

Summer Intensive Course 2017

Course Descriptions (for Brothers)

Identity, Gender, and Order

Instructor: Shuja Ali Mirza

Duration: 10 Sessions

Introduction: The world is not just “one big vanilla pudding”. It is composed of an infinite multitude of different things that are *universus*—turned into one, or, towards the One. To see the world as a whole, the differences must be placed properly in an order. The different levels of being and the different *kingdoms* must be tied together into a great “Chain of Being.” The identity of any particular being comes from its placement on this Chain. Human identity is no exception. The human body and its association with the *animal kingdom* provides the grounds for a primary identification that determines the particular sex of the human being. The human spirit and its association with the *human kingdom* finds its realization through the modalities that become actualized as it inspires and informs the lower levels of human existence. What is of note in the human case is that this very *power* or *faculty* that makes human beings different from animals, plants, and minerals, engenders a self-conscious will that is free and that allows the human being to move along the Chain of Being. Hence human identification has an aspect that is existential, creational, and static, and another aspect that is volitional, conational, and dynamic. The latter aspect has both an individual element and a societal element. The gender that any human being identifies with is a function of all of the above elements. The series of lectures will seek to investigate the role of identity and gender as it applies to the divine order mandated by Allah and will juxtapose it with the increasing disorder of the modern and postmodern world.

Violence and Non-violence from the Perspective of the Qur'an

Instructor: Muhammad Hasnain

Duration: 6 Sessions

Introduction: These days Islam is under attack for being the promotor of violence and war. Muslims themselves are confused regarding *jihad* and how, or if, to justify it. There are two extreme positions amongst the Muslims: the first is that of deviant groups like Daesh who think that there is to be an unconditional war with all disbelievers; the second is that of the liberal, secular-minded people who promote total peace and reject all forms of violence in the name of religion. Both groups use Quranic verses to justify their beliefs, which only serves to increase the confusion amongst the Muslim laity.

The general purpose of these sessions will be to develop a systematic approach whereby we can determine the Quranic view on almost any issue. The particular goal will be to do this with regards to the issue of *violence*. In the process, we will critique the two extremist views regarding violence and aim to present the right and balanced understanding of *jihad* in Islam and the Qur'an.

Man and Nature: An Islamic Perspective on the Ecological Crisis

Instructor: Rizwan Rashid

Duration: 7-8 Sessions

Introduction:

"The sun and the moon are upon a reckoning. And the stars and the trees prostrate. Heaven He has raised and the Balance He has set, that you transgress not in the balance. So set right the weight and fall not short in the balance. The earth has He laid down for creatures. Therein are fruit and date palms bearing sheaths, husked grains and fragrant herbs. So which of your Lord's boons do you two deny?" (55:5-13).

There is no doubt that with the advent of modern science and technology in the West, the natural world has undergone a great transformation. A large number of living creatures are increasingly diminishing as a result of overpopulation, climate change, air pollution, water contamination, and many other factors. What more, these same factors could threaten the survival of the human species today. Despite the clamour over 'progress' and 'development' in the West, which is a direct result of the discoveries of modern-day science, many people are beginning to suggest that the root of our predicament is modern science itself and the paradigms that have driven it. From an Islamic point of view, this "ecological crisis" is indicative of a more fundamental crisis pertaining to how man understands the world, and his own mandate in it. In this course, we will attempt to highlight some of the philosophical perspectives that have had a role to play in influencing the direction of modern science as well as compare it to the Islamic perspective regarding man and his relation with the cosmos. We will also survey some of the relevant verses of the Qur'an and narrations from the Infallibles pertaining to this topic.

An Overview of 'Ilm al-Ḥadīth

Instructor: Sayyid Ali Imran Naqvi

Duration: 6 sessions.

Introduction: One of the most significant bodies of work within the vast sea of Islamic disciplines is *ḥadīth* literature. The majority of Muslims since the rise of Islam, have relied heavily on *ḥadīth* to gain religious knowledge pertaining to different aspects of their lives, whether it be in theology, jurisprudence or ethics. These sessions will introduce students to a brief development of *ḥadīth* sciences, a glance over the main Shi'a and Sunni works, different approaches taken towards understanding *ahadīth*, a rudimentary exposure to some important discussions within the *ḥadīth* sciences, and a brief critique of the different methodologies employed by Orientalists towards this science.

Topics will include: The history of its development and compilation; major books of *ḥadīth*; understanding the Akhbārī and Uṣūlī views; the sciences of Rijāl and Dirāyah; Fiqh al-Ḥadīth - methodology and case studies; and the case of Orientalists and Ḥadīth studies.

Increasing One's Ma'rifah of God

Instructor: Sayyid Ali Aqib

Duration: 7 Sessions

Introduction: The media campaign against religion has created a lot of doubts in the minds of our youth. They are required to prove their beliefs, but unfortunately have no formal training in that area. This leaves them vulnerable to anti-religious ideas. These series of lectures are designed to equip the youth with the necessary tools to *logically* prove and defend their faith in Allah (swt). Conducted in an interactive setting, the students will be required to think logically and not react emotionally.

At the end of this course the students will be able to *logically* prove and defend their belief in God and His Attributes.

Insha Allah.