

Syllabus for the Month of May for MGAs and Workers

Quran (Memorization and Study):

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

- وَمَنْ تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَإِنَّهُ يَتُوبُ إِلَى اللَّهِ مَتَابًا ﴿٤١﴾
وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَشْهَدُونَ الزُّورَ ۗ وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوا كِرَامًا ﴿٤٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّوا عَلَيْهَا صَبًّا وَعُتْيَانًا ﴿٤٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ ۗ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْبَتِّقِينَ إِمَامًا ﴿٤٤﴾
أُولَئِكَ يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيهَا تَحِيَّةً ۙ وَسَلَامًا ۗ ﴿٤٥﴾ خُلِدِينَ فِيهَا حَسُنَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا ﴿٤٦﴾

قُلْ مَا يَعْبُوا بِكُمْ رَبِّي لَوْلَا دُعَاؤُكُمْ فَقَدْ كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ

يَكُونُ لَكُمْ لِرَامًا ﴿٤٤﴾ (سُورَةُ الْفُرْقَانِ)

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And whosoever repents and does righteous good deeds, then verily, he repents towards Allâh with true repentance. (71) And those who do not witness to falsehood, and if they pass by some evil play or evil talk, they pass by it with dignity. (72) And those who, when they are reminded of the Ayât (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) of their Lord, fall not deaf and blind thereat. (73) And those who say: "Our Lord! Bestow on us from our wives and our offspring the comfort of our eyes, and make us leaders for the Muttaqûn" (pious - see V.2:2)." (74) Those will be rewarded with the highest place (in Paradise) because of their patience. Therein they shall be met with greetings and the word of peace and respect. (75) Abiding therein;— excellent it is as an abode, and as a place to dwell. (76) Say (O Muhammad SAW to the disbelievers): "My Lord pays attention to you only because of your invocation to Him. But now you have indeed denied (Him). So the torment will be yours forever (inseparable permanent punishment)." (77)

(Translation by Dr. Mohsin)

Hadith (Study):

عَنْ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَيضًا قَالَ: بَيْنَمَا نَحْنُ جُلُوسٌ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ إِذْ طَلَعَ عَلَيْنَا رَجُلٌ شَدِيدُ بَيَاضِ الثِّيَابِ شَدِيدُ سَوَادِ الشَّعْرِ لَا يَرَى عَلَيْهِ أَثَرَ السَّفَرِ وَلَا يَعْرِفُهُ مِنَّا أَحَدٌ حَتَّى جَلَسَ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَأَسْنَدَ رُكْبَتَيْهِ إِلَى رُكْبَتَيْهِ وَوَضَعَ كَفَّيْهِ عَلَى فَخْذَيْهِ وَقَالَ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِسْلَامِ، فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: الْإِسْلَامُ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَأَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ، وَتَقِيمَ الصَّلَاةَ، وَتُؤْتِيَ الزَّكَاةَ، وَتَصُومَ رَمَضَانَ، وَتُحْجَّ الْبَيْتَ إِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا. قَالَ: صَدَقْتَ فَعَجِبْنَا لَهُ يَسْأَلُهُ وَيُصَدِّقُهُ. قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِيمَانِ، قَالَ: أَنْ تُؤْمِنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَتُؤْمِنَ بِالْقَدَرِ خَيْرِهِ وَشَرِّهِ. قَالَ: صَدَقْتَ قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ الْإِحْسَانِ، قَالَ: أَنْ تَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ كَأَنَّكَ تَرَاهُ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَكُنْ تَرَاهُ فَإِنَّهُ يَرَاكَ. قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ السَّاعَةِ، قَالَ: مَا الْمَسْئُورُ عَنْهَا بِأَعْلَمَ مِنَ السَّائِلِ. قَالَ: فَأَخْبِرْنِي عَنْ أَمَارَاتِهَا، قَالَ: أَنْ تَلِدَ الْأُمَّةُ رَبَّتَهَا وَأَنْ تَرَى الْحَفَاةَ الْعُرَاةَ الْعَالَةَ رِعَاءَ الشَّاءِ يَتَطَاوَلُونَ فِي الْبُنْيَانِ ثُمَّ انْطَلَقَ فَلَبِثْتُ مَلِيًّا ثُمَّ قَالَ: يَا عُمَرُ أَتَدْرِي مِنَ السَّائِلِ؟ قُلْتُ: اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ. قَالَ: فَإِنَّهُ جِبْرِيلُ أَتَاكُمْ يُعَلِّمُكُمْ دِينَكُمْ - رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ.

"While we were one day sitting with the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, there appeared before us a man dressed in extremely white clothes and with very black hair. No traces of journeying were visible on him, and none of us knew him.

He sat down close by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, rested his knee against his thighs, and said, O Muhammad! Inform me about Islam." Said the Messenger of Allah, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, "Islam is that you should testify that there is no deity save Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger, that you should perform *salah* (ritual prayer), pay the *zakah*, fast during Ramadan, and perform Hajj (pilgrimage) to the House (the Ka'bah at Makkah), if you can find a way to it (or find the means for making the journey to it)." Said he (the man), "You have spoken truly."

We were astonished at his thus questioning him and telling him that he was right, but he went on to say, "Inform me about iman (faith)." He (the Messenger of Allah) answered, "It is that you believe in Allah and His angels and His Books and His Messengers and in the Last Day, and in fate (*qadar*), both in its good and in its evil aspects." He said, "You have spoken truly."

Then he (the man) said, "Inform me about Ihsan." He (the Messenger of Allah) answered, "It is that you should serve Allah as though you could see Him, for though you cannot see Him yet He sees you." He said, "Inform me about the Hour." He (the Messenger of Allah) said, "About that the one questioned knows no more than the questioner." So he said, "Well, inform me about the signs thereof (i.e. of its coming)." Said he, "They are that the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress, that you will see the barefooted ones, the naked, the destitute, the herdsmen of the sheep (competing with each other) in raising lofty buildings." Thereupon the man went off.

I waited a while, and then he (the Messenger of Allah) said, "O 'Umar, do you know who that questioner was?" I replied, "Allah and His Messenger know better." He said, "That was Jibril. He came to teach you your religion."

Hadith Background

Al-Imam Muslim says: Towards the end of his life, Abdullah bin 'Umar (the son of 'Umar bin al-Khattab) was told by two people that a new Islamic sect had emerged from Iraq. They were called Al-Qadariyah and they denied *al-qadar* (fate). Thus Abdullah bin 'Umar narrated this *hadith* which mentions *qadar* as one of the pillars of Iman to refute the misconception of this sect.

Hadith Lessons

This *hadith* teaches the *adab* (ethics) of seeking knowledge:

- We should be clean and wear clean clothes.
- We should sit properly and closer to the speaker.
- Asking questions for better understanding.
- Seek knowledge from the right source/authority.

The method of seeking knowledge is through asking questions:

- The type of questions we ask should be meaningful - questions that will lead to valuable knowledge and good action.
- Asking good questions will result in better learning as well as teaching. Those who are present when the questions are asked will also learn from the answers - thus, the questioner is teaching the others.

- When Ibn Abbas, one of the greatest Scholars among the Sahabahs, was asked how he obtained all his knowledge, he replied: "with an inquisitive tongue (i.e. he always asked questions) and a contemplating heart".
- In many *hadiths* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, himself will start by asking questions before he imparts with knowledge. Asking questions will prepare the mind/heart so that it will be ready for the answers/knowledge - ready to absorb and learn. In this hadith he calls Jibril "the questioner" which implies full appreciation and encouragement of asking questions specially the ones that will lead to gaining more knowledge.
- In the Quran itself there are more than 1,200 questions - to serve different purposes - to provoke the mind of the reader and force it to indulge in thinking about what he/she reads.



Scholars say that qadar can be seen at two levels:

- i. We believe that Allah knew, with His ultimate knowledge, what all His creations will do, even before the creations took place. Allah recorded all this knowledge in Al-Lauhulmahfudz - the preserved tablet.
- ii. We believe that it is the will of Allah that these things will take place, whether they are good or bad.

Allah created our willingness and our ability of doing things - we can only do something if we are willing and able to do it. However, we are responsible for the choices we make.



Misconceptions about Qadar

Many Muslims believe that what they are going to do is **caused** by what has already been written in Al-Lauhulmahfudz - they confuse 'causation' with 'association'. In truth what we have is association, not causation. What we do is not caused by what is written by Allah. Allah with His ultimate knowledge knew what we are going to do. He could easily have put the good-doers into Jannah and the evil-doers into the Hellfire. But Allah is Adil (Just) so He created us in this life as to test us which way to go. What we are going to do will match what has already been written but it's not a matter of causation - what we do is out of our own willingness and ability and we do have full responsibility on whatever choice we make.

Looking at guidance and misguidance, guidance (*hidayah*) is a gift (*rahmah*) from Allah. It is Allah who created us and gave us the mind so we can distinguish between right and wrong to a certain capacity. It is Allah who equipped us with **fitrah** to like the truth and good and to dislike the wrong and evil. It is Allah who gave us the ability and power to do things and it is Allah who sent the Messenger with the Message to guide us in things, which are beyond the reach of our conception. So when it comes to guidance it is a bounty from Allah.

But when it comes to misguidance, it has to do with us. When we do bad deeds, it is from our own willingness and ability.

Those who turn away from guidance do so because they want to turn away, i.e. they choose not to be guided. They have been misguided because they are arrogant - they refuse to listen.

And so when they swerved from the right way, Allah let their hearts swerve from the truth.
[Surah As-Saff (61): ayat 5]

Nevertheless there are people who have not received the Message of Islam/guidance at all or the Message has not reached them in the clearest form, i.e. it is incomplete or distorted. These people are called Ahlul Fatrah and will be excused and not be punished, even though there are misguided.



There are certain situations where we can do something about our *qadar*. For example:

- Illness/sickness is *qadar* - but we have been commanded by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, to look for a cure should we become ill. Finding a cure is also *qadar*. Thus, a *qadar* could be dealt with through another *qadar*.
- If something unfortunate happens to us, e.g. if we lost our job, we don't just say that it's *qadar* and do nothing about it. We look for another job, the consequence of which is another *qadar*.

'Umar bin al-Khattab was traveling with a group of Sahabahs during his Khilafah (leadership). They were coming to a town when they heard that it had a contagious/infectious disease, i.e. cholera. 'Umar asked his group whether they should proceed or go back (to Madinah). The majority of the Sahabahs said they should go back but some said they should proceed. Then one Sahabi said he knew a *hadith* where the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said, "If you hear that this disease exists in a country, don't travel to that country." So 'Umar decided that they should go back. Another Sahabi (it seems from the second group) asked him whether he was running away from a *qadar*. 'Umar replied that they were moving away from one *qadar* to another *qadar*.

Thus, whenever there is a problem, a challenge or any hardship which we can remove, overcome, solve or minimize, it is a must that we do so. Some scholars like al-Imam al-Jilani use the term: "overcoming *qadar*" in this regard.

In one *hadith*, the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, said, "Be keen for whatever is beneficial for you. Seek the help of Allah. And don't be reckless." This *hadith* implies we must make the effort. **The right concept of *qadar* is: we are responsible for whatever we do.**

For example: If we were to drive recklessly and caused an accident where someone died or was injured, we cannot simply say that it is *qadar*, abusing the concept to justify our mistakes. It is *qadar* that the incident took place because it is by the permission of Allah. But we are responsible for the death because it is through our willingness and ability that it happened. That's why in the courts we will be found guilty. If *qadar* can be used as an excuse, then many crimes will go unpunished - a thief can simply claim that his stealing was *qadar*!



Those who abuse the concept of *qadar* are those who fail to be responsible. They abuse it to justify their failure. The correct way of using *qadar* as an excuse is: if someone exerts himself to do his best to fulfil an obligation but due to an unavoidable circumstance, which was out of his control, he could not achieve that obligation - then he might be excused. For example, a student has studied hard for an exam but on the day of the exam he falls sick and does poorly or cannot even attend the exam, then he can say that it is *qadar* and that it is the will of Allah.

When it comes to religious obligations, the matter is the same. We cannot blame *qadar* for committing sins or failing to do a *wajib* as some Muslims might do. We have to know that we are responsible. We might get into a weak status of Iman in doing a sin or delaying a *wajib*. Islam is such a practical religion that it gives us room for repentance and getting back to the right path.



In the above *hadith* the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, defines Al-Islam, i.e. the five pillars, as the outward actions of the limbs, Al-Iman as being associated with belief - the inner actions of the heart, and Al-Ihsan as the highest level to attain. But the first two definitions can be interchanged with each other - sometimes Islam can be used to describe internal actions and Iman can mean external actions. There are a few *hadiths* which The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, mentions that there are more than seventy actions which are considered as Iman.

If the term Islam is used on its own, it means the whole thing - Al-Islam, Al-Iman and Al-Ihsan. Similarly, when Iman is used on its own it means Al-Iman, Al-Islam and Al-Ihsan. The Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, mentions at the end of this *hadith* that the *deen* consists of these three things.



If the Iman is weak it will affect Al-Islam (good deeds/actions). According to al-Imam Abu Hanifa: Even though Al-Iman and Al-Islam are different, Al-Iman necessitates the actions (Al-Islam).

Some Scholars say the Muslims are considered strangers among the Disbelievers; and the Mua'minin are considered strangers among the Muslims; and the Muhsinin are considered strangers among the Mua'minin.



Al-Ihsan (the highest level of Iman where we worship Allah as if we see Him or if we don't see Him we know He sees us) is about fearing Allah and glorifying Him. This will lead us to strive for our best in performing our *ibadah* - we will be more sincere in our *ibadah*. Thus Al-Ihsan is also about the best actions of the heart. The actions that will lead to Al-Ihsan: to love Allah the most, to fear Allah the most, to seek the help of Allah, to have hope in Allah that He will give us mercy and guide us, to trust Allah wholly.



When Jibril, *aliyyhi as-Salam*, asks the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, about the Hour (the Day of Judgement), the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, replies that neither he nor Jibril knows the answer. This is an example set by the Prophet, *sallallahu 'alayhi wasallam*, where even someone with vast knowledge like himself does not know everything and admits so.

Al-Imam Malik was asked forty questions by someone and to most of them he answered "I don't know - Allah knows better". The man was surprised that the great Imam Malik didn't know the answers. Seeing the man surprised, Imam Malik told him that when he goes back to his town, to tell the people that he met and asked al-Imam Malik questions and Imam Malik said he didn't know the answers. Al-Imam Malik didn't want to be accountable for giving wrong answers. Thus, if we are to become an educator or a scholar, we should have the courage to admit what we do not know. We should not give an answer which may contain incorrect information.



The signs of Akhirah mentioned in this *hadith* are minor signs, as opposed to major ones. We believe in these signs but we should not worry about them too much - we should not worry about when these signs will occur. We should actually be careful as some of these signs are bad deeds and we must steer away from these bad deeds.

Hadith Conclusion

This *hadith* contains everything about Islam: the five pillars of Islam, the beliefs that make up Iman (including the belief of fate or *qadar*), the attainment of the highest level of Iman which is Ihsan, the *adab* of seeking knowledge and of teaching.

Dua (Memorization):

رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى
وَالِدَيَّْ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَصْدِقَ لِي فِي ذُرِّيَّتِي إِنِّي
تُتِبْتُ إِلَيْكَ وَإِنِّي مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ-

"My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favour which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds, such as please You, and make my off-spring good. Truly, I have turned to You in repentance, and truly, I am one of the Muslims (submitting to Your Will)."

Instructions:

1. Memorization should include both Arabic script as well as English translation. Hadith for this month is excluded from memorization, since it is long.
2. Study should include in-depth understanding from other Ayats, Ahadith and other literature. ICNA-Chapter can help in this by having dedicated study circles on these lines.

3. Study should include all aspects; including knowledge, understanding and practice in real life.
4. We all should share these topics among our families as well.

General Guidelines:

1. Each one of us should plan to pray obligatory Salah with Jamah in the masjid. A good starting point is try to be regular in Isha and Fajr Salat with Jama' in the Masjid.
2. Each member should have his own private library.
3. Each one of us should plan to study at least few verses with Tafseer daily.
4. Each one of us should have one book in regular study.