بسم الله الرحمن الرحیم

جلسه 4

اساسا دستورات خدای عالم ترکیبی از دستورات و امتحانات است؛ مثلا هنگامی که دستور به صبر و نماز داده می شود در ظرف زمانی و مکانی خاص و وضعیت خاص که امتحانی و ابتلایی خاص است به ما دستور داده می شود. تمام اوامر و نواحی خداوند همراه امتحانات است.

The most important secret of servitude of Allah is to know what he expects from us. When everything is for test, people act according to the expectation of the one who is examining them and disregards his/her  
own needs and desires. Even if your desires are great, again Allah shall test you in those; like prophet Ibrahim (AS) that did everything Allah told him. Allah asked him why do you love Ismail and he replied because of you. Then Allah told him let’s see if you can sacrifice him! Being a good person means be good in your examinations

Lecture sessions on the topic of how we try in Read more

**in name of God**

Session 1:

Imam Hussain (A.S.) did not hold Ashoora as a Shiite epic. We should not assume that mourning is specifically for Shiites. The global arrogance looks for the weaknesses of the Islamic community and highlights it. We should promote mourning for Imam Hussain (A.S.). Under Islamic brotherhood we must mourn for Imam Hussain (A.S.). As an example, we see that Shafei- the faqih of one of the Sunni sects- cried for Imam more splendor than us.

If we look at these mourning from perspectives other than religion like psychology, political and educational science it's good to refer to a sentence from Imam Khomeini: "If those with westoxification realize the political aspects of these mourning, they too will hold mourning sessions if they seek the nation and the country." This shows Imam Khomeini regards mourning as an issue which helps politics.

We now come to the moral and spiritual perspective. Sometimes the efficiency of this ten days in our spiritual growth can be more than the effect of Ramadan. The words of Mr. Ghadhi are "If one seeks to reach "towhid" (unity), he has no choice but through seyed al shohadda Aba abdellah al Hussain (A.S.)". No one has reached anywhere without through Imam (A.S.). Let's look at these sessions with this perspective, not with the look as if Imam should thank us for mourning for him.

I would like to explain another point in detail regarding the personality of Ayatollah Mahdavi Kani. During the issue of the revolution committees it was clear that among other core members of the revolutionary council he was the successful manager. I believe Allah had given Imam Khomeini a set of things to help him carry on the revolution which one of them was Ayatollah Mahdavi. Imam mentions that his judicial decrees (fatvas) are close to ours. Imam assigns the trusteeship (toliat) of the Marvi School – which should be assigned to the A'lam of scholars of the city- to him. During the revolution with all his competence, no one has been oppressed as much as he has been. Even Ayatollah Beheshti was relieved from oppression when he was martyred. As a 17-18 year old teenager after the revolution I remember being warned of getting close to Ayatollah Mahdavi because he was accused of being pro American Islam. These were the words of the hezbollahis! This character should be known. Imam Khomeini would not say in vain that we had respected him, have and will respect him. Being prepared for special situations was a characteristic of him and I don't know anyone like him. His insight in both political and scientific aspects to this level is not retractable in others. We can learn from them how to be both a political and a courtesy clergy.

Session 2:

In previous years the discussion was about the most decisive factor in divine decrees which is the factor of "examination". We live within a context of examination and needs to know it more than ever and realize that everything is examination and basically we live for examination: "Who created death and life to test you {Al-Mulk 2}" essentially life and death is created to test you. No concept other than examination has a distinct reality. We are involved with the subject of divine decrees during every second of our daily life but do not comprehend it. Like a fish in water which is not conscious of water.

This year we seek to investigate how Allah tests us. Let us first provide an introduction on the modality of divine examinations (tests).

One discussion is that sometimes Allah tests individuals and sometimes a nation and society. We should see both.

The other is that talking of examination is not talking of divine rulings rather its about the context of a mixture of divine commandments and human actions. What is the use of divine rulings regardless of examinations? Dos and don'ts find their meanings when connect to tests and require a specific action from you. Talking of examination, is talking of lifology. We should know our life because we are tested in the context of life. Patience is good but we should see what we do when there is an examination. All our knowledge should show itself in examinations.

The other issue is the philosophy of examinations. Amirolmomenin (AS) in his "Ghase’a" speech mentions that all these lasting and difficult examinations are to remove arrogance from the heart of mankind.

To ease examinations you can sometimes take a look at its philosophy. Whenever you faced difficulty with the examinations and could not figure it out take a look at the philosophy of examination. Go to your prayer place and show Allah that you are modest in front of him. When you return you see that the examination has eased. Say to Allah that the examinations are designed so I become modest and obeisance in front of you. Well, didn’t you want me to reach here? I’ve reached the point.

What does these issues have to o with "Muharram"? The greatest social divine examination on earth was "Karbala". Karbala means tests. Allah has never tested any of his "saints" (O’lia) harder than he has tested Imam Hussain (AS).

Session 3:

One way to see whether you have understood religion is to look at different parts of religious knowledge as a whole. We should comprehend the network of religious concepts integrated. A problem of religious societies is the dispersed distribution of these knowledge and lack of formation of an ordered intellectual network of this knowledge. Within a correctly engineered system of religious concepts, all parts of your religious information confirm each other.

In the "Ghase’a" speech of Amirolmomenin (AS), another revelation of the philosophy of the examinations is mentioned: «وَ لِیَجْعَلَ ذلِکَ أَبْوَاباً فُتُحاً إِلَى فَضْلِهِ» "in order for the doors of divine grace and mercy to open towards mankind". Since when arrogance is gone, servility, light and union with Allah is achieved.

«وَ أَسْبَاباً ذُلُلاً لِعَفْوِهِ» means "It removes the obstacles from your way". You will love Allah. The philosophy of examinations is for you to love Allah.

Friends, how empty of arrogance are you? Do you know who can be empty of arrogance? A person who is always begging and asking Allah and the obstacles are removed from his path. The philosophy of examination is to remove arrogance and its other philosophy is to love Allah. «أَسْبَاباً ذُلُلاً لِعَفْوِهِ» means that through his forgiveness he makes you love him. The love of Allah is a fire which burns whatsoever it reaches and turns it into ashes.

I like to introduce an anthropological revelation of the philosophy of examination using Amirolmomenin’s (AS) words. You saw the religious, moral and mystic revelation. Its anthropological revelation is that examination seeks to activate potential human capabilities. Examination causes mankind to grow. This is the philosophy of examination. If we go along with divine examinations we shall discover superior talents. Amirolmomenin (AS) says: "With arrival of difficulties, human talents are revealed." Would you now still run away from difficulties of life?!

Let’s come to the first characteristics of divine examinations which are its proportionality with our capabilities. So, they are easy. Divine examinations never get hard. If we are told they are difficult it’s because we acknowledge although they are difficult but are never beyond our capabilities. Well, how do I know how much my capabilities are? There is no need for you to know your capability for examination because you are not designing the examination. So relax! On the other hand one way to realize own capacities is the divine examinations. How fool are those who reduce their capacities. You can smell Satan from them.

Session 4:

Basically, divine rules are a combination of commandments and examinations. For example, when the command is given for patience and prayer, it is within a particular time, place and a specific situation along with a specific examinations and comorbidity. All divine orders and prohibitions are along with examinations.

Our perception of our abilities is not so good. Sometimes we are tempted by the devil and underestimate our abilities. Divine examinations are a level higher than our actualized abilities because it intends to change our potential abilities to actual

Most of the pleasures we are deprive of by Allah is to increase our enjoying capacity so we can have complete gratification in the other world. If suffering leads to increased capacity it is valued. Allah neither forbids pleasure nor welcomes pain unless it is accompanied by an increased capacity. This increased capacity is reached only through examination which itself is with suffering.

{If} we do self-introspection (Muhasabah　an-Nafs) and gain self-knowledge, we can somehow figure out the divine examinations.

One way to ease the divine examinations is to acknowledge their philosophy and realize which one of our {spiritual} illnesses Allah’s intends to heal. Well, try to fix the flaw as soon as possible.

Doubt: The way you are mentioning this, spoils human motivation to work?

Answer: We have the obligation to try and have nothing with the results. We should not take action according to the destiny; rather actions should be motivated by divine commandments. We have been ordered to try. {We have been told to take action sometimes thinking of the result and sometimes regardless of the outcome. We should take action proportional to our responsibilities. Thus we should recognize our duties, which indeed is difficult but possible through recourse (tavassol).

As Satan tempts individuals you cannot accomplish this examination, it also tempts the society. Faithful communities sometimes underestimate their capacities. We can, because Allah never examines us beyond our capacities. Whoever Allah examines means he can. Divine examinations also reveal the capacity of the society.

Session 5

As individual examinations are regularly accompanied with difficulties, examinations for the society are also with some difficulties. Examination means growing through pain. It’s not rational to negate all pain. But this does not mean not trying and asking for pain. The manager of the society should have an austerity plan for a developing society. Every family should design a path to train children in which through examinations and coping harshness reveal and strengthen their childrens’ capabilities.

The philosophy of examinations is to activate their potential talents through pain. Flourishing individual and social talents is possible within the context of examination. The method for identification and development of talents undoubtedly is examination. The society should too strive to identify and develop social talents. Within the context of divine examinations this growth happens. Like the 8 year holy defense and right now in the economical siege. Sieges make our talents flourish.

When we face examination, it means we have faced a rational difficulty which tends to develop our talents. We should tolerate difficulties, if not we should migrate and again if not we should stand if Islam is in danger. Definitely Allah helps he whom resists or migrates. This is the true promise of Allah which sends his aid. Our story shall never be like the story of Karbala. The reason why Allah’s aid did not reach Imam Hussain in Karbala was that people were not on the right front. If our society resists, Allah will destroy the global arrogance and our Imam when sees that our movement is definite he shall join us.

Some people have the sickness of depression and some have the sickness of fobia. When they wake up in the morning are thinking of what they should be worried of! They are sick. Some of us face this sickness but the sickness of "feeling week" is worse than all. Such a person shall never feel powerful. You should feel powerful and feel like a victorious person. Thus don’t say "I can’t" to examinations. Because Allah has promised to help the believers.

Session 6

When we observe world phenomenon with an examination perspective in mind, we act differently than when we do not have this look. For example when there is a food on the table and there is examination, we act proportionate to the expectations from us. However if the food is on the table regardless of examination we act according to our own expectations and needs. Although the expectations may be rational or irrational.

It is with this new perspective that issues like duties and obligations arise. When Allah says we have given you both the blessings and the deprivations only to test you, all of a sudden mankind acts according to Allah’s expectations; this means duties and obligations. Tests become the basis of seeking your duties. It becomes a motivation to do your duties.

The most important secret of servitude of Allah is to know what he expects from us. When everything is for test, people act according to the expectation of the one who is examining them and disregards his/her own needs and desires. Even if your desires are great, again Allah shall test you in those; like prophet Ibrahim (AS) that did everything Allah told him. Allah asked him why do you love Ismail and he replied because of you. Then Allah told him let’s see if you can sacrifice him! Being a good person means be good in your examinations.

We mentioned that the first and most common type of tests is "fear". For Allah to test us through fear, we should consider the foundation established by Allah:

Fear has been created in us so we fear hell and other events.

We are intimidated by the devil and evil enemies.

We are intimidated by Allah.

While Allah intimidates us he also tells us where to be frightened and where not to fear. He states not to fear others but only fear him {Maedeh 3}. Even if you fear others and seek refuge to Allah, it is not so accepted by him. Fear is embedded within us, but it is important what we fear. The issue of fear is so important that when imam Ali (AS) wanted to marry (after Zahra (AS)) he was looking for a brave person.

Session 7

Providing a definition of servitude of Allah and life, without considering the concept of test and examination is not only complete but it is not even correct. (life and servitude are the two concepts encompassing all dimensions of mankind life). There should exist an examination look at the world, the hereafter, material, spirituality and generally all life dimensions. This is no preaching or spiritual note rather it’s a truth, an ideology and a key reality in defining our relation with the universe.

We face a series of values and realities in material or spiritual sections of our life. Because we are not continuously being tested (common known examinations) we neglect the point that we are continuously being tested by the creator in our lives. We should not face Allah in life the way we face our normal life events. Rather we should consider every event between us and Allah a test. If we are wealthy or poor it’s a test. Whether we are healthy of sick it’s a test. Allah values the test so much that makes it the purpose of creation {Al-Molk 2}.

How and with what Allah tests us?

The first type of test- that seems to be the most prevalent type of test and is constantly current in our spirit- is "fear" which is typically neglected {Al-Baqra 155}.

Most of our tests are of "fearing" the loss of blessings. The test is not losing the blessings rather it’s the fear of losing them. Thus we fail in the first stage, which is the fear of deprivation and we don’t get to the next stage which is facing the deprivation. Allah puts fear besides other tests. Why Allah intimidates us? Because fear removes our arrogance and it brings us closer to Allah. Fear like other tests flourishes human talents and makes mankind work and make efforts. Of course, Allah has plans for this fear and we should not be frightened in a way that destroys us and become depressed and a psychic. We should not be frightened in a way that disconnects us from Allah. Typically, when we fear we get distanced from Allah and become infidels. The reason is we consider the enemy instead of Allah as our support. Because we have not taken refuge to Allah.

When we say Allah tests us with fear, it means that in 90% of occasions the tests are only the fear and in fact there is no deprivation.

Session 8:

Undoubtedly, one of our tests is "fear" which in fact is the most common test. At the beginning of one of the most famous versus of Quran the test of fear is mentioned: 　And We will most certainly try you with somewhat of fear and hunger and loss of property and lives and fruits; and give good news to the patient, {Al-Baqra 155}.

Some of our talents should grow within the context of fear. When we are tested with fear it means discovering our hidden talents and our spiritual evolution happens in the context of fear.

When fear is the first case of our tests and Allah implicates it in the Quran, we should realize that fear is not accidental. When we pass one fear, we reach another. If we realize that fear is a test, this knowledge itself alleviates our fear.

Fear factors vary. It might be the enemy, the devil or even our self, friends or the fools of the society or the unwise advisors.

Fear but form Allah (unrealistic dangers), perishes human talents and brings death to mankind.

A benefit of fear is that we gain some of self- knowledge. We should successfully pass the test of fear in order to grow. With fear we get adducent to Allah.

As we grow up reasons for fear change. First we fear from school, than the compulsory military service and then work! We fear falling behind and being blamed by others. Most people live based on fear. We should not take action because of fear or study fearing being discredited. Even Allah does not intimidate besides his tests. Allah mentions the purpose of the tests in {Molk 2} as "Who created death and life that He may try you-- which of you is best in deeds; and He is the Mighty, the Forgiving." Intimidation is not there. There is no word of hell, although the fear from hell is different from most of our other fears. Thus we should not fear but Allah. If you do not have much sense of the divine position of Allah, fear his punishments. Fearing Allah is different form the fears we now live with.

We must eliminate the roots of aberrant fears within so we don’t fear when we are feared from something aberrant by Allah or others. The correct answer to the test of fear is not to fear. Allah intimidates so we don't fear. If you feared something acknowledge that you have failed the test.

Two key roots of fear:

The prophet (PBUH) mentions to Imam Ali (A.S.) that:" Acknowledge o' Ali that fear, stinginess and greed are instincts and all are rooted to suspicion to Allah"

[Suspicion to Allah is one of the roots of fear]

Session 9:

The subject we are discussing is one of the important issues regarding our lifestyle and the way we see life.

We should not usually directly go to the good or the bad deeds. If their basis is not set right, one cannot dissent from moral vices and tend moral virtues.

If the stories and films we make are based upon the test, the way we see life would change. We should look for the missing in our lives: the test and the fear - which we cannot imagine life without them. Don’t fear being spoiled, don’t groom yourself fearing being ugly and don’t host the guest fearing being spoiled in front of him. Avoid these types of actions because of fear. Our test through fear is not to be frightened. If we are not frightened our talents will flourish. Fear is an infrastructure for the society. Society infrastructure help achieve a religious society. If the people were brave themselves will seek religion.

Benefits of courage

Innovation comes after courage. An innovative person should be courageous so when he gets to a point, take action with a mind free of fear. We should accept calamity so we shed fear.

Relation of fear and haste

Although fear gathers an initial energy in us but in long term it paralyses you. One cannot find motivation for deep thoughts. If we fear Allah, the fear from others shall be shed.

The other causing factor for fear

Other cause of fear is love and interest. Until there is the love of Dunya in our hearts we are afraid. Your sustenance is yours. Why should you love it [dunya]? If you take it seriously you will fear both losing it and earning it/ why should you love it when there is no different when you love it or not. If you need money you don’t have to love it. Love of the Dunya shall cast fear in your hearts.

If you love Allah you will also fear him. Imam Ali (A.S.) states: "Their (those who love Allah) fear is not because of doubt (in whether Allah will accept them) but they fear their own failure in affection and obedience of Allah." (Vasael ol Shia, V.11). Fearing the Dunya smites you. Instead the love of Ahlolbait and piety (fearing Allah) is delightful.

Session 10:

Fear is one of the ways we are being tested. Acknowledging this, is for itself an approach in life and religiosity and has special effects. One of which is the fresh spirit it brings with itself.

Quran states: "So when they ride in the ships they call upon Allah, being sincerely obedient to Him, but when He brings them safe to the land, lo! They associate others (with Him)" {ankaboot, 56}. While we face problems we seek refuge to Allah and when they are over we associate others with Allah. This is not the correct way of being religious. Allah expects us to face the sufferings with tough spirit and burn the roots of sorrow. We should not ask Allah only to remove the sufferings. Notice that this devalues religion. It’s alright to pray for the entangled and disabled but praying is not only for those. One of the indicators of being religious is the human spirit brings them dignity and spiritual strength.

When fear vitiates from our hearts, sorrow will too vitiates. Do you believe Allah would make you suffer so much and then let go? Is this the way Allah tests you? No; you can feel no suffering. You can feel no distress, no anger and don’t agonize over the problems. Otherwise the tests are treated in correctly. Any suffering is for a period of time. Allah obviously can test us with ways other than fear so we live bravely but do we have the capacity for victory, wealth and living powerfully and free of oppression?

Analyzing the news gotten to us we can realize that Allah’s tests are not to suffer us: "　(As for) those who say: Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the garden which you were promised."{Fosselat 30}

Divine tests are varied. One way is testing us how we treat his "Vali". Imam Ali (A.S.) was one way. Prophets are a way to test us. Our supreme leader is also a way we are being tested. If we fail a test (at a certain level), for sure we will fail tougher tests. The most important situation which we are tested is the "velaya". Testing through the "velaya" of your parents is also a key test in which Allah orders us to: "And your Lord has commanded that you shall not serve (any) but Him, and goodness to your parents."{Esra 23}

Session 11

Both the blessings and the sufferings are to test us. Related issues such as patience in calamity, satisfaction through calamity, effort to remove the calamity, preventing calamity and the asking for forgiveness from Allah to alleviate tests are issues which require more detailed discussion.

During tests when a bad characteristic of us appear we should notice the potential of that vice within us and try to remove it. The same applies for the society. Naturally the elite of a society are where the virtues and vices of a society outbreak. To investigate this aspect of the society we should consider the elite and laity of the society and discuss the issue.

When the society is tested if the elite misbehave, the laity should overthrow them and change the situation of the society. If people are not sensitive towards those elite which misbehave and don not control them on one hand and on the other hand mistrust the good elite and don’t support them, these people are free soldiers for the oppressors. Karbala is an example of how 72 people were martyred by thousands of people. People cannot be apathetic in social tests and leave the work to the elite.

Test through fear is strange. We mentioned several times that Allah wants us to not to fear other than Allah. And if we are supposed to fear, fear him.

There are six or seven instances in the holy Quran in which fearing Allah and not fearing other than Allah is discussed. Two main instances are related to propagation and velaya:

Propagation:

There is a plan for social life based on the following verse of the holy Quran: "Those who deliver the messages of Allah and fear Him, and do not fear anyone but Allah; and Allah is sufficient to take account." {Al-Ahzab 39}. One of the instances where there should only be fear of Allah and not anyone else is where you want to defend the religion and proselyte. Fearing people is one of the most important aspects of fear. Fear of being spoiled and fear of honor. There are people who have endeavored in the way of Allay and not feared their lives but they have feared their honor. One should not fear the society and others and care of what others say about him.

Velaya:

The other instance in which we should not fear anyone other than Allah is the Velaya: "…This day have those who disbelieve despaired of your religion, so fear them not, and fear Me. This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favor on you and chosen for you Islam as a religion…" {Maedeh, 3}. Right after mentioning the desperation of the non-believers it is stated not to fear them. Why among all the concepts regarding Velaya, the issue of no fearing them is raised? It comes to mind as if this is the main weak point of those who stand up for Velaya. This is the most important damage that Allah aims to prevent. At least this means that the first requirement of a "Vali" is not to fear from people. In other words the most important damage for Velaya is fear of the people.