

# **The Best in Islam Part 4**

**Bilal Philips**

## **Outline of the Course**

1. Best Aspects of Faith
2. The best fasting
3. The best month to fast
4. The best festivals
5. Celebrating the birth of Jesus
6. Friday in Islaam
7. Best Gatherings
8. The Best Generations
9. Best greetings
10. The Best Hajj ritual
11. Best Hijrah
12. The Best Muhaajir & Mujaahid
13. Best Legacy
14. Best Da'wah

## **Course Objectives:**

1. To introduce to the learner the best in everything, so as to get great reward in limited time
2. To elevate the Muslim morally and make him always aim for the best in everything.
3. To draw a line of demarcation between pagan practices, which should be avoided by all faiths and the monotheistic practices that are part of all heavenly religions

QUESTION & ANSWER BUCKET

TRANSCRIPTS

## ASSESSMENT

Multiple Choice Questions

Match the Columns

True or False

## COURSE DURATION

Video	–	2 hours 30 min
Study Guide	–	30 min
Assessment	–	15 min
Total Duration	–	3 hours 15 mins

# Lesson 1: The Best in Islam Part 19

## 1. Best Aspects of Faith

It was narrated by Abu Hurairah that the Prophet, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, said, "Emaan (Faith) has over 70 branches, the best of which is the declaration that there is no God worthy of worship but Allah, and the simplest of which is removal of a bone from the road. And modesty is a branch of faith".

### What we understand from the Hadeeth

- i. Physical actions such as removing bones from roads are part of Emaan.
- ii. Faith from an Islamic perspective is not merely a concept, or a belief in the heart, which might be confused with knowledge. This is not faith. Faith has to be translated into some form of action.
- iii. The declaration of faith being the highest is confirmed by another hadeeth in which it is stated that the best deed is faith in Allah, expressed in the term 'there is no God worthy of worship but Allah'.
- iv. The declaration of faith should be made publicly, unless there is a fear that there would be harm, as in the case of the Negus of Abyssinia, who died as a Muslim, without anybody knowing about it. Otherwise, normally, a person is required to make that declaration open to let people know that he or she is a Muslim. It is always good to be known who you are, so as to get Islamic marriage, death, and burial ceremonies.

And this declaration of faith is also a declaration of transparency. They are not hiding anything from people; what is in their hearts, they share. If you believe that Islam is good, then of course, you should not even keep it to yourself.

Furthermore, for the declaration of faith to be the highest act, it has to be sincere, not for any other worldly purpose such as marrying a Muslim girl. Making the declaration only for marriage without being ready to do the obligations, does not get one into the fold of Islaam.

Allah is the one true God, the Creator and the Sustainer of the universe, who has no beginning and has no end, who is in control of everything.

Then, the Prophet, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, went to the other end of the spectrum, and said that the simplest of branches is that of removing harmful objects from the path that people walk on, whether it is a broken bone, or any other harmful object.

This has value, it is a part of faith. And that is the comprehensiveness of faith in Islaam. That is how much Islaam cares for human welfare.

The point is that the principle here is that nothing is too small, to be outside of faith. The faith encompasses everything, every aspect of our lives. There is nothing in our life, which is not governed by faith, and done according to the teachings of Islaam.

The real good deed is that which is consistent. It is one that you do, because you know its good, and because you know, it is good, you should be doing it. So, you strive to do it continually. Allah loves being consistent in doing good deeds. It is easier to be consistent with bigger deeds.

And being consistent with the small ones trains us to be consistent with the big ones. So, this is a complete system. Nothing is insignificant in Islaam.

And then he closed off the Hadeeth saying that modesty is a part of the faith.

Modesty or Al Hayaa' is a part of faith. Modesty in dressing: (you should not expose yourself), modesty in speaking (you do not speak about things not your own business), and modesty in everything.

But it does not mean that your modesty make you keep silent while seeing others commit sins. It is your duty to correct them.

## Lesson 2: The Best in Islam Part 20

### 2. The Best Fasting

Fasting is referred to as the best of deeds. We have a narration from Abu Umamah, in which he reported that he asked the Messenger of Allah, "Which deed is best?", to which he replied, "Fasting, for there is nothing equal to it".

The Prophet's advice for different people varied, given that people are different. So gave each person the advice he required.

So, to one person, the Prophet counselled, "Fasting", because there's nothing equal to it; to another, he said, "Fast, for it is the best to make you lower your gaze and guard your chastity". On another occasion, he advised someone else, "Do not get angry".

That is why the Prophet, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, also recommended fasting on Mondays and Thursdays of every week, so that we do not think of fasting as only being confined to one month in the year, the month of Ramadaan, although it is the only month which we fast the whole month.

### 3. The Best Month to Fast

Now the best fast according to the Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam is Al Muharram. This month, which is considered to be the first month of the lunar calendar. The 10th of Muharram is known as Ashura, on which we are strongly recommended to fast. The reward for fasting on the Day of Ashura is that it removes the minor Sins of the previous year. This is, in other words, a purifier.

Aishah said, "The fast which the messenger most liked to fast voluntarily was Shaban, the month before Ramadan. Then he would join it to Ramadan. But this was his own practice; we are not recommended to fast two months consecutively.

He said the best fast is that of my brother Dawood (The best fast is that of my brother Dawood; he used to fast every other day. And he would never flee when he met the enemy in battle).

However, make sure we do not end up in an automatic mode, where you are just fasting out of ritual, where fasting becomes just a norm. Set your intention before the fast in order to keep the fast on a conscious level. We stay conscious. We are active spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, we will remain active in our fast and not fall into a sleep mode.

## Lesson 3: The Best in Islam Part 21

### 4. The Best Festivals

The first Hadeeth, which was narrated by Anas that when the Prophet, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, came to Medinah, there were two days in which the people of Medinah used to play during the time of ignorance. That is the time before the coming of Islam. He told them, "You have two days in which you used to play but Allah has replaced them with something better, the festival of sacrifice (Eidul Adha) and the festival of breaking the fast (Eidul Fitr). What we learn from this Hadeeth is:

- i. that this Hadeeth is a fundamental Hadeeth telling us about festivals in Islam. These festivals are called Eids because they are celebrated every year at the same time. They are repeated.
- ii. The Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam came to Madinah and cancelled all other festivals and recommended these two.
- iii. The celebration of other days, which were not prescribed by Rasulullah, Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, especially those having religious significance should not be done, and are considered Bid'ah, or innovation in religion.

### 5. Celebrating the birth of Jesus

- i. Jesus was not born on 25<sup>th</sup> of December. The date is a pagan creation.
- ii. If they consider Jesus to be God, God is not born
- iii. The roots of that celebration, which is now called Christmas are from the pagan practices of the Greeks and the Romans. And added to it were the practices of the Scandinavian Europeans, introducing the Christmas tree and all the other things that came along with it.

Eidul Fitr, the Eid of celebrating the end of Ramadan, which is a feast after Sawm and Eidul Adhaa the slaughtering of an animal commemorating Prophet Abraham's willingness to slaughter his son, at the command of God.

## 6. Friday in Islaam

We have a narration from Abu Hurairah in which he quotes the Prophet, Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, as saying " The best day on which the sun has risen is Friday. On it, Adam was created; on it, he was placed in Paradise; on it, he left Paradise; on it, he was forgiven; and on it, he died. And, on it, the final hour will take place".

Regarding Friday, the Prophet, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, also said as narrated by Samura, "Whoever makes Wudu on Jumuah has done well. But if one takes a Ghusul (a full bath), it is better".

In Medina, the mosque of the Prophet, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, was the greatest and people from all corners of Madinah would come and listen to the sermon of the prophet on Friday. Unless people had full bath, there would be unpleasant smell.

## 7. Best Gatherings

We have a narration from Abu Sa'eed Al Khudri, in which he quoted the Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, as saying, "The best of gatherings are those most spacious"; no one should be blocked. Our gatherings should be open to all.

There is a tendency for people when they make gatherings to keep them private, keep it personal, and exclude people, whereas the Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, wanted us to be inclusive to bring people in and let people feel comfortable to be a part of our gatherings.

We are not plotting or planning anything secretively. But we are open, and transparent.

## 8. The Best Generations

It was narrated by Imran bin Hussein that the Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, said, "The best of people are my generation, then those in the following generation, then those in the following generation". What he was speaking of here was the example whom we should look forward to, namely, the Sahaabah and then their students, the Taabi'oon as they had a closer contact with Revelation. They were one generation away from Revelation. And then comes Atbaa'uttaabi'een, or those who succeeded the students of the companions' students.

Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, himself had said, "Follow my Sunnah, and the Sunnah of the righteous caliphs after me". So, he gave sanction to taking the righteous caliphs.



## Lesson 4: The Best in Islam Part 22

### 9. Best greetings

Allah said, "When you are greeted, answer with an even better greeting or at least a similar greeting. Certainly, Allah takes account of all things". When somebody greets you 'As Salaamu Alaikum', then you should at least respond, saying, 'Wa Alaikumus Salaam'. It is better to respond Wa Alaikumus Salaam Wa Rahmatullaah or Wa Rahmatullaah Wa Barakatuh. To add on it to increase it, that is better.

However, if the disbelievers have greeted As Salaam Alaikum, we should respond by saying merely 'Wa Alaikum', which means 'same to you'. We do not complete Wa Alaikumus Salaam.

This is because at the time of the Prophet, Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, the Jews used to greet the Prophet with Assaamu Alaikum, which means 'may you be poisoned', thus wishing death for the Prophet. The Prophet was fair with them and responded with "wa alaikum" (i.e., whatever you wish for me, I wish the same to you). This will spare us the search into their intentions. However, when the non-Muslims wish us Merry Christmas, or they wish us Happy New Year, we should not respond to this since it is idolatrous.

### 10. The Best Hajj ritual

Abu Bakr and Ibn Mas'oud reported the Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, as saying "The best part of Hajj is the raising of voices and the flowing of blood". This is referring to the raising of voices in the Talbiah. When a person puts on Ihraam, they begin to recite a prayer said aloud Labbaikallaahumma labbayk labbayka laa shareeka laka labbayk innal hamda wann'emata laka wal mulk laa shareeka lak (I'm responding to your call. O Allah. I'm responding to your call. I'm responding to your call. You have no partner. I'm responding to your call. Certainly, all praise and blessings and dominion belong to you. You have no partner).

This is the basic slogan of the Hajj. It is repeated from the time that we first put on the garments known as Ihram, the moment we enter into the state of Ihram, until we reach Mina and this is the expression of our intent. This is the only rite in Islam of the various Islamic practices where we express our intent aloud.

In all of the other rites, the intent is kept in the heart. However, in the case of Hajj, we express that intent together loudly. People will make this special Du'aa. So, to do so, in the loud voice, that is a part of the Hajj, an important part of the Hajj, and also the slaughter of the animal on the 10th in commemoration of Prophet Abraham's slaughter of the animal which God had sent

to him, in the place of his son, based on his willingness to sacrifice his son. And the goal behind it is thanksgiving.

## Lesson 5: The Best in Islam Part 23

### 11. Best Hijrah (Emigration)

As regards the concept of Hijrah, and the best Hijrah, there is a Hadeeth narrated by Ibn Amr, in which he quoted the Prophet, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, as saying (The best emigrant is the one who emigrates from what Allah has prohibited. And the best Jihaad is that of one who strives against his own desires, for the sake of Allah, Most Great and Glorious”.

#### Concept of Hijrah

- i. Hijrah means leaving the land of disbelief, and going to the land of belief.
- ii. When the prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, migrated from Makkah to Madinah, it was obligatory on the Muslims to leave Makkah and settle by the prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam.
- iii. The conquest of Makkah ended the obligation to leave it for Madinah, that is why the Prophet Mohammed Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, was known to have said After the conquest of Makkah “There is no Hijrah required”. However, if one chose to go there, it is still valid.
- iv. Hijrah is still obligatory if we are living in a land where we are having difficulty practising Islaam. We should try to go to a land where we can practise Islaam properly, and in this way, Hijrah remains an open principle until the Last Day.

### 12. The Best Muhaajir & Mujaahid

The Prophet, Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, had said, "The best emigrant is one who emigrates from what Allah has prohibited". Leaving behind or departing from sin makes one the best emigrant.

A Muslim applies this principle, not only in his physical movement from one place to another, but in his spiritual decision to follow the commandment of God and avoid, emigrate from, abandon, leave all that is displeasing to Allah.

Then, the Hadeeth goes on to declare that the best Jihaad “is one who strives against his own desires for the sake of Allah”, giving us the foundational principle behind Jihaad.

So, the Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, said that the best Jihaad is where one strives against one's own evil desires. Such strife should start from within and then extend to external enemies. If we fail in fighting ourselves and desires, we cannot triumph in our battle against the external enemies.

### **13. Best Legacy**

The best things that a human being can leave behind after death are three: a righteous child who will pray for him, a continuing charity whose reward reaches him, and knowledge which benefits those who come after him.

Nothing apart from these three can be added to one's account posthumously.

## Lesson 6: The Best in Islam Part 24

### 14. Best Da'wah

As regards the best in Da'wah (the invitation to Allah Subhanhu Wa Ta'aala), Allah said in Surah Nahal verse 125, "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and discuss with them using what is better". So, in the course of giving Dawah, Allah commands us to invite all who we are in contact with to the way of our Lord with wisdom, using the wisdom of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah which Sahabah practically demonstrated.

#### **Points that need to be considered in this verse:**

i. Allah begins with the command 'Udu' call or invite. "Call to the way of your Lord", indicative of this propagation of Islam being an obligation on the Ummah, as it was an obligation on Prophet Muhammad, may God's peace and blessings be upon him.

And he being the last of the messengers whose message was to reach the whole of humankind, then all of his companions and followers, etc, are bound by this command.

ii. The prophet himself instructed the Muslims that to convey whatever they have learned through him, even though it may be a single verse from the Qur'aan. Therefore, one should not indulge in what is beyond one's knowledge.

iii. The obligation to invite non-Muslims to Islaam will be an individual obligation so long as there is a need for the individual to be part of it. Otherwise, it is a communal obligation, where the whole community is obliged to do it.

iv. “To the way of your Lord”, that it is to Islam, not to a culture, because sometimes people invite non-Muslims to the Arab culture, or to Malaysian culture, or to Gambian culture, or some country's culture, not to Islaam as such.

v. Da’wah should be done with wisdom, which is found in the Quran and the Sunnah. Revelation is the fountain of wisdom. But then there is also wisdom, which comes from knowing people, knowing the psychology of people, knowing the backgrounds of people, choosing the right circumstances, choosing the right people, using the right language, all this is part of wisdom.

vi. Allah mentions that we should strive with them in the best way. This means that we should not get involved in heated arguments, in proving the other as wrong. It is enough to convey and share the message to the others. The prophet sallallahu alaihi wasallam, said, “By Allah, it is better for you that Allah guides one person to Islaam through your efforts, than to have the most valuable possessions.

vii. We should convey the message and leave the results to Allah. Only Allah possesses guidance.

### Question and Answer Bucket

**1. Why do Muslims object against wishing the Christians Happy Christmas despite the Christians’ wishing them Happy Eid? If Happy Christmas goes against the teachings of Islam, Happy Eid goes against the teachings of Christianity.**

**Ans.** This assumption is wrong. Christians believe in the concept of Eidul Adhaa, and that is part of their religion that Prophet Abraham was to sacrifice his son; when God confirmed from him through his actions that he was truly ready to obey God, a ram was sent down. And that ram was sacrificed in the place of his son. Christians, Jews and Muslims believe that this incident took place. So, to celebrate that great event is not against Christian teachings. Similarly, on Eidul Fitr, we celebrate the fast of Ramadan, give Zakatul Fitr to the poor, and have that day as a day in which we feast and invite others to eat along with us. Is that something against the teachings of Christianity? No. There is nothing in it against the teachings of Christianity. Prophet Jesus fasted for forty days and nights. It is recorded in their own books. Prophet Moses fasted for 40 Days and nights. So, fasting is not something looked

down upon, nor is the idea of feasting, afterwards, nor is sharing with the poor anything against the teachings of their religion.

To illustrate the point further, there is a religion recognised in the US known as the Church of Satan. Now the Church of Satan have Satan's Bible, and they have rites and rituals which they follow and beliefs concerning Satan. Now, if somebody from that cult or that religion says to a Christian, Happy Satan's Day, would that Christian feel comfortable saying back to them Happy Satan's Day to you too? Of course not. They would reject it; they would not join in that; they will not say it. So, in the same way that they would not repeat what was said because it contained in it a concept which is against the religion; Muslims have objections against the Christmas.

Happy New Year's Day is a pagan celebration from ancient Roman times. Janus was the god who is looked at as the god governing the beginning of the year, and is depicted as a two-faced man, a face to the front and another to the back of his head, one looking forward to the new year; one looking backward to the passing year. This god was worshipped at the beginning of the new year, January. January is named after this god.

And furthermore, the principle that they had was the New Year's Eve, which was the night of revelry and drunkenness and a freedom for all; and everybody and anybody could do anything, including alcohol, Sexual abandonment, etc. This celebration cannot be compared with commemorating the sacrifice of the great Prophet Ibraaheem, or celebrating the completion of a great worship such as fasting.

## **2. Why would Allah have to tell the people to take provisions with them for hajj, although that was a normal preparation for any travel?**

**Ans.** With regards to preparing ourselves and carrying provisions for Hajj, Allah says there, "Take provisions with you. However, indeed, the best provision is piety. This verse was revealed, because the people of Yemen used to come for Hajj without bringing provisions with them, attributing that to their firm trust in Allah. Subsequently, on their arrival in Makkah, they would beg the people. So, Allah revealed the verse.

Trust without preparations and precautions is not true trust. That is why on one occasion, when a man came into the mosque, after he had left his camel behind, and he asked the Prophet, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, "Should I trust in Allah? Or should I tie my camel?" The Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, told him, "Tie your camel and trust in Allah". So, we have to make an effort, and then we put our trust in Allah. Similarly, Allah tells them, bring your provisions and know that ultimately, the greatest provision is piety.

### **3. Why should Allah tell the Muslims to slaughter animals on Hajj days?**

**Ans.** It is to thank Allah for the blessings that He has given them. They share the meat with the needy in the society and eat from it. But in the course of the sacrifice, we should remember as Allah said, in Surah, Al Hajj, verse 37, "Neither their meat, nor their blood reaches Allah, but your piety reaches Him". So, the goal behind the slaughter is not to think that this slaughtering benefits Allah nor it is for the people; it is for yourself; it's purification. And it is that commitment to do so for the pleasure of Allah that increases faith and avails you a greater reward.