allah you lost all your wealth, then your children died in an accident, then your land was burnt, and now you have become so ill you can’t even stand properly! Why are you still thanking Allah?!”

Nabi Ayyub replied, “The wealth that my Lord gave me was a trust; if He wants it let Him have it back. My Lord blessed me with children, and then He took them. If He wants to give me more He will bless me again, even in this old age. Allah gave me land, I trust Him so much, and I know He will replace it with better land later on. Sometimes Allah tests us with our health.”

Later on, when his wife asked him why they had lost everything, Nabi Ayyub answered, “For 80 years Allah blessed us with everything; if He wants to test us for a few years, then let Him test us.”

Nabi Ayyub teaches us the importance of having *tawakkul*, *sabr*, and *shukr* in our relationship with Allah. It is because of his *shukr* and patience that Allah gave Nabi Ayyub his health, wealth, and children back.

We must also try and prove Shaytan wrong! Always thank Allah. Remember, that in every situation there is always something to be grateful for. *Alhamdulillah!*

We should have complete faith and trust in our Lord. Allah loves those who have *tawakkul* and leave their affairs to Him. However, this does not mean that we should passively leave everything to Allah. We should plan our lives and aim to complete everything to the best of our abilities with the blessings that Allah has given us, like our intellect. But at the same time we should recognise that Allah is the best of planners, and accept that He knows what is best for us. Even though sometimes we cannot see it, there is always a reason behind everything.

Imam Hasan (a) says that:

Whoever relies on Allah’s best choices does not wish to be in a situation other than what Allah has chosen for him.

When we reach this level of *tawakkul* then not even Shaytan will be able to misguide us:

Surat an-Nahl 16:99

إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَهُ سُلْطَانٌ عَلَى الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَلَى رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ

Indeed he [Shaytan] does not have any authority over those who believe and put their trust in their Lord.

Discussion Box

We know that Allah tests us to enable good qualities to develop in us.

What qualities do you think were developed in Nabi Ayyub (a) as a result of his severe tests?

Why should we fear Allah?

The reason Allah has commanded us to fear Him in ayah 7:205 is so that He can discipline us.

Allah's mercy and compassion is so great, it outweighs His wrath. Allah's anger towards His servants is also out of His mercy and compassion.

In the same way that our parents become angry and disappointed with us when we do wrong, so does Allah. The only reason our parents want to punish us is to teach us a lesson and stop us from repeating our mistakes. Similarly, Allah does not want us to keep repeating evil deeds and become sinful.



Surat al-A'raf 7:205

وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا
وَخِيفَةً وَدُونَ الْجَهْرِ مِنَ
الْقَوْلِ بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ وَلَا
تَكُن مِّنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

And remember your Lord within your heart humbly and fearing, without being loud, mornings and evenings, and do not be among the heedless.

Allah is Self-Sufficient

When we realise that there is no one else who can help us like Allah, and that everything we are able to do is only because He has given us the ability and tools to do so, we recognise that we are dependent on Allah for everything, from our existence to our sustenance. Also, if we are intelligent, we realise that Allah is absolutely needless of everything and everyone.

Everything that we have been given is a blessing from Allah! Our life, family, friends, health, wealth, knowledge, toys, gadgets, and everything else, are from Allah.

It is not just humans that are needy of Allah. All of creation, from the animals on earth to the moon in the solar system, is dependent on Allah. Allah is the Creator and He is not dependent on anyone or anything:



ACTIVITY...

List 20 things that you needed to be able to continue your life when you woke up this morning, for example:

Air

water

sunrise



Surat al-Ankabut 29:6

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ

Indeed Allah has no need of the creatures.



al-Asma al-Husna

The 99 Beautiful Names of Allah

الْغَنِيُّ
THE SELF-SUFFICIENT

Al-Ghani (The Self-Sufficient).
Allah is absolutely needless of everything and everyone.



ACTIVITY...

Whom does Allah love?

In the Holy Qur'an, Allah describes the qualities of those special people that He loves.

When Allah tells us that He becomes the eyes, ears, hands, and tongue of a person He loves, He is telling us that sincere love for Allah encourages a person to perform the best of deeds with his eyes, ears, hands, and tongue. If we really love Allah we will ensure our actions please Him and are for His sake only (*qurbatan ilallah*).

Allah says in *hadith al-qudsi*:

I shall be his ears with which he listens, his eyes with which he sees, his tongue with which he speaks, and his hands with which he grasps; if he calls Me, I will answer him and if he asks Me, I shall give him.

The pictures of the hearts on this page contain the translation of some of these special qualities and the *ayah* of the Qur'an in which they were mentioned. Working in pairs, discover the Arabic word for these qualities by looking up the *ayah*.

...patient ones
(3:146)

...those who are God-
wary (3:76)

...those who put their
trust in Him
(3:159)

...those who do good
(2:195)

...keep themselves pure
and clean (2:222)

...those who turn to
Him (2:222)

...those who are fair
(60:8)

DID YOU KNOW?

Sleeping on the right side of your body helps your heart to function better and gives you a good night's sleep. Your heart is on the left side of your body and so when you sleep on your right, this wonderful organ has more space to pump blood around the body!

Our *a'imma* (a) have told us that it is *mustahabb* to sleep on the right side, facing the *qiblah* with the right hand under the right side of the face.



KEY POINTS

- 1 The reality of our existence is that we are from Allah and to Him we shall return.
- 2 Each one of us has a unique and special relationship with Allah. We can connect with Allah through *shukr* (thankfulness), *sabr* (patience), *tawakkul* (trust), *taslim* (submission), *taqwa* (piety), *raja'* (hope), *ibadah* (worship), and *ubudiyyah* (servitude).
- 3 Everything we do to connect with Allah can be *ibadah*. It all depends on our intention.
- 4 While there are formal modes of communicating with Allah (*salah* and *du'a*), we can also connect with Allah informally, in our own special way whenever we want.
- 5 Allah is not dependent on His creation for anything.

How did you do?

Think about how you could have connected with Allah even more. Remember that your relationship with Allah is always developing and growing. Whenever we try to build on our connection with Allah, He always helps us. If we take one step toward Him, he will take ten steps towards us.



Faith in Action

Reflect over your day and create a one-day diary entry of how you connected with Allah during the day.

Remember that there are formal and informal ways of connecting with Allah. Write or draw about the different ways in which you remembered Allah.

Remember that everyone has a unique relationship with Allah.

Review your diary entry with your parents and evaluate your connection by colouring in the stars below:



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- NOTES

A vertical sheet of lined paper with a green cloud-shaped sticker at the top that says "NOTES". The paper has horizontal ruling lines and a silver-colored curled bottom edge.