

# Islamic Summer Intensive Course 2018

## Course Descriptions (for Brothers)

### Anticipation of the Deliverance

**Instructor:** Shuja Ali Mirza

**Duration:** 5 Sessions

**Introduction:** In a *ḥadīth* from the present Imam (‘a), he says of himself:

إِنِّي أَمَانٌ لِأَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ كَمَا أَنَّ النُّجُومَ أَمَانٌ لِأَهْلِ السَّمَاءِ

*I am a protection for the inhabitants of the earth,  
just as the stars are a protection for the inhabitants of the heavens.*

The Imam (‘a), in his role as the *insān al-kāmil*, *ḥujjatullah*, and *walīullah al-a‘zam* is the point of reference, the proverbial pontifex, and the principle of humanity and indeed of the entire created order. His role and position with respect to the earth and its inhabitants is as the role of the soul to the body. The soul is the meeting-point of the immaterial spirit and the material body—it is its animating faculty that gives life to all below and within its scope.

At present this essential pearl of mankind that presides in the profound depths of the human state is not visible—not so much because it has disappeared or is no longer there, but more so because we can no longer swim at that depth to see it, or because we have made the water so murky with our collective sins that it becomes difficult to see anything clearly at all. As time goes on and we approach the latter days the darkness and oppression increases, and will continue until it totally engulfs the earth—the signs are already there and more are to come. But God has said: “I shall surely prevail, I and My apostles. Indeed Allah is all-strong, all-mighty”. The coming and final victory of the Kingdom of God, on earth as it is in heaven, is principally a direct function of the omnipotence, honour, and supernal majesty of God Almighty. God is present and victorious by His very nature, but this truth must be reflected on the horizontal plane and on the stage of the great drama that human history represents. Hence, the final victory of God must be enacted at the hands of those very people whom *He* sent as *His* prophets and saints, and who were oppressed, convicted, and killed by evil men. There must be a final vindication... a settling of scores, so to say.

The culmination of all of the prophets and saints is the present and living Imam (‘a) who, along with his companions, will be the ‘hand of God’ who will establish justice on the earth again. The companions of the Imam will be those that have anticipated his coming in the right manner—those who had refined their intellects, increased their knowledge, and strengthened their wills so that they could recognize and follow the relative instances of *walāyah*, thereby calling forth the emergence of the *walī al-muṭlaq*. These are those who understood *intizār* or ‘Anticipation’ properly and were neither complacent nor haughty in the face of whatever guidance that was allotted to them. They were active and prepared themselves mentally, emotionally, and physically.

The course will cover these themes, concentrating on the signs of the times and the practical methods of Anticipation so as to make possible the Deliverance or *faraj*.

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### The Qur’ān and Ethics: Practical Examples from the Qur’ān

**Instructor:** Jafar Hammoud

**Duration:** 5 Sessions

**Introduction:** Taking our inspiration from the Qur’ān, we will be looking at certain ethical traits. In particular, we will explore the following five topics: (1) Prophet Moses and trust in the Almighty, (2) Acceptance and action, (3) Prophet Adam and Perfection, (4) Submission to God, and (5) Patience and perseverance.

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## The Reformer's Government: Manifestation of the Beautiful Names of God

**Instructor:** Saleem Bhimji

**Duration:** 5 Sessions

**Introduction:** There is a tradition reported from the 6<sup>th</sup> Imam in which he has been quoted as saying, "Adorn yourselves with the traits of God." These 'traits', what is also referred to as the *asmā' al-ḥusnā* or the most beautiful names of God, have been recorded in the *aḥādīth* and in the supplications, such as the famous *al-jawshān al-kabīra*. They are not only meant to be memorized and recited melodiously, but rather, to be imbibed in our daily lives.

Given that Imam al-Mahdī, may God hasten his noble advent, is the most perfect manifestation of the names of God, it stands to reason that in order to better serve Allah and be a devoted follower of Imam al-Ḥujjah, we need to seek and emulate him and to implement the characteristics of Allah in our daily lives.

Drawing from some of the names of Allah, their understanding in the Noble Quran and how they are understood by our scholars, this series of talks will review some of the most beautiful names of God, how they relate to the 12th Divinely appointed representative of God on Earth and how we can also work to establish them in our daily lives so as to prepare ourselves and our family for the establishment of the universal government of Imam al-Ḥujjah ibn al-Ḥasan al-'Askarī, may our souls be sacrificed for the dirt under his feet.

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## Fortifying Faith

**Instructor:** Ali Karmali

**Duration:** 3 Sessions

**Introduction:** Faith (الإيمان) has been likened to the fruit within the skin. It is like the orange under the peel. It is the essence of the fruit. It is that faculty through which a Muslim actualizes his beliefs, propelling him to take action. Faith, therefore, is a powerful agent in creating positive change both within an individual and within the world. Keeping faith during these tumultuous times can be a colossal challenge. To build resilience, we will explore the position and spectrum of faith within the context of Islam. We will draw on the words of the Commander of those who have faith (Amīr al-mu'minīn) to extract the fundamental elements which contribute to one's faith. This process will lead us to understand the delicate interrelationship between faith and other important Islamic concepts such as patience, desire, justice and more. We hope to identify practical methods which we can use to strengthen and fortify our faith from which we can draw upon during our spiritual development in reaching closer to Allah, and becoming faithful, devout followers of the Imam of our time (may Allah hasten his reappearance).

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# Tangled in a Web: Technology and the Signs of the Times

**Instructor:** Rizwan Rashid

**Duration:** 5 Sessions

**Introduction:** What defines man and differentiates him from the other creatures that occupy this planet? Is it his ability to rationalize about himself and his surroundings (*homo sapiens*), or his ability to organize his social relationships with his peers (*homo socius*), or is it his ability to manage and control his environment through tools and techniques (*homo faber*)? Or is it something even greater that lies at the core of his being? Perhaps all of these contribute to man's particular distinction but what seems to dominate this period of human history is his infatuation with the tools he has fashioned—an infatuation that has undermined how he sees the world and structures his society.

Despite its relatively recent origins, the Internet has become one of the most pervasive and certainly intrusive mediums of technology the world has ever seen. It has significantly changed the way we interact with each other and with the world around us. For many Internet users and developers, it offers a new and what may be called “postmodern hope” of breaking free from traditionally oppressive and restrictive means of control and an attempt to restructure the world in a manner that can benefit humanity at large.

In this course, we will begin by discussing the position of technology in Aristotle's division of the sciences and examine the causal relationship between man and his own creation. This will help answer the question: is technology really “neutral”. We will then explore the postmodern hope for the internet and the assumptions regarding identity, knowledge, freedom, autonomy, and other factors that inform this particular vision. We will end by evaluating these assumptions from an Islamic and philosophical point of view and see what they say about the signs of the times.

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# Holding the Cactus: Lessons from the Sīrah of the Prophet

**Instructor:** Asad Jafri

**Duration:** 5 Sessions

**Introduction:** We find in traditions that the state of the faithful ones before the advent of the Mahdi (atf) will be one of difficulty and resolve. At one point, the challenge of maintaining ones true faith has been compared to holding a cactus in your hand. By examining the life and times of our Holy Prophet (saw) we will attempt to draw lessons and insight on how to face such a challenge and ensure that we succeed before the arrival and well after.

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# The Expansion: Reflections on Sūrah al-Inshirāḥ

**Instructor:** Sayyid Ali Imran Naqvi

**Duration:** 5 sessions.

**Introduction:** In these sessions we will begin by going over a few key points regarding Qur<sup>2</sup>ānic exegesis, such as the need to do exegesis, the different methods of doing exegesis, the criterion to differentiate a Makkī from a Madanī chapter etc. Thereafter, we intend on briefly going over the 94<sup>th</sup> chapter of the Qur<sup>2</sup>ān, namely, al-Inshirāḥ and expound on the various themes found within it. Is this Sūrah an independent chapter or a continuation of Sūrah al-Ḍuḥā? What does it mean for the chest to be expanded? What heavy burden—that almost broke the Prophet's (p) back—was lifted from him? Does the chapter praise the notion of fame and popularity or are these qualities condemned? Is the coming of ease after hardship a universal law or does it have exceptions? Why is this principle reiterated twice in the chapter? How is this chapter immediately relevant for those seeking to preserve their faith today? These are few questions we will attempt to reflect upon during the course of these sessions and God willing arrive at a better understanding of the chapter.

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# Recognizing the Spirit of the Khawārij

**Instructor:** Muhammad Hasnain

**Duration:** 5 Sessions

**Introduction:** Extremism in the name of religion is one of the most notorious dangers of today's world. History, which is a great teacher, can help us to understand this phenomenon. Islamic historical sources present the Khawārij as the most salient example of religious extremists who, despite being the devout followers of some religious rituals, stood against their Imam and exhibited the worst brutality against their fellow Muslims.

In this course, we will try to learn about...

- conditions which are conducive to such a mentality,
- attributes of individuals or groups of people who fall prey to this mindset,
- how Imam Ali (‘a) dealt with this menace,
- who the ultimate beneficiaries of this approach are, and
- real-life examples of this mentality in today's world.