

*Winning through
sacrifice:*
**A rewarding
means of
worship**



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Icon Key

Stage One:



Essential questions:

The most important questions that the students should be able to answer by the end of the lesson.



Key vocabulary:

These are the primary technical terms in the unit without which the student will not understand the lesson.

Stage Two:



Teacher takeaway:

This is the primary takeaway we want students to leave the lesson with. It usually outlines the learning process that describes how the different parts and sections of the lesson plan help students arrive at the learning objectives.



Teacher's note:

This is an undefined body of text that ranges between notes on instructions or a heads up on potential problems you may encounter while teaching.



Ayat:

Qur'anic verse



Hadith:

Hadith narration

Stage Three:

Formative Assessments:

Low-stake assessments used to monitor student learning during instruction in order to provide ongoing feedback and adjust teaching to improve student understanding.

Summative Assessments:

Assessments that evaluate student learning and skill acquisition at the end of a lesson or unit to determine student understanding and application of the lesson objectives.



Unit overview and objectives

Unit overview

Learning objectives

Content standards

Unit overview

When it comes to rituals in Islam, particularly those that require sacrifice, many students question their purpose. What is the point? What do I get out of it? While some lack interest because they are unaware of their immediate or tangible benefits, others find that engaging in rituals like praying five times a day or fasting for thirty days in a row can be intimidating. In this unit, we explore the purpose of rituals, which dominate our lives and reveal what people find to be sacred. We then expand this discussion by taking a closer look at the numerous benefits of engaging in Islamic rituals in particular.

The first lesson begins with an exploration of the nature of rituals, specifically what we call “rituals of sacrifice.” In short, these types of rituals require an individual to sacrifice something for the sake of someone or something they deem sacred. While rituals are often associated with religious individuals, or people who hold a theocentric (god-centered) worldview, students will quickly realize that any act of sacrifice, including those enacted in secular societies, constitute rituals. Thus, in the first lesson, students will focus on inspecting what they think it means to sacrifice and what that sacrifice reveals about the things they sanctify.

Unlike other rituals of sacrifice, nonetheless, Islamic rituals uniquely provide its practitioners with both worldly and otherworldly benefit. In the remaining two lessons of the unit, we take a deep dive into two rituals that are central in Islam: fasting (sawm) and almsgiving (zakat). Our selection of these two rituals in particular is intentional since, at their core, is an element of sacrifice. And rather than solely focusing on their outer legalistic or inner spiritual dimensions, we take a multi-dimensional approach that highlights both of these elements while also reflecting on some of their socio-psychological advantages. Ultimately, we set out to walk students through the innumerable benefits both of these practices procure in our lives in this world and in the next.

Lesson objectives

Toward the completion of this lesson, students should be able to:

- ① Analyze how rituals define what a society deifies and deems sacred. *(cognitive)*
- ② Understand and compare rituals of sacrifice as practiced across cultures and religions. *(cognitive)*
- ③ Understand that the Islamic rituals of sacrifice do not benefit God but rather benefit the individual in a worldly and otherworldly sense. *(cognitive and affective)*
- ④ Understand how sensory deprivation by sacrificing food, water, and sexual pleasure is a means of achieving *taqwa* (God-consciousness). *(cognitive)*
- ⑤ Understand that the Islamic ritual of fasting does not benefit God, but rather benefits the individual in a worldly and otherworldly sense. *(cognitive)*
- ⑥ Recognize that everything is the property of God and we are only the caretakers of our wealth (*rizq*). *(cognitive)*
- ⑦ Understand that *zakat* is a means of purifying one’s excess wealth. *(cognitive and affective)*
- ⑧ Identify how blessings like wealth can be vehicles to finding God’s Love. *(cognitive)*
- ⑨ Recognize the beauty in sacrifice through an application of sacrifice and internalization of the Islamic worldview on wealth. *(affective)*

Content standards**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9**

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.11-12.6

Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.9-10.5

Analyze the structure of the relationships among concepts in a text, including relationships among key terms.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.



Read before you teach

Yaqeen publication(s)

Multimedia resources

General FAQs



For an additional resource, check out our animated video series on fasting and *zakat* with Sh. Abdullah Oduro.

Read before you teach **General FAQs**

How can I navigate a tough discussion?

Expect varying understandings and interpretations of religious content. To offset contestations, mention varying points beforehand and engage the strengths and weaknesses of each argument.

How do I steer tangents?

Demonstrate concern and acknowledge the feelings of those who are speaking by recognizing the value in everyone's contributions. Do not assume any student has malicious intent in their comments or tangents, and work towards a solution. Be aware of the tendency to have a "scapegoat" in the group (i.e., a student who questions a lot). Be mindful not to treat them like a black sheep and respect their journey. Use their questions to push the thinking of everyone in the group.

How do I engage a quiet group?

It is important to understand your students and tailor engagement strategies to help capture their attention. Here are some general tips that might help:

- Begin the class by mentioning any relevant anecdotes or current events to prompt student interest.
- If time permits, start the discussion with an icebreaker.
- Allow students to develop comfort for silence by giving them at least 10 seconds to reflect on the question/topic before responding, and rephrase if necessary.
- Have students talk to a partner before sharing with the larger group

How do I respond to a question that I don't know the answer to?

Recognize that there are various types of questions. Many questions are open to individual reflection, and can be answered through personal reflection, discussion and/or engaging the perspectives of others. Other questions can be technical in nature and requires specialized study (e.g., fiqh questions). Some questions tie back to the questioner's personal life journey and require individual counseling. Finally, some questions do not have a clear-cut answer and can serve as a reminder for how limited our knowledge is as humans.

By knowing how to categorize the type of question, you will know how to appropriately respond and have a better sense of when to say, "I do not know, but I can help us find out." Within and beyond Yaqeen, there are many resources to help you facilitate the questioner's journey towards an answer.



Instructions and activities

Lesson 1 • Sacred surrender

Lesson 2

Lesson 3



Essential questions

What purpose do rituals play in the modern world?

How are modern rituals different from those of previous cultures and religions?

What does Islam's conceptualization of sacrifice rituals tell us about the purpose of life?



Key vocabulary

Rituals of sacrifice

a sacred, habitual practice of giving up something for the sake of something else

Lesson plan 1

Sacred surrender

Stage 1: Big ideas and desired results

Lesson overview

To open the unit, we first tap into the mental associations and real-life experiences students have with the word “sacrifice.” Through introspection and a comparative analysis of different rituals of sacrifice, students will realize that rituals of sacrifice speak to what is deified, adored, and deemed sacred by a society. Our analysis of such rituals spans across those that are theocentric and secular, as well as across different cultures. While all types of rituals offer insight as to what individuals or communities deem sacred, rituals that are done in the name of God are notably distinct. Theocentric rituals of sacrifice require humility and recognition that the self is powerless and in need of a being beyond itself.

This first section sets the stage to shift student focus to Islamic rituals, which will be explored in the final portion of this lesson. Through the exploration of select rituals, students will recognize that sacrifice in Islam is a vehicle to show love and gratitude to God. Unlike other religious traditions, rituals of sacrifice in Islam provide tangible worldly benefits for its practitioners while not diminishing its potential to receive God’s Mercy and Love in the Hereafter.

Learning objectives

Toward the completion of this lesson, students should be able to:

- ① Analyze how rituals define what a society deifies and deems sacred. *(cognitive)*
- ② Understand and compare rituals of sacrifice as practiced across cultures and religions. *(cognitive)*
- ③ Understand that the Islamic rituals of sacrifice do not benefit God but rather benefit the individual in a worldly and otherworldly sense. *(cognitive and affective)*



Teacher's note

Before teaching this lesson, prepare by printing out copies of **1.1 “Opening Activity,”** one copy per group of four students. Cut out the three components of the handout (the “Instructions,” the individual “Would you rather...?” cards, and the “Reflect & Discuss” slip). Place each set of components inside an envelope, one envelope per group, before class begins.

Stage 2: Learning plan

Total time: 60 min

Lesson plan outline

- Section 1, **slides 1-4:** exploring students’ associations and experiences with the term “sacrifice,” defining “rituals of sacrifice,” and explaining what they reveal
- Section 2, **slides 6-16:** showcasing rituals of sacrifice across time and space and the metaphysical worldview that gives each sacrifice its purpose
- Section 3, **slides 17-24:** introducing Islam’s rituals of sacrifice and their higher purpose for Muslims

Supplies/equipment

- Lesson plan 1 presentation (for teacher)
- Projector/screen/computer/internet connection to display presentation and play videos
- Printouts of 1.1 (one per group of four students, cut up and placed in an envelope)
- Envelopes (one per group of four students)
- Printouts of 1.2, 1.3, and 1.4 for each student
- Printouts of 1.5 (optional)

Opening activity (10 min)

Section 1 • Slides 1-4 | Exploring students’ associations and experiences with “sacrifice”

Slide 1 / Let’s talk sacrifice: setting up the opening activity

1. Open slide one and set up the opening activity:
 - a. Ask students to **form groups of four.**
 - b. Once they are settled, they should send one group member to **grab an envelope** from the front of the room.
 - c. They will have 7-8 minutes to **complete the two activities** inside the envelope, a “Would you rather...?” game followed by a short, reflective discussion. Students should read the instructions for both activities first.

Learning activity (50 min)

Slide 2 / Let’s talk sacrifice: whole-class discussion

1. After 7-8 minutes are up and all groups are finished with both activities, proceed to slide two.
2. Invite each group to share their reflections on the second and third discussion questions with the whole class. (The first question is strictly a personal reflection). You may use the following responses to guide the discussion:

Observe | “What are some things that you and your peers would sacrifice for?”

Guided Response: Student responses to this question will vary depending on their common interests and shared value systems. Allow students to share candidly what they are willing to sacrifice for.

Infer | “What do our sacrifices reveal about us as individuals? About us as a society?”

Let's Talk Sacrifice

Form a group of four, grab an envelope, and complete the two activities inside!

Let's Talk Sacrifice

Class Discussion: Share your reflections on the following questions:

- 1. INTROSPECT** | What did you learn about yourself while playing the “Would you rather...?” game?
- 2. OBSERVE** | What are some things that you and your peers would commonly sacrifice for?
- 3. INFER** | What do our sacrifices reveal about us as individuals? About us as a society?

Guided Response: What are we willing to sacrifice that reveals what we, as individuals and collectives, intrinsically love, value, and deem sacred? For example, someone who values their physical health may readily sacrifice temporary indulgences and short-term conveniences for long-term physical well-being. Free time and extra savings may go toward purchasing and preparing highly-nutritious food items, learning new recipes, and cooking at home, no matter how inconvenient the process. A similar inference can be made about someone who values the environment. In an effort to reduce plastic waste, they may invest in reusable mesh bags (for groceries), cloth diapers (for babies), metal straws (for drinks), and glass containers (for bulk spices) to avoid consuming plastics during their day-to-day. While the objects of our sacrifice may be inspired by a religious/theocentric worldview or a secular one, they invariably point to what is valuable and sacred to a group of people.



Slide 3 / Ritual (of sacrifice): defining the terms

1. Proceed to slide three and point to the term “ritual.”
2. Begin by defining a “ritual” as “a defined practice consisting of a series of actions, that breaks from ordinary life and reveals what is sacred to a people.”
3. Continue by sharing some examples of contemporary rituals to students:
 - a. throwing a gender reveal party during a woman’s pregnancy
 - b. going to prom as a senior in high-school
 - c. barbecuing and watching fireworks on the night of the Fourth of July
 - d. hosting a coming-of-age celebration (e.g., a bar mitzvah or quinceanera)



Slide 4 / Rituals of sacrifice: what they are and what they reveal

1. Transition to slide four. Explain to students that, sometimes, the sacrifices people make occur in a ritualistic way, i.e., “rituals of sacrifice.” While pointing to the graphic organizer on the slide, elaborate on “rituals of sacrifice” using the following notes:
 - a. **What:** A “ritual of sacrifice” is a kind of ritual in which we give up something for the sake of something greater in a defined, methodical manner. This type of ritual consists of two components. The first component is the practice (or series of actions) done by the sacrificer, which is often defined and executed in a set time, place, and method. The second component is the belief, the myth, or the metaphysical worldview that gives the practice its greater meaning and purpose. In other words, a ritual of sacrifice is meaningful and purposeful according to the worldview from which it stems.
 - b. **Why:** People engage in rituals of sacrifice because, according to their metaphysical worldview, the object or self being sacrificed will procure greater material and/or immaterial benefit for the sacrificer.
 - c. **Who:** Everyone—be they male or female, young or old, individuals or collectives, spiritual, secular, or otherwise—engages in rituals of sacrifice. They are not necessarily exclusive to religious groups as we often assume.



Teacher takeaway

To open the unit, we first tap into the mental associations and real-life experiences that young Western Muslims have with the act of sacrifice. The examples of sacrifice presented in the “Would you rather...?” activity are non-religious, non-ritualistic examples in order to gauge students’ general sentiments toward the word “sacrifice” and to reveal their personal values and priorities. When facilitating the post-activity discussion, it is important to point out that, oftentimes, modern, Western people perceive “sacrifice” as counterproductive to their individualistic pursuits, unless that sacrifice is self-serving in a materialistic, worldly sense, like boosting one’s career or increasing one’s wealth. After transitioning into the learning instruction, students should realize that acts of sacrifice stem from a belief system in which something is deified, adored, and deemed sacred, be it money, the ego, or a god, as is the case with religious people. The final takeaway at the end of this section is that “sacrifice” is a category of rituals grounded in a metaphysical worldview that is present in every society, religious or otherwise. The upcoming section takes students on a virtual tour of sacrificial rituals across time and space.

Rituals of Sacrifice
across theocentric and secular societies

In the upcoming slides, identify the following...
In practicing this ritual of sacrifice, what is loved, valued, and deemed sacred to this specific group of people?



Teacher's note

This next section explores rituals of sacrifice practiced in various societies. During the course of the activity, it is important to note that sacrificial rituals can be of two kinds: body or objects. Bodily sacrifice can include self-harm or sacrificing oneself for the sake of something greater, whereas sacrificing an object could entail giving up something in one’s possession. An additional layer to this exploration also highlights the difference between theocentric rituals and secular rituals, which will be defined in the instruction below. This distinction will set the stage for a deeper exploration of Islamic sacrificial rituals, which is the final section of this lesson.

When showcasing the sacrificial rituals in this section, spend no more than 30-45 seconds on each slide while briefly explaining the ritual taking place. The rituals are presented as captioned photos followed by additional commentary on the sacred elements of the sacrifices.

- Conclude the instruction by reminding students of the earlier whole-class discussion, specifically question three, “What do our sacrifices reveal about us...?” Tell students that the sacrifices we make reveal something deeper about us as humans. On a basic level, our sacrifices as individuals and collectives reveal our priorities and shared value systems. Most importantly, in a spiritual sense, our rituals of sacrifice reveal what we love, adore, deify, and deem sacred. For example, people in a secular, capitalist society may love individual material success and pleasure above all else and will, therefore, sacrifice God’s pleasure and moral uprightness in pursuit of money (e.g., modeling for the Playboy and Sports Illustrated magazines or becoming a professional gambler as fast-tracks to wealth). On the other hand, for members of a spiritual community, a purified soul may be regarded as their most valued, most sacred possession and the center of their ambitions. The purpose of their sacrifices may be to gain spiritual purity, even at the expense of their egos, bodies, and wealth.
- Conclude the commentary by telling students that the topic of this new unit is **Islamic rituals of sacrifice** as a means of worship and devotion to God.

Slide 5 / Rituals of sacrifice across theocentric and secular societies: what do rituals reveal about a society?

- Proceed to slide five. Inform students that the upcoming activity showcases rituals of sacrifice practiced by various societies.
- Explain that this exploration will highlight two types of rituals, theocentric and secular. Tell students that theocentric rituals are those in which god(s) or a divine power(s) is the sacred element at the center of the sacrifice. Next, explain that secular rituals are those in which god(s) or a divine power is removed from the picture and replaced with something else.
- To set up the activity, instruct students with the following:
 - Study each ritual of sacrifice openly and objectively. No matter how strange, uncomfortable, or “barbaric” a ritual may seem from our modern, Western vantage point, recognize that each ritual makes sense through the lens of a metaphysical worldview from which it stems. It is important to suspend judgment and, instead, seek to identify the sacred element in each ritual.
 - For each ritual of sacrifice, inform students to identify the following: “In practicing this ritual of sacrifice, what is loved, valued, and deemed sacred to this specific group of people?”
- Before proceeding to the next slide, remind students that they will only have 30-45 seconds to study each ritual of sacrifice. They will end the activity with a brief discussion with their reflections.

Section 2 • Slides 6-16 | Exploring rituals of sacrifice across time and place

Slide 6 / Retainer sacrifice

- Proceed to slide six to showcase an example of a retainer sacrifice in Ancient Egypt.
 - Read aloud the caption: “The pharaoh’s servants from the lower social class would be sacrificed and buried alongside the deceased pharaoh (who was believed to be a god in human form) in order to serve and comfort him in the afterlife.”

Retainer Sacrifice
Ancient Egypt

A pharaoh's servants from the lower social class would be sacrificed and buried alongside the deceased pharaoh (who was believed to be a god in human form) in order to serve and comfort him in the afterlife.

In practicing this ritual of sacrifice, what is loved, valued, and deemed sacred to this specific group of people?

Aztec Human Sacrifice
Southern Mexico

After a human was sacrificed at a temple altar, the Aztecs would offer the heart, flesh, and blood to their gods for nourishment, burning the meat and pouring the blood over the statues of their deities. Nourishing their sun god, Tezcatlipoca, ensured he had strength to raise the sun each morning.

In practicing this ritual of sacrifice, what is loved, valued, and deemed sacred to this specific group of people?

Gadhima Festival
South Nepal

Every five years, the Gadhima Festival is held in Nepal to slaughter thousands of animals in honor of the Hindu goddess Gadhima. Millions of worshippers travel to Nepal to sacrifice animals or witness their slaughter.

In practicing this ritual of sacrifice, what is loved, valued, and deemed sacred to this specific group of people?

Lent
Christians Worldwide

In the days leading up to Easter, worshipers fast for forty days from a luxury object or food of their choice (traditionally, eggs, fish, meat, and fat) in an effort to imitate Jesus' sacrificial fast in the wilderness. They are also in a state of prayer, self-reflection, and repentance.

In practicing this ritual of sacrifice, what is loved, valued, and deemed sacred to this specific group of people?

- b. Provide students with this additional commentary: In Ancient Egypt, the pharaohs were believed to be divine humans and intermediaries between the cosmic gods and the Egyptian people, deserving of maintaining their social status even after death. This metaphysical worldview led many lower-class Egyptians to sacrifice their own family members for the sake of their pharaohs. The families viewed the sacrifice as a guarantee of eternal happiness and security in the afterlife.

Slide 7 / Aztec human sacrifice

1. Proceed to slide seven to showcase an example of an Aztec human sacrifice in Southern Mexico.
 - a. Read aloud the caption: "After a human was sacrificed at a temple altar, the Aztecs would offer the heart, flesh, and blood to their gods for nourishment, burning the meat and pouring blood over the statues of their deities. Nourishing their sun god, Tezcatlipoca, ensured he had strength to raise the sun each morning."
 - b. Provide students with this additional commentary: Human sacrifices were a central and ceremonious element of the Aztec civilization. They were viewed as a means to repay the gods who exerted themselves in the creation and maintenance of the universe. According to this metaphysical worldview, feeding and nourishing their gods through human sacrifice was honorable and essential work, necessary for the continuous balance and prosperity of the Aztec civilization.

Slide 8 / Gadhima festival

1. Proceed to slide eight to showcase an example of an animal sacrifice in Nepal, India.
 - a. Read aloud the caption: "Every five years, the Gadhima Festival is held to slaughter thousands of animals in honor of the Hindu goddess Gadhima. Millions of worshippers travel to Nepal to sacrifice animals or witness their slaughter."
 - b. Provide students with this additional commentary: Gadhima is believed to be a Hindu goddess of power. According to the Hindu tradition, the goddess appeared as a prisoner in a dream and asked the prison guard to build her a temple, known as the Gadhima Temple. Since then, millions of worshippers travel to the Gadhima Temple to sacrifice animals with the belief that their wishes will be fulfilled by this goddess of power.

Slide 9 / Lent

1. Proceed to slide nine to showcase an example of the Lent ritual practiced by Christians all over the world.
 - a. Read aloud the caption: "In the days leading up to Easter, worshipers fast for forty days from a luxury object or food of their choice (traditionally, eggs, fish, meat, and fat) in an effort to imitate Jesus' sacrificial fast in the wilderness. They are also in a state of prayer, self-reflection, and repentance."
 - b. Provide students with this additional commentary: In the Christian tradition, Jesus' life, death, and resurrection represent the ultimate sacrifice for God and humankind. Fasting and turning to God in repentance before Easter (the day Jesus arose from the dead, according to Christians) is a way of commemorating Jesus' sacrifice and upholding his teachings.

**Korban (Qorbān)
Israel**

Korban, meaning “something that draws close,” was an ancient ritual in Judaism. This ritual of sacrifice involved burning grains, offering food or drink, or expressing regret and guilt for sins. After the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, Jews replaced the ritual of Korban with prayer instead.

In practicing this ritual of sacrifice, what is loved, valued, and deemed sacred to this specific group of people?

Slide 10 / Korban

- Proceed to slide ten to showcase an example of the Korban ritual from the Jewish tradition.
- Read aloud the caption: “Korban, meaning “something that draws close,” was an ancient ritual in Judaism. This ritual of sacrifice involved burning grains, offering food or drink, or expressing regret and guilt for sins. After the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, Jews replaced the ritual of Korban with prayer instead.”
- Provide students with this additional commentary: Korbanot (sacrifices or offerings) were done solely for the purpose of communing with God in order to become closer to Him. Others believed it was a way of expressing gratitude and love to God, while others performed the rituals to gain purity and atonement.

Secular Sacrifices

Reflect: What happens when god(s) or a divine being(s) is removed from the picture? For whom or what do people sacrifice?

أَفَرَبْتَ مِنْ أَنْخَذَ إِلَهٌ هُوَنَّهُ

“Consider the one who has taken his own desire as a god...”

[Surat al-Jathiyyah, 45:23]

Slide 11 / Secular sacrifices: taking the “self” and its desires as god

- Proceed to slide eleven. Inform students that all of the sacrificial rituals in the virtual gallery so far stem from theocentric worldviews in which a god(s) or a divine being(s) is the sacred element at the center of the sacrifice. For members of these societies, “sacrifice” is the highest expression of love, devotion, adoration, and worship toward a being(s) outside of the human self.
- Pose the question on the slide: “What happens when god(s) or a divine being(s) is removed from the picture, as is the case in secular societies? For whom or what do people sacrifice?” Call on a few students to share their responses.
- Next, read aloud the displayed verse and its translation. 
- Then, explain the connection between the verse and rituals of sacrifice using the following commentary:
 - We have learned that rituals of sacrifice, whether religious or secular, point to what is deemed sacred by an individual or a society. In this verse, God poses a rhetorical question about the person who regards their individual self as more valuable and sacred than everything else. Such a person serves and sacrifices only for the sake of their desires and ego, much like a religious person serves and sacrifices for God.
 - This verse is especially relevant to secular, highly individualistic societies such as ours in the modern West.



أَفَرَبْتَ مِنْ أَنْخَذَ إِلَهٌ هُوَنَّهُ

“Consider the one who has taken his own desires as a god...” [Surat al-Jathiyyah, 45:23]

**Black Friday
America**

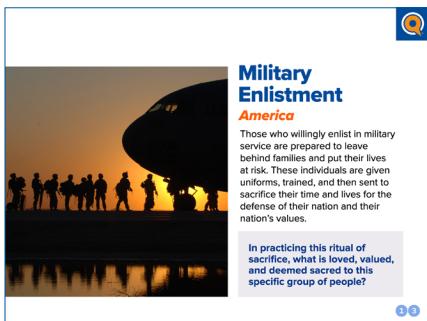
Known as the busiest shopping day in America, Black Friday is a day when consumers rise long before dawn, camp outside of department stores for hours, and barge into stores at opening in order to secure the best deals on electronics, clothing, and other goods.

In practicing this ritual of sacrifice, what is loved, valued, and deemed sacred to this specific group of people?

Slide 12 / Black Friday

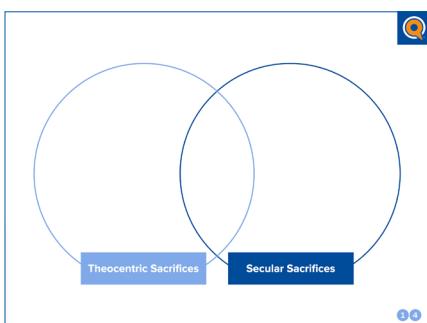
- To continue the virtual gallery, proceed to slide twelve to showcase an example of Black Friday in America as a secular ritual of sacrifice.
- Read aloud the caption: “Known as the busiest shopping day in America, Black Friday is a day when consumers arise long before dawn, camp outside of department stores for hours, and barge into the store at opening in order to secure the best deals on electronics, clothing, and other goods.”
- Provide students with this additional commentary: Capitalist America has spawned a hyperconsumption culture in which many people believe that owning more non-essential goods and upgrading to the newest products will bring them inner happiness, fulfillment, and a higher social status. It is

with this mindset that people are willing to sacrifice sleep and money to snatch non-essential goods for low prices.



Slide 13 / Military enlistment

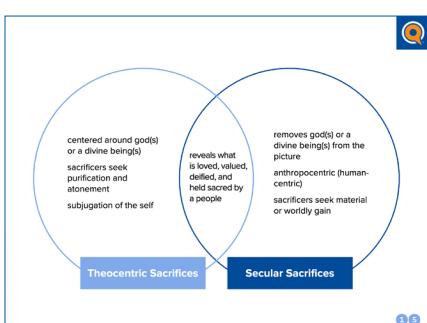
1. Proceed to slide thirteen to showcase an example of military service in America.
 - a. Read aloud the caption: "Those who willingly enlist in military service are prepared to leave behind families and put their lives at risk. These individuals are given uniform, trained, and then sent to sacrifice their time and lives in defense of their nation and the spread of their nation's values."
 - b. Provide students with this additional commentary: Sacrificing one's life in military service is the highest expression of patriotism in America. Those who serve are highly honored and respected, a quality many soldiers seek to attain. Additionally, soldiers are willing to die for their country and its citizens in order to preserve the nation's freedom.



Slides 14-15 / Venn diagram: compare and contrast (student activity)

1. Proceed to slide fourteen and pass out copies of **1.2 “Venn Diagram.”** Instruct students to spend 2-3 minutes collaborating with an elbow partner to complete the following tasks:

- a. **Contrast:** On the left and right spheres of the Venn diagram, jot down the differences between theocentric and secular rituals of sacrifice, based on what you learned during the virtual gallery and the class discussion.
 - b. **Compare:** In the center, record what all rituals of sacrifice have in common: what are they, why do they happen, and who participates in them?
2. Once time is up, call on pairs of students to share their notes with the whole class.
3. Next, transition to slide fifteen to display some key points about the differences and similarities between theocentric and secular rituals of sacrifice. Use the following notes to guide the discussion:



- a. **Theocentric:** Members of a theocentric worldview sacrifice body and object for a divine being(s) that exists beyond the human self. This divine being(s) is at the center of their worldview, and therefore, subjugating and sacrificing oneself for this being is the highest expression of devotional worship and is believed to bring about worldly and otherworldly benefits for the sacrificers (e.g., inner and outer purification, blessings, and atonement). It is also important to note that the examples of theocentric sacrificial rituals showcased in the virtual gallery still differ from those in Islam, as will be discussed in the final section of this lesson.

- b. **Secular:** The sacrificial rituals of a secular people are not devoted to a divine being. Rather, at the center of their sacrifices is something anthropocentric (meaning “human-centered”), such as the individual self/ego and its desires, a political state, or humanity as a whole. These secular sacrifices are often intended to procure material or worldly benefits for the sacrificer, such as more wealth, social status/recognition, and the safety of a political entity, among other things. Rituals of sacrifice in a secular society may be more difficult to identify.



Teacher takeaway

The second portion of this lesson serves two purposes. First, viewing rituals across cultures will have students make a connection to the first part of this lesson by determining what a ritual can tell us about what an individual or community identifies as sacred. Second, comparing theocentric and secular sacrifices help identify some of the benefits of theocentric sacrifices compared to their secular counterparts.

By the conclusion of this section, students should be able to identify the several distinctions between theocentric and secular sacrifices. The first is that in theocentric rituals of sacrifice, that which is sacred is a Being that is superior and external to humans, namely God. Second, theocentric rituals have the underlying purpose of purification and atonement that benefit the soul. Finally, students should recognize that theocentric rituals require humility and recognition that the self is powerless and in need of a being beyond itself.

This section sets the stage to shift student focus to Islamic rituals, which will be explored in the final portion of this lesson. It is important to note that the theocentric rituals explored in this section are not equal to Islamic rituals. Through the exploration of Islamic rituals, students will recognize that sacrifice in Islam is a vehicle to show love and gratitude to God in a way that benefits the self. This will ultimately result in a greater appreciation of Islamic rituals.



Teacher's note

In this section, students will shift their focus to Islam's prescribed rituals and explore how such rituals help Muslims achieve their purpose in life.

Elevator Pitch

Imagine having to describe the rituals in Islam to a non-Muslim friend or someone hearing about them for the first time. Answer the following questions in your pitch:

1. What is the ritual?
2. Why do we do it?

Sacrifice for the Sacred
the Islamic rituals

Consider the Islamic rituals of prayer, alms, fasting, and pilgrimage.

1. What is being sacrificed?
2. How does this act of giving up something and object of love at the center of these rituals, and how do these rituals align with our purpose in life as Muslims?

c. **Summarize this section** by directing student attention to the center of the diagram. Explain that while secular people reject the belief in a higher power and adherence to an organized religion, it does not mean they do not deify anything nor deem nothing to be sacred. Rather, God is replaced by other beings or entities, such as the self, the state, or humanity as a whole. In both theocentric and secular sacrificial rituals, people sacrifice body and/or object with the belief that they will procure something greater for the sake of something or some being they deem sacred. These sacrifices reveal what they love, value, deify, and deem sacred.

- d. Conclude by stating that **the subjugation of the self to a being much more powerful is a fundamental distinction between theocentric and secular rituals.**
4. Before proceeding to the final portion of this lesson, ask students to consider some rituals within Islam and how they are similar or different to the rituals discussed up to this point in the lesson. This final reflection is to have students begin shifting their mindset from various religious or secular rituals, to those specifically practiced in Islam.

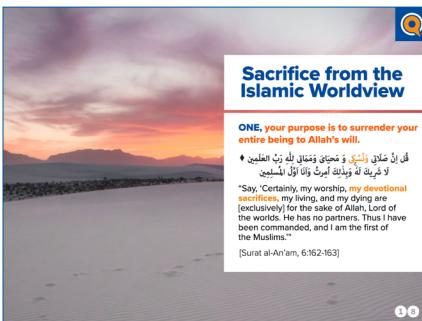
Slide 16 / Elevator pitch: what and why?

1. Proceed to slide sixteen and read the prompt on the slide: "Imagine having to describe the rituals in Islam (e.g., praying, fasting) to a non-Muslim friend or someone hearing about them for the first time. Answer the following questions in your pitch: What is the ritual? Why do we do it?"
2. Give students one minute to turn to an elbow partner and make their pitch. Inform students that an elevator pitch is usually 20-30 seconds, so they should both try to complete their turns in one minute.
3. Once time is up, call on several students to share their answers with the class. Ask students whether they found it difficult or easy to describe those rituals and their purpose to a non-Muslim who is hearing about them for the first time. What were some of the reasons they gave for why we engage in these rituals in Islam?

Section 3 • Slides 17-24 | Introducing Islam's rituals of sacrifice and their higher purpose

Slide 17 / Turn & talk: sacrifices in the pillars of Islam

1. Transition to slide seventeen and pass out copies of **1.3 "Sacrifice for the Sacred."** Read the following instructions found on the handout: "The following rituals in Islam involve some element of sacrifice: prayer (*salat*), alms (*zakat*), fasting (*sawm*), and pilgrimage (*hajj*). In this lesson, we learned that all rituals of sacrifice, be they secular or religious, practiced by a people reveal what they deem sacred. Apply this concept to the four rituals above. First, identify what is being sacrificed, and second, determine how these rituals of sacrifice align with our purpose in life as Muslims."
2. Give students five minutes to fill out the table on **1.3.** They may choose to complete this independently or with the same elbow partner.
3. Once complete, have students share some of their answers with the whole class and then conclude the activity with the following commentary: The rituals of Islam, specifically the four pillars mentioned in this activity, all contain some form of sacrifice. When we pray, we give up the tasks, activities, and obligations that were previously occupying our time to turn



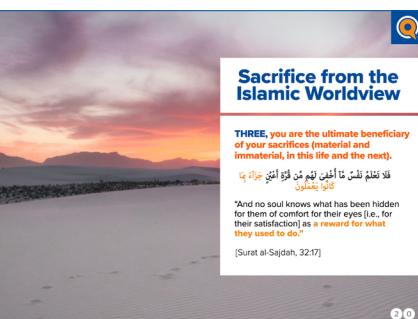
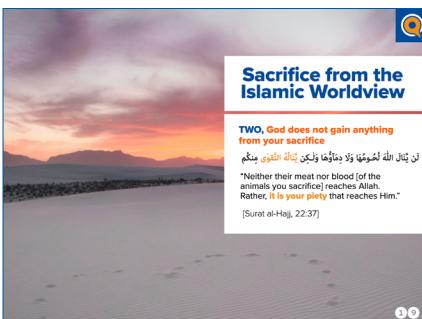
قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايِ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ
الْعَالَمِينَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذِلِّكَ أُمِرْتُ وَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

"Say, 'Certainly, my worship, my devotional sacrifices, my living, and my dying are [exclusively] for the sake of Allah, Lord of the worlds. He has no partners. Thus I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.'" [Surat al-An'am, 6:162-163]



لَنْ يَنْالَ اللَّهُ لُحْمُهَا وَلَا دَمًا وَهَا وَلِكِنْ يَنْالُهُ
التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ

"Neither their meat nor blood [of the animals you sacrifice] reaches Allah. Rather, it is your piety that reaches Him." [Surat al-Hajj, 22:37]



فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَا أَخْفَى لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرْبَةٍ أَعْيُّنِي جَرَاء
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

"And no soul knows what has been hidden for them of comfort for their eyes [i.e., for their satisfaction] as a reward for what they used to do." [Surat al-Sajdah, 32:17]

to our Creator in devotion. We give up part of our wealth when we give alms (*zakat*) and food, drink, and sexual pleasure when we fast. Pilgrimage is another ritual of sacrifice because we sacrifice our wealth, our egos, and material comfort for days in a humbling journey through Makkah and Madinah. What makes these sacrifices worthwhile and valuable is that at the center of them all is God, Allah, the Creator, Sustainer, and Originator of all things and the One to whom we owe our entire existence.

Slides 18-20 / What's the difference?

1. Proceed to slide eighteen and inform students that three things can be said about the Islamic worldview of sacrificial rituals. These three points are encapsulated in three verses of Qur'an.

2. To establish the first point, read aloud the displayed verse and its translation. 

a. Provide students with the following commentary: **Our purpose in this world is to each surrender our entire being—hearts, bodies, and minds—to Allah's will.** Engaging in these sacrificial rituals in the way that He commanded, then, is the highest expression of love and devotion toward our Creator. When we give up what we love for His sake, we are demonstrating our preference for Him over everything worldly that we possess: time, wealth, energy, pleasure, comfort, and so on. Submitting to Him in this manner is a fulfillment of our purpose in life as Muslims, as Allah commands us in this verse.

3. To establish the second point, continue to slide nineteen and read aloud the displayed verse and its translation. 

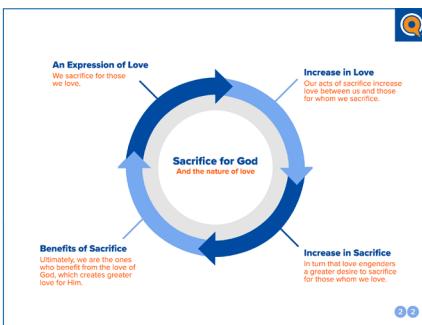
a. Provide students with the following commentary: **God does not gain anything from our sacrifices, nor does He benefit from our submission to His will.** In fact, if all of humankind were to reject God, it would not diminish anything from His power and glory. Allah affirms this in another verse, "O humankind, it is you who stand in need of God, while God needs nothing and is worthy of all praise" [Surat Fatir, 35:15]. This is unlike the worldview of other faith traditions, where oftentimes the purpose of their sacrificial rituals was to nourish and sustain their "gods" who could not fulfill their "godly duties" without the flesh and blood of humans and/or animals, or other food offerings.

4. To establish the third point, continue to slide twenty and read aloud the displayed verse and its translation. 

a. Provide students with the following commentary: We are the ultimate beneficiaries of our sacrifices (material and immaterial, in this life and the next). In every divine command, prohibition, recommendation, and so on is a physical and spiritual benefit aimed to elevate our state of being in preparation for meeting Allah. Therefore, we will each have our own unique journey with Islam's rituals of sacrifice. Regardless of where we are in our spiritual journeys, we should remember that the nature of sacrificial rituals is that they test our willingness to struggle for the One whom we love, i.e., God. The more difficulty we overcome during the course of the ritual, the greater our demonstration of love for Him and the greater His reward.

Consolidation (5 min)

Slides 21-22 / Conclusions



Teacher takeaway

The primary goal of this section is to help students recognize how Islam conceptualizes rituals of sacrifice. Students are presented with the question of what distinguishes rituals in Islam from the examples presented from other religions/cultures. The ultimate purpose of sacrifice in Islam is three-fold. The first is that the ability to surrender one's body and objects to God is the ultimate expression of devotion. Secondly, it is a purification and atonement of the physical and spiritual self. Lastly, it is the procurement of material and immaterial benefit for the sacrificer. This lesson should leave students with the impression that, in Islam, sacrifice for the sake of God never results in loss. Rather, it provides us with both worldly and otherworldly benefits. As students look at the two rituals we will highlight in the upcoming lesson plans, fasting and *zakat*, it should become clear that although they require sacrificing things for the sake of God, their reward and benefit illustrate their ultimate good.

1. Proceed to slide twenty-one. To wrap up the lesson, begin by directing student attention to the images and captions:

- A mother makes her daughter's favorite dish for her daughter's return home from college.
- A husband shows interest and participates in his wife's favorite hobby.
- An older brother drops his responsibilities to help his sister change a flat tire.
- You stay up past your bedtime to wish your best friend a happy birthday.

2. After sharing these scenarios, pose the following question to students:
What is motivating these individuals to do what they are doing? Call on some students to share their responses.

3. Next, transition to slide twenty-two. Explain to students that the scenarios they just explored are all acts of sacrifice for the sake of another person. At its core, sacrifice in Islam is the ultimate expression of love. When we sacrifice for someone—sincerely and expecting nothing in return—our actions naturally increase our love for the one we are sacrificing for. The same goes for our relationship with God.

4. Use the displayed diagram to conclude the lesson:

- We sacrifice for those we love.
- Our acts of sacrifice increases love between us and those for whom we sacrifice.
- In turn that love engenders a greater desire to sacrifice for those whom we love.
- Ultimately, we are the ones who benefit from the love of God which creates greater love for Him.

5. Inform students that the rest of the unit will focus on two sacrificial rituals in Islam: fasting (*sawm*) and alms (*zakat*).

Lesson plan 1

Sacrificing for the sacred

Stage 3: Assessments

Formative assessment

1.2 “Venn Diagram”

To assess the first and second objectives, you may collect **1.2** from students and evaluate what they recorded in their Venn diagrams. Their notes in the center of the diagram will reveal what they understood about sacrificial rituals (objective one)—specifically, that they point to what is deified and deemed sacred by a group of people. Their notes in the left sphere will indicate whether or not students understood that sacrificial rituals in theocentric societies are practiced as a means of purification and atonement.

Summative assessment

1.4 “Portraits of Sacrifice”

This assignment is designed to help students explore theocentric sacrifices in the contemporary world through the stories of public figures celebrated by Muslim and non-Muslim communities alike. Though the sacrifices of these public figures are not ritualistic, they still reveal what is valued, loved, and deemed sacred by these Muslim figures—that is, God, the Islamic faith, and Islamic principles, such as modesty and justice.

name: _____ date: _____

Theocentric and Secular Sacrifices a venn diagram comparison

In the left and right spheres, jot down the differences between theocentric and secular rituals of sacrifice based on what you learned during the virtual gallery and the class discussion. In the center, record what all rituals of sacrifice have in common: what are they, why do they happen, and who participates in them?

12 Venn Diagram

name: _____ date: _____

Portraits of Sacrifice what we value, love, and deem sacred

Say, “Certainly, my worship, **my devotional sacrifices**, my living, and my dying are [exclusively] for the sake of Allah, Lord of the worlds. He has no partners. Thus I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.”

فَلَمَّا مُكَلِّفٌ وَمُؤْمِنٌ قَدْرَتْنَا لَهُ بِرَبِّ الْعَظِيمِ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ مُنْبِتٌ

[Surat al-An'am, 6:162-163]

Directions: Sacrifice, the act of giving up something with the belief that you will attain something greater, is often at the center of our largest life decisions. We each sacrifice our time, resources, and selves for the sake of something we value and love. When we examine popular stories in the media, we may come across public figures who share our Islamic worldview. These individuals are willing to make personal sacrifices for the sake of God. They firmly believe gaining God's pleasure and reward is far more valuable than any short-term, worldly gain.

To prepare for your assignment, complete these three parts:

PART 1: Pick a Public Figure

Bilqis Abdul-Qader American collegiate basketball player (1990-present)
Merve Safa Kavaklı Turkish politician and Turkish ambassador to Malaysia (1958-present)
Saad Ibn Said al-Ghamidi Qur'an Reciter and Imam (1968-present)
Muhammad Ali American professional boxer and activist (1942-2016)
Choose your own! _____

14 Portraits of Sacrifice



Instructions and activities

Lesson 1

Lesson 2 • Fasting of the mind, body, and soul

Lesson 3



Essential questions

How can fasting help facilitate purification of the self/soul?

What are the two components of *taqwa*, and how do they lend themselves to benefits in this world and the next?



Key vocabulary

Sawm (fasting)

to intentionally abstain from eating, drinking, and sexual relations from dawn to sunset

Taqwa (God-consciousness)

to protect and guard oneself from that which is harmful and to preserve what is beneficial through vigilance toward God's commandments

Lesson plan 2

Fasting of the mind, body, and soul

Stage 1: Big ideas and desired results

Lesson overview

In the previous lesson, students were introduced to rituals of sacrifice as a vehicle to recognize what a society finds sacred. An Islamic worldview is unique in that rituals of sacrifice are done in pursuit of pleasing the Most Sacred, God. In this lesson, students will focus on the ritual of fasting as an expression of love and devotion toward God. Rather than taking a purely legal or spiritual analysis of fasting in Islam, students will tease out what the Islamic ritual of fasting says about what Muslims find sacred: God and His Will. Although fasting as a spiritual technique may be a foreign concept in our modern context, students will recognize that fasting was prescribed to all Abrahamic faiths that came before Islam and, hence, has a long legacy that predates today's societal trends.

In the second section of this lesson, students will reflect on the inner mechanics of fasting and how this ritual of sacrifice helps us achieve our purpose of becoming more God-conscious. Students will realize that even though fasting is a physical experience wherein a person restrains their physical and sexual appetites, its benefits are most importantly spiritual. This is so through the conscious act of saying “no” to the *nafs*' inclinations. When this is done from a sincere and correct worldview, this practice strengthens the soul and reorients a person's entire being toward God. After understanding the spiritual benefits of fasting, in the last section of this lesson, students will zoom out of the inner dimensions of fasting to learn how fasting also benefits the human body and mind. Then, in the final section, we highlight the manner in which rituals of sacrifice in Islam provide tangible worldly benefits.

By the end of this lesson, students should recognize that sacrificing for the sake of God in Islam is never a zero-sum equation, but one that leads to gains in both this world and the hereafter without any sense of loss in either. Students should be able to confidently acknowledge that when it comes to Islamic rituals such as fasting, although the act is done for God, it is ultimately we who are the recipients of its benefits.

Learning objectives

Toward the completion of this lesson, students should be able to:

- ① Understand how sensory deprivation by sacrificing food, water, and sexual pleasure is a means of achieving *taqwa* (God-consciousness). (*cognitive*)
- ② Understand that the Islamic ritual of fasting does not benefit God, but rather benefits the individual in a worldly and otherworldly sense. (*cognitive*)



Teacher's note

To set up one of the class activities in advance, prepare a six-inch piece of string for each student. Then, cut the notecards (one for each student) in half and tape each half to one end of the string.

Stage 2: Learning plan

Total time: 60 min

Lesson plan outline

- Section 1, **slides 1-6**: introducing the Islamic ritual of fasting as a legacy of the Abrahamic faiths
- Section 2, **slides 7-11**: defining *taqwa* and exploring the inner mechanics and spiritual benefits of fasting
- Section 3, **slides 12-17**: identifying the worldly benefits of fasting

Supplies/equipment

- Lesson plan 2 presentation (for teacher)
- Projector/screen/computer/internet connection to display presentation and play videos
- Printouts of 2.1 for each student (half-sheet)
- Printouts of 2.2, 2.3, and 2.5 for each student
- Two sets 2.4 cut into cards before class (1 card per pair)
- 6-inch pieces of string (one for each student)
- Notecards (one for each student), cut in half
- Tape

Opening activity (5 min)

Section 1 • Slides 1-6 | Introducing the Islamic ritual of fasting as a legacy of the Abrahamic faiths

Slides 1-2 / Fasting Muslim: making a meme (opening activity)

1. Open slide one. To set up the lesson's opening activity, complete the following steps:
 - a. Pass out a half-sheet copy of **2.1 “Fasting Muslim”** to each student.
 - b. Set the timer and inform the students that they have three minutes to quickly sketch out a meme about their experience as a fasting Muslim.
 - c. Their meme template consists of five parts: what society thinks I do, what my non-Muslim friends think I do, what my family thinks I do, what I should do, and what I actually do.
 - d. Explain that the goal of this activity is to share their personal experience with fasting and how it is perceived by various groups of people.
2. Once three minutes have passed, call on students to share their sketches with the whole class.
3. Next, transition to slide two to display another meme about the fasting Muslim. Use the following notes to engage students in a light-hearted discussion about the Islamic ritual of fasting:
 - a. **“What society thinks I do”** | This photo highlights the public perception that religious fasting is an extreme form of self-starvation that weakens the body and jeopardizes a person’s physical health. The loss, not the gain from the sacrifice, is at the center of public attention.
 - b. **“What my non-Muslim friends think I do”** | This photo highlights the reaction of many non-Muslim adolescents toward fasting. Learning that their Muslim peers refrain from eating and drinking from dawn to sunset,

they perceive the Islamic fast as just another fad diet or weight-loss regimen. “Wait... not even water?” they often ask.

- c. **“What my family thinks I do”** | This photo humorously captures how parents perceive their fasting adolescent children: sleeping in or napping throughout the day in order to pass the time until sunset (maghrib).
- d. **“What I should do”** | This photo highlights the essence of fasting in Islam, that is, to heighten our spiritual sense and gain closeness to God through increased worship and self-reflection.
- e. **“What I actually do”** | This last photo humorously captures what many fasting Muslims, young and old, often do during their free time: mindlessly scroll through photos of their latest food craving, binge-watch cooking videos, and/or plan out their next iftar indulgences with family and friends. So even though they deprive themselves of food, water, and sexual pleasure, they seek stimulation and satiation from alternative means that stifle them from truly benefiting from the fasting experience.

The Sacrificial Ritual of Fasting
a legacy in the Abrahamic faiths

بِاللَّهِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُفِّرْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَصْيَامُ كَمَا كُفِّرْ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ أَعْلَمُمْ تَتَقَوَّنَ

“O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed upon you as it was prescribed upon the people before you—so that you may attain *taqwa*.” [Surat al-Baqarah, 2:183]



يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُفِّرْ عَلَيْكُمُ الْأَصْيَامُ كَمَا كُفِّرْ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ أَعْلَمُمْ تَتَقَوَّنَ

“O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed upon you as it was prescribed upon the people before you—so that you may attain *taqwa*.” [Surat al-Baqarah, 2:183]

Learning activity (45 min)

Slide 3 / The sacrificial ritual of fasting: a legacy in the Abrahamic faiths

1. Proceed to slide three and read aloud the verse and its translation to students.
2. Remind students of the common attitudes toward fasting that they shared in the opening activity. Explain that while many non-Muslims may be shocked or alarmed by the nature of the Islamic ritual of fasting—that it lasts for an entire month and includes the abstinence from water—the reality is that this ritual of fasting predates the Qur’anic mandate (and Muhammad’s prophethood). God reveals in this verse that the prophets and their nations before us were also commanded to fast, just as Muslims do today.
3. Next, play the video to show students how fasting is a legacy found in all three Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
4. Conclude with the following commentary on the video: Though fasting may seem unusual or perhaps extreme to those outside the Islamic faith, the reality is that the ritual of fasting is a legacy that runs through all three Abrahamic faiths. The next section will explain the specifics of the Islamic ritual of fasting.

Slide 4 / The sacrificial ritual of fasting: a definition

1. Proceed to slide four and pass out copies of **2.2 “Fasting at a Glance”** to the class. Then, read the following definition of *sawm* (the Islamic ritual of fasting) to students:
 - a. linguistically, *sawm* means “to abstain”
 - b. technically, it means to abstain from eating, drinking, and sexual relations from dawn to sunset with the intention of fasting
 - c. *sawm* is a ritual of sacrifice of the body
2. Remind students of the rituals of sacrifice presented in the previous lesson and how some were a sacrifice of the body and some were a sacrifice of an object. This lesson focuses on a type of bodily sacrifice, i.e., fasting.

صَوْم

Fasting
an Islamic conceptualization

1. linguistically, *sawm* means “to abstain”
2. technically, it means to abstain from eating, drinking, and sexual relations from dawn to sunset with the intention of fasting
3. a ritual of sacrifice of the body



Teacher's note

Depending on the nature of your student body, slide five provides you with the space to dive deeper into the ritual of fasting, specifically the legal rulings of fasting and the various classes of Islamic fasts.



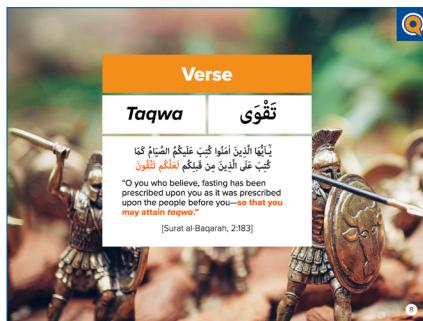
Teacher takeaway

In the previous lesson, sacrifice was defined as an expression of love and devotion towards a being higher than one's self (e.g., a ruler, a government entity, one's ancestors, and so on). In this lesson, students are viewing fasting as an Islamic ritual of sacrifice that is an expression of love and devotion toward God. The opening activity of this section has students reflect on various attitudes toward fasting, and how the sacrifice of fasting may be perceived by the non-Muslim society. Students will then recognize that fasting was prescribed to the Abrahamic faiths that came before Islam and they will understand that fasting is not as new and strange as society perceives it. The reference document given to students in this section highlights the different types of fasts and how they are categorized. Additionally, the document allows students to privately read answers to frequently asked questions that may be too sensitive for students to be comfortable to ask. The following section will have students explore how fasting leads to *taqwa* (God-consciousness).



Riddle

What do a shield and the Islamic ritual of fasting have in common?



Verse

Taqwa	تَقْوَى
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُفِّرْ عَلَيْكُمُ الصَّيَامُ كَمَا كُفِّرْ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ تَعَلَّمُونَ	كُفِّرْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَذْنَانُ كُفِّرْ بِمَا فَطَّنَهُمُ اللَّهُ كُفِّرْ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ تَعَلَّمُونَ

[Surat al-Baqarah, 2:183]



يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُفِّرْ عَلَيْكُمُ الصَّيَامُ كَمَا كُفِّرْ
عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ تَعَلَّمُونَ

"O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed upon you as it was prescribed upon the people before you—so that you may attain *taqwa*." [Surat al-Baqarah, 2:183]

Slide 5 / Fasting at a glance: advanced discussions on the fiqh of fasting (optional)

1. Optionally, proceed to slide five. If you have time and if your student body is receptive toward a more advanced fiqh discussion, you may choose to go over a few questions from the FAQ section on their reference document (**2.2**) as a class. Otherwise, allow students to read through it in their own time.

Slide 6 / Rituals of sacrifice: a recap

1. Before proceeding to the next section, tell students that, up until this point, they have only learned about the mechanics of fasting. The next part of this lesson will cover the worldview and benefits of this ritual of sacrifice.
2. Recap the following components of a ritual of sacrifice that they learned about in the first lesson:

 - a. **Worldview:** This is the metaphysical worldview or belief system that gives a ritual of sacrifice its purpose and meaning.
 - b. **Ritual of sacrifice:** This is the defined practice consisting of a series of actions that a person undertakes for the sake of a higher power.
 - c. **Benefits:** These are the immeasurable benefits, worldly and otherworldly, that a person hopes to procure from the ritual of sacrifice.

Section 2 • Slides 7-11 | Defining *taqwa* and exploring the inner mechanics and spiritual benefits of fasting

Slides 7-9 / The divine objective of fasting: a riddle, a verse, and a word (instruction)

1. Proceed to slide seven and read aloud the riddle: "What do a shield and the Islamic ritual of fasting have in common?"
2. Give students a moment to think and then call on some students to share their answer to the riddle. Listen to their guesses without indicating whether or not they are correct. Tell students that they will come back to this riddle shortly (slide nine).
3. Continue to slide eight and call on a student to recite the displayed verse and its translation, this time, highlighting the text in orange.
4. Ask students how this highlighted portion, "so that you may attain *taqwa*" relates to the riddle.
5. Inform students that this verse explicitly states that the divine objective of fasting is to attain *taqwa*. In other words, abstaining from eating, drinking, and sexual relations from dawn to sunset is a physical mechanism by which we achieve the spiritual state of *taqwa*.
6. Continue to slide nine to further define *taqwa* for students:
 - a. Root and Meaning: *Taqwa* (تَقْوَى) comes from the root word *waqa* (وق-ى), which means "to protect, to preserve, to guard."
 - b. Usage: Historically, the Arabs called the warrior's shield *wiqaya* (وقاية) from the root word (وق-ى).
 - c. Metaphor: Abu Salih reported: A man said to Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, "What is God-fearing mindfulness?" Abu Huraira said, "Have you ever taken a thorny path?" The man said yes. Abu Huraira



Teacher's note

The purpose of the following activity is to highlight the tug-of-war between the two aspects of the human self: the *ruh* (spiritual self) and the *nafs* (lower self). It is important to note that the inclinations of the *nafs* are not inherently problematic; however, it does become problematic when following the desires and pursuits of the *nafs* without the guidance of the *ruh* (spiritual self) and the parameters set by the Shariah.



Teacher's note

For the second task, encourage students to turn inward and reflect on their own inner state. You may prompt them with these follow-up questions: "What does your *nafs* incline toward? What does it desire? What does it constantly crave? Attention and praise on social media? Certain foods? Brand clothing to gain social status? Background audio to fill gaps of silence, e.g., music or a podcast episode? Romantic companionship? New electronic gadgets?" Every student is different and should answer based on what they know about themselves.

said, "What did you do?" The man said, "If I saw thorns, I would avoid them, pass over them, or stop short of them." Abu Huraira said, "That is *taqwa*." [al-Zuhd al-Kabīr 963]

- d. To finally answer the riddle from slide seven, explain that *taqwa* is like the spiritual shield we carry within us to guard ourselves against what is harmful (God's prohibitions) and to preserve what is beneficial (God's commandments). It is a state of God-consciousness and vigilance that will ultimately preserve the purity of our souls and protect us from the hellfire, thus fulfilling our purpose as God's creation.
7. Finally, explain to students that they will now complete an activity to explore the connection between the physical act of fasting and the attainment of *taqwa*.

Slide 10 / The inner mechanics of fasting and the spiritual benefits it provides (activity)

1. Proceed to slide ten and pass out the following learning material to each student:
 - a. a copy of **2.3 "Attaining Taqwa"**
 - b. a six-inch piece of string with half a notecard taped onto each side (as modeled under the "Supplies and equipment" list)
2. Next, direct student attention to the visual on the slide. Explain that one aspect of the human is the inner-self, which consists of two forces: **the *ruh* (the spiritual self)** and the ***nafs* (the lower self)**. Continue by explaining that the *ruh* is not from this physical world, it inclines towards connecting with our Creator, and fulfills the purpose of our existence (i.e., devoting oneself to God). On the other hand, the *nafs* is from this physical world and inclines toward fulfilling its physical needs and desires. We are each composed of these two forces, the *nafs* pulling us downward and the *ruh* pulling us upward.
3. Then, instruct students to pull out their two cards attached by string (modeling the visual displayed on the slide) and to complete the following:
 - a. On the first card, they should write "*ruh* (the spiritual self)," and on the second card, they should write "*nafs* (the lower self)."
 - b. Underneath these labels, they should briefly record and/or illustrate what each inclines toward and what gives each a sense of fulfillment. For example, sensory pleasure, stimulation, material comfort, prestige, and wealth could be listed under desires of the *nafs*. Whereas *dhikr* (remembrance of God), moral excellence, and submission to God could be listed under desires of the *ruh*.
4. After a few minutes, instruct students to place their connected notecards vertically on their handout **(2.3)**. The card labeled "*ruh*" should be toward the top and the card labeled "*nafs*" toward the bottom. Then, read aloud the directions as seen on **2.3**: Imagine these cards as two internal forces tugging at one another, the *ruh* inclining upward and the *nafs* inclining downward. Alone or with a partner, complete the following tasks:
 - a. Reflect: What does it take within yourself to strengthen one force over the other?

The purpose of this task is to prompt students to consider the internal tension between the *nafs* and the *ruh*. With two competing forces, each pulling in the opposite direction, one is bound to dominate over the other. And while our natural disposition inclines toward God, our spiritual drive can diminish when we mindlessly gratify our *nafs* with whatever pleasure it desires. Whether it's the *ruh* or *nafs*, one force will dominate at the expense of the other based on which inclinations are more readily satiated.

- Demonstrate: What happens to the *ruh* and the *nafs* when you fast, whereupon you are abstaining from food, drink, sexual pleasure, sensory stimulation, distraction, and vulgar and idle speech day after day, from dawn to sunset?

The purpose of this task is to prompt students to demonstrate with their cards how the physical act of fasting reorients our inner selves toward the direction of God. In other words, saying “yes” to the *ruh* at the expense and dissatisfaction of the *nafs* strengthens the spiritual muscle over the muscles of the *nafs*.

- Conclude: Briefly define *taqwa* and explain how the sacrificial ritual of fasting can help you attain that heightened state of being which results in closeness to God.

The purpose of this task is to prompt students to recall the meaning of *taqwa* and its relationship with the sacrificial ritual of fasting. *Taqwa* is the ideal spiritual state in which a person protects and guards him or herself from that which is harmful. Additionally, *taqwa* preserves those actions that brings a person closer to God. Fasting helps us attain this spiritual state by strengthening the *ruh* over the *nafs* through the prolonged deprivation of sensory pleasure and stimulation, which the *nafs* craves.

- After a few minutes, engage students in a whole-class discussion around each task by asking them what they noticed. Use the commentary above as instruction toward the end of the discussion.

Slide 11 / The divine objective of fasting: video

- Continue to slide eleven and play the video to summarize the divine objective of fasting. After the video, call on some students to recap some of the main points from the video. Two primary takeaways are listed below to guide the discussion:

- Saying “no” to the *nafs*’ insatiable appetite is the mechanism that helps us grow in *taqwa*.
- When we fast, we become hypervigilant in taming our bodies’ strongest and most instinctive desires: food, drink, and sexual relations. This in turn strengthens our spiritual muscle (the *ruh*) over our lower desires (the *nafs*). 

Section 3 • Slides 12-17 | Identifying the worldly benefits of fasting

Slide 12 / A holistic approach to the benefits of fasting: mind, body, and soul

- Proceed to slide twelve and explain that fasting benefits the human being in all dimensions. Explain that the dimensions are in three categories: mind (*عقل*), body (*جسـد*), and soul (*روح*), and when reflecting on the ritual of fasting, we come to recognize that we experience holistic benefits. Use the following explanations to help build student understanding around each dimension:

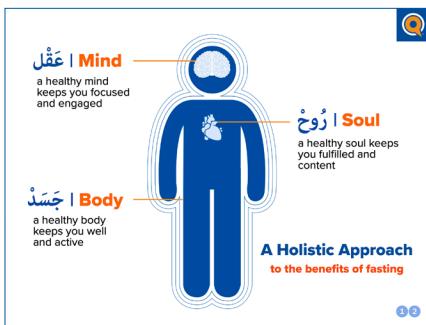


The image shows a video player interface. At the top, it says "The Divine Objective of Fasting" and "achieving taqwa". Below this is a thumbnail image of a person speaking at a podium, with a play button in the center. The video player has a blue border and a progress bar at the bottom.



Teacher takeaway

This section aligns with the first objective on the inner mechanics of fasting and how this sacrificial ritual helps us achieve our purpose of becoming more God-conscious. So even though fasting is a physical experience wherein a person restrains their physical and sexual appetites, its benefits are most importantly spiritual. The practice of saying “no” to the *nafs*’ inclinations in obedience to God strengthens the *ruh* and reorients a person’s entire being toward God. After understanding the spiritual benefits of fasting, students will now zoom out of the inner dimensions of the human heart to learn how fasting also benefits the human body and mind.



- Mind:* Choosing to fast requires will-power and mental stamina. It ultimately helps us to resist the need for instant gratification and instead allows us to pursue our long-term goals.
- Body:* A healthy body can keep a person well and healthy. The Prophet ﷺ informed us that our bodies have a right over us. When something has a right over us, we give it time, attention, and diligent care. Fasting is a manner of taking care of our bodies and becoming mindful of its needs.
- Soul:* Acts we fulfill mindfully, such as fasting, feed the needs of the soul and help to redefine and achieve our true purpose in life. Remind students that this component was explained in the first portion of this lesson and in activity **2.3**.

- Before proceeding to the next slide, inform students that they will use the framework of the mind, body, and soul to continue to understand the benefits of fasting. Students will apply their understanding of the benefits of fasting to the mind and body dimensions of the human self.

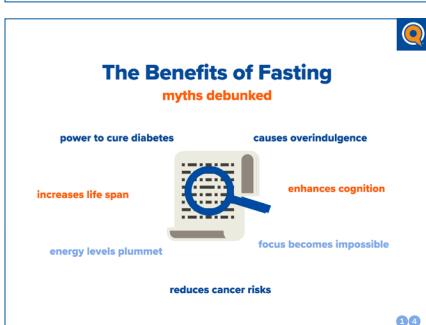


Slide 13 / The benefits of fasting: beyond spirituality (video)

- Proceed to slide thirteen. To highlight how fasting provides benefits in dimensions beyond spirituality, inform students that they will watch a short news clip which highlights some benefits of fasting based on various research and studies.
- Play the video and have students listen out for the benefits gained through fasting. After the video, ask students if any facts they heard were surprising to them and facilitate a brief discussion around the video.

Slide 14 / The benefits of fasting: myths debunked

- Proceed to slide fourteen and explain that there are many misconceptions surrounding the practice of fasting. Tell students they will engage in a brief discussion to explore common misconceptions in order to deepen their understanding of the benefits of fasting.
- Next, read each statement on the slide, ask students to share whether they believe the statement is true or false. If students believe a statement is true, they may stand up (alternatively, they may give a thumbs up). If they believe a statement is false, they can remain seated (alternatively, they may give a thumbs down).
- After reading through the statements and quickly gauging what students believe to be true or false, use the list below to help explain each statement:
 - Power to cure diabetes:** true; based on the results of several studies around Type 2 Diabetes patients and the increase in insulin production through fasting, many doctors prescribe intermittent fasting to help with the treatment and cure of diabetes.
 - Increases life span:** true; in studying multiple species, it has been discovered that moderating caloric intake can increase life expectancy by up to 50%.
 - Energy levels plummet:** false; cells will tap into an alternate energy source while a person is fasting. This alternate source of energy is body fat. Even in a lean person, there is plenty of body fat that can be used to support energy needs while fasting.



- d. Reduces cancer risks: true; the decrease in levels of insulin through fasting creates cancer preventing mechanisms in the body. Other studies have shown that a combination of fasting and chemotherapy slowed the progression of various cancers.
- e. Causes overindulgence in food: false; it is common to assume that because fasting causes hunger, it will lead to habits of overeating. However, this is a myth because studies have shown that those engaged in fasting regularly eat to their fill and still lose weight.
- f. Enhances cognition: true; fasting regularly can protect neurons from dysfunction and degeneration. Studies have shown fasting increases the growth of new nerve cells, which benefits brain function and can even help prevent Alzheimers.
- g. Focus becomes impossible: false; by adopting a regular practice of intermittent fasting, a person's cells adapt to using body fat for energy which stabilizes hunger hormones and increases focus.

4. Conclude the discussion by telling students the facts you shared with them are based on recent research and data. Inform them that this topic is becoming increasingly common in the scientific world due to the numerous mental and physical benefits of fasting.

Slide 15 / The benefits of fasting: an exploration through real-life scenarios

1. Proceed to slide fifteen and inform students they will participate in an activity which will have them explore the benefits of fasting through real-life scenarios. Explain that the characters in the scenarios are fictional. Some scenarios, however, are connected to research and data, while others are completely fictional and developed to draw connections to the experience of fasting.

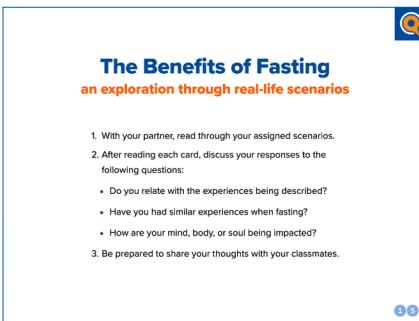
2. To complete this activity, have students pair up with a classmate and give each pair two scenario cards from **2.4 “Fasting Scenarios.”**

3. Give students a few minutes to read and discuss the two scenarios they were given with their partners. Students should then briefly reflect and make connections to what is being described. Ask them to consider the following questions:

- Do you relate with the experiences being described?
- Have you had similar experiences when fasting?
- How are the mind, body, or soul being impacted?

4. After students have read their scenarios and had a discussion around the questions with their partners, bring them back as a whole group to share their scenarios and their connections.

5. Next, explain that the purpose of reading through the scenarios and having a short discussion is to highlight how the Islamic ritual of fasting has many avenues through which the human can benefit. The scenarios highlight benefits in the physical, mental, and social capacity, all of which support the holistic well-being of the mind, body, and soul. 

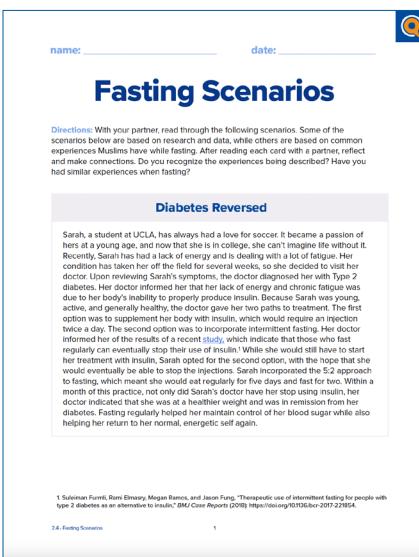


The Benefits of Fasting
an exploration through real-life scenarios

1. With your partner, read through your assigned scenarios.
2. After reading each card, discuss your responses to the following questions:

- Do you relate with the experiences being described?
- Have you had similar experiences when fasting?
- How are your mind, body, or soul being impacted?

3. Be prepared to share your thoughts with your classmates.



name: _____ date: _____

Fasting Scenarios

Directions: With your partner, read through the following scenarios. Some of the scenarios are based on research and data, while others are based on common experience. Make sure to read each scenario. After reading each card with a partner, reflect and make connections. Do you recognize the experiences being described? Have you had similar experiences when fasting?

Diabetes Reversed

Sarah, a student at UCLA, has always had a love for soccer. It became a passion of hers at a young age, and now that she is in college, she can't imagine life without it. Recently, Sarah has had a lack of energy and is dealing with a lot of fatigue. Her condition has taken her off the field for several weeks, so she decided to see her doctor. After reviewing her symptoms, the doctor diagnosed her with Type 2 diabetes. Her doctor informed her that her lack of energy and chronic fatigue was due to her body's inability to properly produce insulin. Because Sarah was young, active, and generally healthy, the doctor gave her two paths to recovery. The first option was to take medication to keep her body with insulin, which would require an injection twice a day. The second option was to incorporate intermittent fasting. Her doctor informed her of the results of a recent study, which indicate that those who fast regularly can eventually stop their use of insulin. While she would still need to start her treatment with insulin, she could slowly reduce her use over time, which would eventually be able to stop the injections. Sarah incorporated the 5:2 approach to fasting, which meant she would eat regularly for five days and fast for two. Within a month of this practice, not only did Sarah's doctor have her stop using insulin, her doctor also informed her that she was in remission from her diabetes. Fasting regularly helped her maintain control of her blood sugar while also helping her return to her normal, energetic self again.

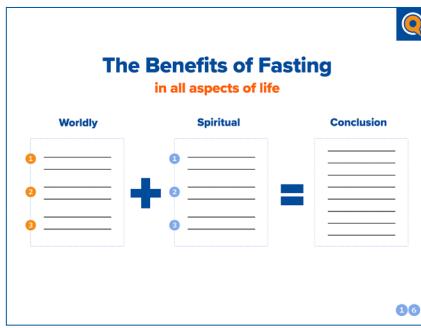
1. Sulaiman Faruqi, Rami Elshamy, Megan Barnes, and Jason Fung, "Therapeutic use of intermittent fasting for people with type 2 diabetes as an alternative to insulin," *BMJ Case Reports* (2018) <https://doi.org/10.1136/bcr-2017-221564>.

2.4 - Fasting Scenarios



Teacher takeaway

The purpose of the final section of this lesson is to highlight the manner in which rituals of sacrifice in Islam go beyond spiritual benefits. By exploring both worldly and spiritual benefits, we understand that although the sacrifice is done for God, we benefit ourselves. It is also important to note that sacrificing for the sake of God in Islam leads to gains in both this world and the hereafter without any sense of loss in either. In other words, there is not a disconnect between fulfilling acts that are good for us in this life and the hereafter.



name: _____ date: _____

Benefits of Fasting

in all aspects of life

Directions: To conclude the lesson, list three worldly and spiritual benefits of fasting. Reflect on your list and then answer the following question: As a conclusion as Muslims, we fast because we are commanded to do so by God (Surat al-Baqarah, 2:183). Although the act of fasting is done for God alone, how does the one completing the fast become the beneficiary? Your conclusion should include points about worldly and spiritual benefits, and reflections on how sensory deprivation calms and quiets the inner self.

Worldly	Spiritual	Conclusion
① _____	① _____	_____
② _____	② _____	_____
③ _____	③ _____	_____

2.5. Benefits of Fasting

1

Consolidation (5 min)

Slide 16 / Benefits of fasting: in all aspects of life (exit ticket)

1. Proceed to slide sixteen and pass out a copy of **2.5 “Benefits of Fasting.”** Have students work independently to complete the table using the information presented in this lesson.
2. Instruct students to write down three worldly benefits and three spiritual benefits attained through the ritual of fasting. Explain that their final task is to reflect on their lists and draw a conclusion. Read aloud the following guiding question to help students develop their conclusions:

a. *As Muslims, we fast because we were commanded to do so by God (Surat al-Baqarah, 2:183). Although the act of fasting is done for God alone, how does the one completing the fast benefit? Your conclusion should include points about worldly and spiritual benefits, and reflections on how sensory deprivation calms and quiets the inner self.*

name: _____ date: _____

Allah
(upward pull toward Allah, submission, and becoming the best version of yourself)

Worldly Distraction
(downward pull toward Shaytan, distraction, and becoming the worst version of yourself)

2.3- Attaining Taqwa

Lesson plan 2

Fasting of the mind, body, and soul

Stage 3: Assessments

Formative assessment

2.3 “Attaining Taqwa”

To formatively assess the first objective on the spiritual benefits of fasting, you may evaluate student responses to the final “conclude” question during the whole-class discussion. They should demonstrate the understanding that the physical act of fasting—more specifically, depriving oneself of sensory pleasure and stimulation for extended periods of time—strengthens our spiritual sense and contributes to a heightened awareness of God and vigilance toward His commandments (i.e., *taqwa*).

2.5 “Benefits of Fasting”

To formatively assess the second objective on the benefits of fasting, evaluate the lists students developed and how their listed benefits brought them to their conclusions. Students should demonstrate an understanding of the holistic benefits of fasting by drawing connections between the worldly and spiritual benefits. They should ultimately realize that the sacrifice of fasting does not benefit God, but benefits us as individuals.

Summative assessment

2.6 “Fasting for Taqwa”

To summatively assess both objectives from this lesson, students will complete a voluntary Islamic fast in order to demonstrate their understanding of the holistic benefits of fasting. There are three steps to completing this assignment:

- Step One: Students will reference **2.2 “Fasting at a Glance”** to choose one of the recommended days of fasting and determine the day they will complete their Islamic fast.
- Step Two: Students will use the diagram to record the holistic benefits they hope to gain through their fast. They will also self-reflect on other means by which they commonly satiate their nafs, and then abstain from those sources of stimulation and pleasure during the course of their fast.
- Step Three: In the final stage of this assignment, students will make a comparison to note if fasting after understanding its holistic benefits impacted how they felt and if it was different from their past experiences with fasting.

name: _____ date: _____

Fasting for Taqwa

Directions: In this lesson, we covered the Islamic ritual of fasting, its divine purpose, and the inbuilt benefits we receive from fasting—the most important of them being *taqwa* (God-consciousness). When we restrain our nafs from food, drink, physical pleasure and stimulation, our spiritual sense strengthens as a result. Therefore, we are the ultimate beneficiaries of our sacrifice both physically and spiritually.

Challenge: Using **2.2 “Fasting at a Glance”** as a guide, choose one of the recommended fasting days to complete this assignment. Your challenge is to maximize the fast by identifying and abstaining from other ways that you personally satisfy your nafs with alternative sensory stimulation and pleasure. Along with abstaining from food and drink, you may also:

- Abstain from screen time
- Abstain from idle speech
- Abstain from junk food and/or overeating at iftar time
- Swap leisure activities with worship

Step one: Determine the day that you will complete your fast: _____

Step two: Use the model below to record the holistic benefits you hope to attain from your fast:

The diagram shows a central human figure with four boxes connected to it by arrows. The top-left box is labeled 'Mind' and contains the text 'What mental benefits do you hope to attain from this fast?'. The top-right box is labeled 'Soul' and contains the text 'What spiritual benefits do you hope to attain from this fast?'. The bottom-left box is labeled 'Body' and contains the text 'What physical benefits do you hope to attain from the fast?'. The bottom-right box is labeled 'Lower Self' and contains the text 'List 1-2 sources of stimulation/pleasure that your nafs routinely craves. You will practice saying "no" to your nafs when it seeks out this stimulation.'

2.6- Fasting for Taqwa



Teacher's note

If there are students in the class who cannot fast for medical reasons, take some time to privately explain that they can still complete the activity. While they may not be able to abstain from food and drink, the primary purpose of the activity is to have students understand the impact of restraining desires from our nafs. Even in the case where a person cannot fast from food and drink, they may take initiative to fast from other desires and still feel spiritually strengthened.



Instructions and activities

Lesson 1

Lesson 2

Lesson 3 • Zakat: More than just charity



Essential questions

How can *zakat* help purify the self/soul?

How does the institution of *zakat* facilitate a collective community?

What is the relationship between someone's inward state and the formation of a community?



Key vocabulary

Zakat (alms)

the obligatory annual transfer of ownership of 2.5 percent of a person's excess wealth to specified groups of people (e.g., for the socio-economic welfare of the underserved and underprivileged)

Nisab (threshold figure)

the amount of excess money or wealth that obligates an individual to pay *zakat*

Lesson plan 3

Zakat: More than just charity

Stage 1: Big ideas and desired results

Lesson overview

The last lesson of this unit turns to our second example of a ritual of sacrifice: *zakat*. Students will be given a conceptual framework to understand and begin to appreciate the Islamic ritual of almsgiving. Unlike fasting, *zakat* requires Muslims to sacrifice a material object when they give away a portion of their wealth. In order to appreciate the implications of this obligation, students begin with an introspection on their personal attitudes and interactions with wealth before considering how contemporary societal values regarding money contrasts with the Islamic worldview toward wealth.

To bring these lessons to life, students will participate in the act of giving *zakat* to recognize its utility in producing a collective community. While the amount of *zakat* given is based on a person's wealth and thus differs between individuals, the precise amount donated is less important than the person's sincerity when giving. Two individuals, as a result, can donate vastly different numerical amounts to *zakat* but reap in the same rewards. By modeling the act of giving *zakat*—even though they may not be required to give *zakat* at this stage of their lives—students will nevertheless appreciate how *zakat* and the Islamic worldview of wealth allows individuals to utilize wealth as a means of drawing nearer to God.

The concluding section of this lesson and unit will lead students to understand that the Islamic worldview of sacrifice is a mindset. No matter how much or how little a person possesses of time, strength, and wealth, those who sacrifice whatever they have will see the rewards of their efforts both in this life and the next. Students will leave this unit appreciating the cosmic alignment between one's inner purity and its reflection toward a more beautiful outward life. The inner beauties attained through the practice of the Islamic rituals of sacrifice produce tangible benefits in this life along with God's promise of an infinite reward in the hereafter.

Learning objectives

Toward the completion of this lesson, students should be able to:

- ① Recognize that everything is the property of God and we are only the caretakers of our wealth (*rizq*). **(cognitive)**
- ② Understand that *zakat* is a means of purifying one's excess wealth. **(cognitive)**
- ③ Identify how blessings like wealth can be vehicles to finding God's Love. **(cognitive and affective)**
- ④ Recognize the beauty in sacrifice through an application of sacrifice and internalization of the Islamic worldview on wealth. **(affective)**



Teacher's note

To prepare for this lesson in advance, print out copies of **3.1 “Personal Attitudes Toward Wealth,”** one half-sheet per student. Cut each half sheet along the dotted line and then fold it horizontally along the thick, bolded line. The final result should appear as a hundred dollar bill on one side and the quick-write prompt on the other side.

Stage 2: Learning plan

Total time: 60 min

Lesson plan outline

- Section 1, **slides 1-7:** comparing the secular worldview toward wealth with the Islamic worldview and defining the ritual of giving *zakat* (alms)
- Section 2, **slides 8-12:** identifying the benefits of *zakat* to create a more cohesive community

Supplies/equipment

- Lesson plan 3 presentation (for teacher)
- Projector/screen/computer/internet connection to display presentation and play videos
- Printouts of 3.1 (half-sheet for each student, folded along the bold, horizontal line)
- Printouts of 3.2, 3.4, and 3.5 for each student
- Printout of 3.2b (for teacher)
- Print and cut out cards on 3.3, enough for one card per student
- Calculators
- “Money” Bags for 3.3 labeled with amount and card number
 - To prepare these for students, refer to slide nine. Each card has a corresponding amount of wealth that is allocated. Common classroom items will be used to represent the wealth as follows:
 - \$1 = 1 paperclip
 - Index cards labeled as \$20, \$50, and \$100
 - Each student must have a minimum of 20 paperclips (\$20), the remaining money should be distributed in the bags with the index cards, with the exception of card 6 which will need 30 paperclips and one \$20 index card.



Opening activity (10 min)

Section 1 • Slides 1-7 | Comparing the secular worldview vs Islamic worldview toward wealth and the ritual of *zakat* (alms)

Slide 1 / Let’s talk wealth: viral TikTok video about Jeff Bezos’ excess wealth

Viral TikTok Video

Turn & Talk: Do you think that Jeff Bezos is entitled to do with this money as he pleases? Why or why not? Explain.



1. Open slide one. To begin the lesson, remind students that the previous lesson explored the sacrificial ritual of *sawm* (fasting) and the holistic benefits we gain from such a sacrifice. Explain that this lesson focuses on the ritual of giving *zakat* (alms).
2. Next, tell students that they are going to watch a video about Amazon’s CEO Jeff Bezos. Bezos is currently one of the wealthiest individuals in the world, with an estimated net worth of 203 billion dollars (as of July 2021). Play the embedded video.

3. Turn & Talk: After the video is finished, ask students to turn to an elbow partner and discuss the following question: “Do you think that Jeff Bezos is entitled to do with this money as he pleases? Why or why not? Explain.”

4. Give students a couple of minutes to discuss their responses, and then call on some of them to share their responses with the whole class. As students share, prompt them to touch on what they believe is the purpose of wealth and the role that it should play in a person’s life.

You receive a **hundred dollar bill** after completing a few hours of work. Are you entitled to do with this money as you please?

OWNERSHIP
PURPOSE
USE

What would you do with this money?

21 - Personal Attitudes Toward Wealth

Two Worldviews Toward Wealth

The All-Mine Worldview

GOD

a portion belonging to others



Teacher's note

This slide is to introduce students to two opposing worldviews on wealth and money. In today's hustle culture (captured by the mottos "rise and grind" and "the grind don't stop"), we are pushed to sacrifice all our time and energy for the accumulation of money. It is common to hear phrases of money-entitlement, such as "I earned it," "my hard-earned money," and "it's all mine." However, this is in contrast to the Islamic conception of wealth as it will be discussed below.

Learning activity (50 min)

Slide 2 / Personal attitudes toward wealth: quick-write activity

- Proceed to slide two. While passing out copies of **3.1 "Personal Attitudes Toward Wealth"** (presented to each student as a hundred dollar bill with the quick-write prompt folded onto the backside) tell students that they have just received a hundred dollar bill after completing a few hours of work. Pose the question (**3.1**): "Are you entitled to do with this money as you please?" Instruct students to think about the three displayed terms—"ownership," "purpose," and "use"—as they begin to formulate their responses.
- Give students two minutes to silently record their responses to the quick-write. After time is up, invite many students to share what they wrote with the whole class. Their responses will capture students' shared attitudes toward wealth that may or may not be influenced by the broader Western culture.
- During the course of the class discussion, refer back to the viral TikTok video on slide one and explain that while the majority of people will never amass billions of dollars like Jeff Bezos, each of us will experience some amount of excess wealth throughout our lives. Whether we have a billion or just one hundred dollars, our personal attitudes toward, and our behavior with, our money is determined by our worldviews or belief systems.

Slide 3 / Two worldviews toward wealth: whole-class discussion

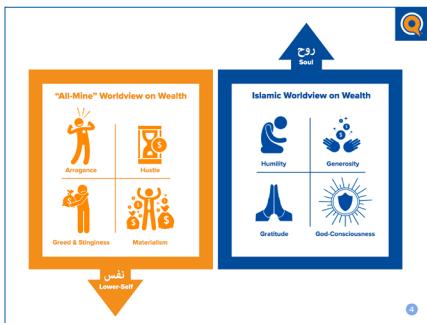
- Continue to slide three to display two worldviews toward wealth: on the left is an image of a flexing man carrying a hundred dollar bill that reads "ALL MINE" in bold script. Juxtaposed to that is the image of a man kneeling, receiving a hundred dollar bill from God. One thick slice of the hundred dollar bill reads "a gift, a test, and a responsibility" and the second thin slice reads "a portion belonging to others."
- Ask students to spend a moment reflecting on these two visuals: what do you think the individual in the visual believes about wealth ownership, purpose, and use? And which of the two individuals do you relate to more (based on what you recorded on the **3.1** quick-write)? As students share their thoughts, provide them with the following commentary about how each of the two individuals views wealth ownership, purpose, and use:

a. Left visual, the all-mine worldview: The economic culture that dominates our secular society today sanctifies the individual self and the right to maximize happiness by acting in one's own self-interest (to the exclusion of others). The base of this individualistic, "all-mine" culture is the core belief that the wealth we possess is purely our own, and its purpose is to satisfy our immediate needs and wants and maximize our carnal pleasures. Therefore, every person is free to spend or hoard his wealth as they wish, with little regard for the interest of others. This mindset toward wealth results in statements like "This money is all mine," "I earned it," and "I can spend it or hoard it as I please."

b. Right visual, Islamic worldview: Stemming from the Islamic worldview is the belief that our wealth—like the blessings of free time and good health—is a gift from God, a test of gratitude, and a responsibility for which we will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment. God is also the true owner of our wealth and, therefore, He alone has the ultimate authority to dictate its purpose in our lives and how we should use it. As

for the use of wealth, God teaches us to enjoy it in a manner that is permissible and beloved to God, and to distribute a portion that rightfully belongs to others. This is because Islam values the economic wellbeing of individuals and societies [as students will learn in the upcoming instruction on *zakat* (alms)].

3. Next, point to the visual on the right and direct student attention to the thin sliver detached from the hundred dollar bill. Tell students that, in Islam, this portion of our wealth that belongs rightfully to others is what we give up in *zakat* (alms) each year.



Slide 4 / Islamic vs. “all-mine” worldview on wealth

1. Transition to slide four to display the two diagrams on the slide. Tell students that the worldview we internalize about wealth dictates our behavior with it. Therefore, the amount of wealth we each have isn't as important as our relationship with that wealth.
2. To concretize this point to students, direct student attention to the box on the left pointing downward toward the *nafs* (lowly self). Explain that when our internal beliefs toward wealth are self-serving and driven by our *nafs*, it could manifest in the following ways:
 - Arrogance:** Believing that we acquire our wealth through talent and effort alone breeds arrogance over those who possess less than us. It also leads to the assumption that everyone is solely responsible for their financial state (without factoring in God's will and power), and that the less fortunate are “lazy,” “irresponsible,” and “without talent.”
 - Hustle:** The belief that our purpose is to acquire more material possessions and maximize our material comforts breeds a hustle culture. That results in a sacrifice of our time, effort, health, and relationships for the acquisition of wealth. When we constantly work and look for opportunities to expand our wealth, it becomes our sole priority and takes us away from the things in life that really matter or bring us true happiness. Rather than looking to those that are less fortunate and being grateful for what we have, we become competitive by constantly looking to those that have more.
 - Stinginess & Greed:** Believing in the “all-mine” worldview breeds a sense of entitlement over how we use our money. We may assume the right to hoard our money (stinginess) and the right to acquire more at all cost (greed), even if it harms others.
 - Materialism:** Believing in the “all-mine” worldview may cause us to prioritize money and our material possessions over other intangible, more valuable things. In this materialistic, hyper-consumerist culture, it is common to have our self-worth and success be contingent on the amount of wealth we have. This leads to material competition over who owns more, and an unhealthy obsession with constant upgrades to the newest and latest gadget on the market.
3. Next, direct their attention to the box on the right pointing upward toward the *ruh* (soul). Explain that the internalization of an Islamic worldview should naturally lead to the following behaviors and characteristics:



Teacher's note

As you go through the material below, ask students to reflect on whether or not the following behaviors and characteristics represent them on an individual level.

- a. Humility:** Believing that God alone owns our wealth and distributes it as He wills should instill within us humility. This is especially true when we have an excess of wealth. As a gift from God, the wealth we have isn't a product of individual effort, but rather, is from God's wisdom and divine decree. This belief should counter any feeling of arrogance when comparing our wealth to those that are less wealthy, and any feeling of resentment/bitterness when comparing ourselves to those that are more wealthy.
- b. Generosity:** Believing that our wealth is a responsibility for which we will each be held accountable should prompt us to spend from it on those less fortunate and to give willingly to righteous causes for the sake of God.
- c. Gratitude:** Believing that our wealth is a gift from God should instill within us an attitude of gratitude. God chose us to carry this wealth, which is unlike the common attitude that we rightfully earned and are entitled to our wealth due to our own talents and efforts.
- d. God-consciousness:** Believing that our wealth is a test of submission from God should encourage us to use it in accordance with His shari'ah, i.e., avoiding any kind of transaction that He prohibited and using our wealth in ways that He permitted.

4. Conclude by quickly reminding students of the three components of a ritual of sacrifice: the **worldview** that gives a ritual its purpose and meaning, the **ritual of sacrifice** itself, and the **benefits** that individuals hope to procure from that ritual of sacrifice. The sacrificial ritual of *zakat* (and the fourth pillar of Islam) derives its purpose and meaning from this Islamic worldview toward wealth.

Slide 5 / The ritual of zakat: a sacrifice in object

1. Proceed to slide five and instruct students on the ritual of *zakat* using the following notes:
 - a. Linguistically**, *zakat* means growth, increase, and purification.
 - b. Technically**, *zakat* as an Islamic ritual of sacrifice means the obligatory, annual transfer of 2.5 percent of a person's excess wealth to specified groups of people (e.g., for the socio-economic welfare of the underserved and underprivileged). This obligatory charity is the third pillar of Islam and must be given by every Muslim adult of sound mind, male or female, with a minimum of excess wealth held for a year.
 - c. The types of zakat** include *zakat ul-mal* (described above) and *zakat ul-fitr*. The latter is an obligatory charity given at the end of Ramadan on behalf of every Muslim, young or old, male or female, rich or poor. Although traditionally paid in food items or food staples mentioned by the hadith of the Prophet ﷺ, payment in monetary value is now the widely accepted method amongst scholars. Charity organizations then convert that value to food staples to deliver to those in need on the day of Eid. In the US, the value currently comes out to around \$12 per person. One of the objectives of this *zakat* is to create an equilibrium of gift-giving by all Muslims who fasted in Ramadan.
 - d. End by defining *nisab*, which is the minimum requirement of excess wealth or money that obligates an individual to pay *zakat*. By this



definition, every Muslim who has wealth exceeding a specific minimum, known as *nisab*, and maintains it for more than one lunar year is obligated to give zakat. Based on the price of gold in 2021, the *nisab* is currently priced at \$3,913 USD.

A slide titled "Calculating Zakat" featuring a blue banner at the top with a magnifying glass icon. The main text is "Calculating Zakat". Below it, "N = \$3,913" is shown. A bracket over "\$5,253" indicates the total amount. The formula "(N + remaining money) x 0.025 = zakat" is displayed. An answer box says "Answer: _____. The bottom features a teal stick figure giving a gold bag with a dollar sign (\$) to a large orange arrow pointing right, which then points to a row of icons representing various types of buildings and objects.

Slide 6 | Calculating zakat: student practice

- Once students have understood the meaning and mechanics of *zakat* and the definition of *nisab*, continue to slide six to give them an opportunity to practice calculating *zakat*.
 - Next, instruct students to pull out a calculator and then read aloud the following scenario for which they will calculate *zakat*: “You have a stable amount of \$5,253 stored in savings for a lunar year. Having passed the *nisab*, you are now obligated to pay *zakat*. Calculate 2.5% of this money.”
 - Tell students that the equation to calculate *zakat* is as follows: N , the *nisab*, plus whatever remains of their money (in this case, it would amount to \$5,253) multiplied by 0.025.
 - Once students have calculated the answer (i.e., \$131.33), explain that this amount would be given to an Islamic institution or organization that then administers this money to eligible social groups specified by the Shariah.
 - Optional: As an additional practice, ask students to calculate what Jeff Bezos, whose net worth is \$203 billion as of 2021, would owe in *zakat* (answer: \$5.075 billion).

BIG QUESTIONS:

- understanding the divine objectives and benefits of zakat
- How does the sacrificial ritual of zakat help you fulfill your purpose before your Creator?
- How does the sacrificial ritual of zakat benefit you individually in this life and the next?
- How does the sacrificial ritual of zakat benefit your community?

Slide 7 | Divine objectives and benefits of zakat: group exploration

1. Proceed to slide seven and inform students that *zakat*—the defined practice of giving up a portion of our excess wealth to a prescribed group of underserved, underprivileged people—derives its purpose and meaning from the Islamic worldview of wealth. And the benefits we procure when engaging in this sacrificial ritual are both worldly and otherworldly, individual and communal.
 2. Pass out copies of **3.2 “Zakat: Divine Objectives and Benefits”** and tell students that, in order to further understand this Islamic worldview and the benefits of *zakat*, they will complete a group activity around three large questions:

a. Worldview | Me & My Creator: “How does the sacrificial ritual of zakat help you fulfill your purpose before your Creator?”

b. Benefit | Me & Myself: “How does the sacrificial ritual of zakat benefit you individually, in this life and the next?”

c. **Benefit | Me & My Community:** “How does the sacrificial ritual of zakat benefit your community?”

3. Set up the group exploration

- a. First, divide the class into three large groups. Assign the first group the first section, “Me & My Creator.” Assign the second group the second section, “Me & Myself.” Assign the third group the third section, “Me & My Community.” You may ask students within each large group to form smaller groups of three while completing the activity.
 - b. Next, read aloud the activity directions (**3.2**): “With your group, study the



Teacher takeaway

The purpose of this section is to provide students with a conceptual framework with which to understand and begin to appreciate the Islamic ritual of giving *zakat*. Students begin first with an honest introspection of their personal attitudes and interactions with wealth. They are prompted to reflect on how aligned their attitudes and interactions are with the Islamic worldview toward wealth, i.e., the belief that God is the true owner of our wealth, that He alone can dictate its purpose and its proper use, and that a portion of the wealth we are gifted belongs rightfully to various underserved and underprivileged groups in society. Ultimately, after their group study of various Qur'anic verses on wealth, students learn that the act of sacrificing their wealth in the manner prescribed by God's law benefits them individually and their communities at large. As members of a highly individualistic, hyper-capitalist economic culture, students may find that the commentary around *zakat* differs from common Western attitudes toward wealth. Modern attitudes toward money stem from the belief that the acquisition of wealth is an end in itself and its purpose is to maximize individual pleasure. Additionally, both extremes—obsessive hoarding and excessive, mindless spending—are perceived as a matter of choice, regardless of their consequences on the broader community. The Islamic conception of wealth and the ritual of giving *zakat* reorients individuals toward the middle ground, where both the economic needs of the individual and the economic needs of the community are holistically addressed. This ritual is also a fulfillment of humankind's higher purpose by giving individuals an avenue to submit to God with their wealth.

In the upcoming section, students will learn how *zakat* has the potential to help those in need and help build communities where everyone's needs are met.

verses in your assigned section. Pay attention to the bolded words and take notes on how they help you understand the worldview that gives *zakat* its meaning, as well as the benefits of giving *zakat*. Then, use your notes to help you formulate a final answer to your section's 'Big Question' at the end. Be prepared to share your notes with the whole class. You will explore the 'Imagine' prompt after the whole-class discussion."

- c. Then, once each group is settled and ready to work, set the timer to 7-8 minutes.
4. After time is up, take out the teacher's copy of **3.2b "Zakat: Divine Objectives and Benefits"** and facilitate a whole-class discussion around the three Big Questions, beginning with group one, "Me & My Creator." Call on members of each group to share two things: 1) their final answer to their Big Question on **3.2**, and 2) how the bolded words helped them formulate their answer. While each group presents, students from the remaining two groups should take notes on what they learn during the discussion.
5. While each group is presenting, use the guided responses below (as well as the verse commentary on **3.2b**) to supplement and further deepen the class discussion:
 - a. **Me & My Creator:** "How does the sacrificial ritual of *zakat* help you fulfill your purpose before your Creator?"
The worldview/belief that gives my *zakat* purpose and meaning is that Allah owns me and my wealth, and He commanded that a portion of it be paid to various underserved and underprivileged groups in my community. Giving up 2.5 percent of my excess wealth, then, is an act of spiritual devotion and an expression of complete surrender to His will.
 - b. **Me & Myself:** "How does the sacrificial ritual of *zakat* benefit you individually, in this life and the next?"
The ritual of *zakat* purifies my wealth of excess and curbs my human tendency toward greed, miserliness, selfishness and hoarding. It also trains me to be concerned for the socio-economic welfare of the underserved and underprivileged groups in my community.
 - c. **Me & My Community:** "How does the sacrificial ritual of *zakat* benefit your community?"
The ritual of *zakat* funnels some of my excess wealth toward the economic welfare of the poor, the needy, the *zakat* collectors, Muslim converts, those in debt, those struggling in the path of Allah, and the stranded travelers. It also alleviates some of the economic inequality and tension between the rich and poor.

Slide 8 / Imagine: envisioning a world where wealth is seen as a moral liability

1. After wrapping up the class discussion, proceed to slide eight and read aloud the "Imagine" prompt: "...what if the wealthiest populations of the world viewed their excess wealth as a moral liability? What do you envision would happen? What kind of society would that produce? Give students a minute to think silently about this prompt and then call on many of them to share their thoughts with the whole class.
2. As students share, explain that the Islamic worldview toward wealth, the ritual of giving *zakat*, and benefits we procure from this ritual (worldly and otherworldly, individual and communal) are ideals toward which we should

Imagine

...what if the wealthiest populations of the world viewed their excess wealth as a moral liability? What do you envision would happen? What kind of society would that produce?





Teacher's note

The materials for the upcoming activity should be prepared before class. The cards from **3.3** should be cut out and separated for students to take one, and the bags representing the wealth associated with each card should be filled and labeled. Prepping before class will ease the facilitation of the activity.

Wealth as a Moral Liability
reframing the "all mine" worldview

Directions:

- Grab a game card and the corresponding money bag. Then, place your card down on the template on **3.3**.
- As each institution is called out, place one paper clip on top of the image of the institution.
- As paper clips are placed down on the card, make observations about the wealth you were originally allocated.

Cards	Wealth
1	\$520
2	\$160
3	\$400
4	\$280
5	\$100
6	\$50

name: _____ date: _____

Card One

Hospital	Food Pantry	Orphans	Food Pantry
Orphans	Mosque	X	Schools
Schools	Food Pantry	Mosque	X
Mosque	X	Shelter	Hospital

3.3 - Potential Benefits of Zakat

Card One \$520 **Card Two \$160** **Card Three \$400**
Card Four \$280 **Card Five \$100** **Card Six \$50**

Turn & Talk
When comparing your card to your classmate's cards, what are some things you notice?

all aspire. What happens when those ideals have been abandoned, and how does *zakat* support the socioeconomic welfare of a society?

Slide 9 / Wealth as a moral liability: reframing the "all-mine" worldview

- Proceed to slide nine and inform students that they will participate in an activity that will simulate a society with varying socioeconomic statuses. Explain that the cards they will receive have six different institutions pictured (food pantry, homeless shelter, schools, orphans, mosques, and hospitals). These are examples of where *zakat* can be distributed in a community to help stabilize those in need of financial assistance. For the purpose of this activity, there are only six examples on the card; however, it should be noted that *zakat* can be distributed in many other ways. This activity will help address the reflection question students had on slide eight - What would happen if the wealthiest populations of a society viewed their excess wealth a moral liability?
- Next, begin setting up the activity by passing out one card from **3.3** and its corresponding money bag to each student.
- Once students have their materials, using the teacher call-out cards, randomly call out one institution at a time. Tell students that if they hear an institution that is called out on their card, they should place a paper clip on top of the box. If the same institution appears more than once, then students should cover it each time it appears. If an institution is called out, and it does not appear on a student's card, then they should not place anything down.
- Remind students to try to draw connections between the wealth they are given and the amount being given back to the community. This point will be discussed in the next slide.
- After all six institutions have been called out, tell students that in the next slide, they will have the opportunity to compare their cards to their classmate's in order to distinguish the relationship between the wealth they were allocated and the money that was distributed.

Slide 10 / Turn & Talk: card and wealth comparison

- Proceed to slide ten and explain that the purpose of this slide is to give students a chance to compare the card they received to their classmate's cards. The visual on the slide represents the other cards given out to their classmates, the wealth they were allocated, and the wealth given back to the community (represented by the paper clips). Give students about thirty seconds to observe the other cards and compare them to the card they were given for this activity.
- After students have had time to compare their cards to the others, have them turn and talk with an elbow partner and respond to the following question:
 - When comparing your card to your classmate's cards, what are some things you notice? This comparison should lead students to understand that the greater amount of wealth a person has, results in a greater responsibility to give back to the community.
 - After discussing the question, ask a few students to share their observations. Ensure the following points come up during the discussion:

- In this activity, the individual with card one had the most wealth (\$520); therefore, they gave the most amount of *zakat*.
 - In the case of card six, the individual with the least wealth was not required to give back to the community because they did not have an excess of wealth. In other words, they did not reach *nisab*.
 - Reassure students that everyone, regardless of wealth status, has an equal opportunity to gain reward from God. Even for the one that cannot financially fulfill the obligation of *zakat*, still has an opportunity to earn reward through other avenues. For example, if a person cannot give back to the community financially, they can give back by donating their time or skills to the disenfranchised. Ultimately, whether a person is rich or poor, they will not be judged on the monetary amount given. Instead, they will be judged on their sincerity and willingness to engage in the struggle of giving for the sake of God.
4. Conclude this discussion by asking students to reflect on the following question: How does it make you feel to know there is disparity in wealth between individuals in a community? It is a natural response to feel the disparities in wealth seem to be unfair; these types of concerns should not be discouraged. On one level, this can be a byproduct of an unjust economic system; however, it is often wrongly associated as an unjust act of God. By considering God's vantage point, students will consider how the Islamic worldview on wealth helps us better reconcile wealth disparities. Ultimately, students will be able to recognize that we do not question God's motives. Instead, we reflect internally on our response to the circumstances God has willed.



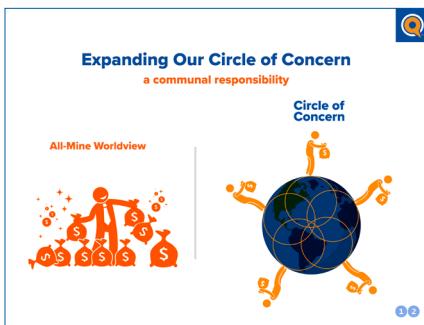
أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَسْتُطِعُ أَنْزَلُقْ لَمَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَيَقْبِرُ

"Do they not know that God provides abundantly for anyone He wills and gives sparingly to anyone He wills?"
[Surat az-Zumar, 39:52]

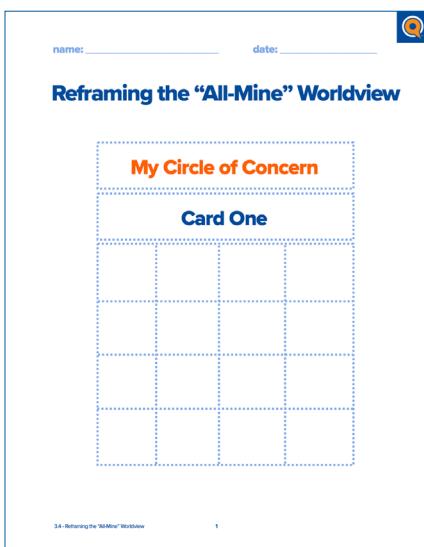
Slide 11 / God's vantage point on wealth: considering His divine decree

- To further reflect on the activity, proceed to slide eleven. Read aloud the verse on the slide.
- Explain that while we do not question the world that God produces, we do recognize that some are given more than others and there is a Divine wisdom for it that is unrecognizable to us. Tell students that from this verse we are also reminded of God's vantage point, specifically that He only acts in accordance with His Wisdom and Knowledge. God's Will is deliberate and He knows what is ultimately good for us when it comes to the amount of a particular blessing we are given. Whether we are given a billion dollars or one hundred, if the goal is to meet God with the best internal state, then it is not about the quantity of blessings we receive in this world, but rather the quality of our hearts as we respond to these blessings.
- Next, remind students that *zakat* is a means to purify one's self. This purification can be achieved through the internalization of the virtues attained with the Islamic worldview on wealth (humility, generosity, gratitude, and God-consciousness), and not necessarily on the amount of wealth one gives. A person is not judged or deemed worthy based on wealth or any other worldly prosperity, but instead is judged by their response to the wealth they own in their action and internal state. In the next slide, students will notice that by internalizing such virtues, this inner beauty manifests outwardly by producing a beautiful community that makes each individual feel included and taken care of by the collective efforts of everyone.

Slide 12 / Expanding our circle of concern: a communal responsibility



1. Proceed to slide twelve and remind students of the question they were asked earlier: What if the wealthiest populations of the world viewed their excess wealth as a moral liability?
2. Continue by explaining that a person's circle of concern represents a wide range of concerns that are important to an individual. The visual on the slide indicates how *zakat* pushes each of us to expand our circle of concern through the obligation of giving a portion of our excess wealth to different societal needs (e.g., food pantry, hospital, orphans, schools, mosques, or homeless shelters) as a means to take care of the basic needs in a community.
3. Conclude the discussion of the image on slide twelve by having students reflect on how the quality of a community reflects the inner states of its individuals. Point out the individual off to the side of the image. This is representative of the all-mine worldview whose circle of concern only encompasses him or herself. Briefly ask students to reflect on the type of community formed when each individual has internalized the virtues of the all-mine worldview: arrogance, hustle, materialism, and stinginess.
4. Next, ask students to reflect on how the virtues of an all-mine worldview could impact how the poor and wealthy view one another. What type of community would this produce?
5. Have students then reflect on the inner purity achieved through *zakat* and the Islamic worldview of wealth and how that gets reflected outwards in the formation of a community. The inner beauty of realizing humility, generosity, and gratitude reflects outwards to produce a beautiful community where each individual feels valued and taken care of, despite their wealth status. By sincerely recognizing the responsibilities toward a community, there is little potential remaining for individuals to feel animosity toward the wealthy or the poor.



6. Next, give each student handout **3.4 “Reframing the ‘All-Mine’ Worldview,”** and allow them to have a few minutes to respond to the reflection questions.
7. After students have had an opportunity to review over the questions on **3.4**, using the notes below, facilitate the discussion around the activity:
 - a. **The relationship between distributed and remaining wealth:** If students haven't made the connection on their own, point out that the relationship between the wealth they distributed and what remained was 2.5%. For example, Card One had an allocated wealth in the amount of \$520, that student placed down 13 paper clips (equivalent to \$13) which represents 2.5% of the wealth they were allocated. This is to point out how little 2.5% is in comparison to the wealth we may have and the impact it has on a community.
 - b. **Viewing wealth as a moral liability:** In the activity, the cards students were given represent a growing “circle of concern”. When shifting from the “all-mine” worldview, we begin to understand that wealth is gifted to us by God, and we are responsible to use our excess wealth to take care of those in need. As a result, the circle of concern expands to include services most needed, which then stabilizes society and can potentially produce a strong-knit community of love and support.



Teacher takeaway

This section highlights the benefit of shifting from an “all mine” worldview to one that expands a person’s individual circle of concern. Everything we are obligated to fulfill has a moral and Divine wisdom that we may not see immediately. In the case of *zakat*, God is requiring us to contribute a mere 2.5% of excess wealth back to society. While we may not realize the impact of a small amount of wealth being circulated, it has the potential to balance and stabilize the needs of a community that may have individuals who are lacking basic sustenance. By participating in this activity, students noticed that some were required to give a larger portion of their wealth back to the community while others were not obligated to give anything at all. This further emphasizes the point that the amount of money a person can give back to the community is irrelevant when being judged by God. Provision is given by God either abundantly or sparingly, for wisdoms unaware to mankind. The amount of money one gives is not used to judge the worth of an individual; instead, judgment is placed on the state of a person’s heart and their sincerity while giving. *Zakat* can help fulfill the basic needs of all individuals. Additionally, it can create a community of love and support. The concluding section of this lesson and unit will lead students to understand that the Islamic worldview of sacrifice is an equally required mindset for the one who possesses a billion dollars or just one hundred. No matter how much or how little a person possesses of time, strength, and wealth, the rewards of sacrifices are seen both in this life and the next. The inner beauties attained through the practice of the Islamic rituals of sacrifice produce tangible benefits in this life along with God’s promise of an infinite reward in the hereafter.



**مَثُلُ الَّذِينَ يُنفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَّ تَرِكُ
حَبَّةً أَنْبَتَ سَبْعَ سَابِلَاتٍ فِي كُلِّ سُبْطَةٍ مَا تَهُدِّهُ حَتَّىٰ
وَاللَّهُ يُضَعِّفُ لِمَنِ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وَسِعٌ عَلَيْهِ**

“Those who spend their wealth in God’s cause are like grains of corn that produce seven ears, each bearing a hundred grains. God gives multiple increases to whoever He wishes: He is Limitless and All-Knowing.” [Surat al-Baqarah, 2:261]



Teacher’s note

In the final activity for this lesson, students will have the opportunity to implement the Islamic worldview on wealth by using their own belongings. The following slide helps contextualize the act of giving for the sake of God and will frame the mindset for students to complete **3.5 “Winning Through Sacrifice.”**

c. A society with an “all-mine” worldview:

Remind students of the negative characteristics that arise from having an “all-mine” worldview discussed earlier in this lesson. If our internal beliefs toward wealth are self-serving and driven by the *nafs*, it could ultimately manifest into traits such as arrogance, greed, stinginess, or materialism. Not only are these characteristics self-serving, but they also result in one overlooking and neglecting those in need.

d. Considering the virtues of an Islamic worldview on wealth:

When it comes to fulfilling the obligation of *zakat*, there is a minimum amount of excess wealth that should be met in order to participate, known as *nisab*. Some, like those with the wealth from card six, do not have excess wealth to give back to the community. Therefore, they are not obligated to pay *zakat*. Others, like the individuals in card one, are obligated to give more because they have a larger amount of excess wealth. God does not judge an individual based on the amount of wealth they are able to contribute to *zakat*. Regardless of the amount, God judges an individual based on their righteous actions and deeds, and the state of their heart when they give in charity.

Consolidation (5 min)

Slide 13 / God’s promise: spending for His sake

1. To wrap up this lesson and the unit as a whole, proceed to slide.

a. Read aloud the displayed verse and its translation.



Explain to students that this verse reminds us that when we sacrifice our time, our strength, and our wealth sincerely for God’s sake, the reward and benefit we procure as a result is *exponential*. We are the ultimate beneficiaries, in this life and the next. Internalizing this reality will motivate us to sacrifice even the little that we possess because we know that Allah will multiply and increase what we’ve spent. The one who sacrifices for the sake of God is never at a loss. God promises to increase and reward us for our sacrifices. He is limitless in what He does for His creation, so the reward could come to fruition in this life through our jobs, school, wealth, successes, or in ways we never imagined.

Introduction to the Unit Assessment (5 min)

Slide 14 / Winning through sacrifice: internalizing the Islamic worldview toward wealth

1. Proceed to slide fourteen and pass out copies of **3.5 “Winning Through Sacrifice”**. Instruct students to follow along through part one of the assessment as you read through the slide.

2. To highlight a story of sacrifice from those who have internalized this verse. This final slide will also serve as the introduction to the final cumulative assessment of this unit:

a. Read aloud the displayed verse and its translation.



Explain to students that this verse was revealed regarding a specific incident from the prophetic era during the Battle of Tabuk in the ninth year of *hijrah*. Coined “the battle of difficulty,” the month-long expedition to Tabuk took place in the desert heat of July, at the onset of harvest



الَّذِينَ يَلْمُزُونَ الْمُطَوَّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ سَخْرَيَةً اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

"It is they who criticize the believers who give freely and those who can only give a little with great effort: they scoff at such people, but it is God who scoffs at them—a painful punishment awaits them." [Surat at-Tawba, 9:79]

name: _____ date: _____

Winning Through Sacrifice
internalizing the Islamic worldview toward wealth

Part I: Read

At the core of submission is the sincere willingness to sacrifice what we love for God's sake, no matter how much or how little we possess. In fact, the Qur'an teaches us that sacrifice is a mindset—a high spiritual state—of loving God and what He commands more than our desires. It stems from the firm belief that He will compensate each of us exponentially for what we give up for His sake.

The Mindset for Sacrifice

"Those who spend their wealth in God's cause are like grains of corn that produce seven ears, each bearing a hundred grains. God gives multiplied bounties to whoever He wishes: He is All-Peaceful and All-Knowing."

ذَلِكَ الَّذِينَ تَطْهِيرُونَ أَنْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فَيَرَهُ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ
وَالَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ بِمِنْهُمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ هُنَّ بِهِ مُشَفِّعُونَ
[Surat al-Baqarah, 2:261]

"It is they who criticize the believers who give freely and those who can only give a little with great effort: they scoff at such people, but it is God who scoffs at them—a painful punishment awaits them."

In prospect: To what extent have you internalized this Islamic attitude toward wealth and sacrifice?

No matter how much or how little we possess of time, strength, and wealth, we can each express our devotion to God by embodying the mindset/spiritual state of these companions.

Part II: Sacrifice

1. As discussed in part one, sacrifice is a mindset and spiritual state that anyone can achieve, no matter how much or how little a person has.

3.5- Winning Through Sacrifice

season when the companions were waiting to finally get their provision for the year ahead.

For this particular expedition, God obligated every mature and able-bodied Muslim male to participate. Only those who did not possess the financial means or personal transportation to travel were exempt. To fund the army with transportation and provision, the Prophet ﷺ encouraged everyone with extra wealth and riding animals to donate for the cause. Both the wealthy of the companions and the impoverished rose to the occasion and sacrificed what they could. The wealthy Abdurrahman ibn Awf came forth with a considerable donation. Meanwhile, a poor companion by the name of Abu Aqeel mustered a small handful of dates, which he placed on top of the pile of gold. When the hypocrites of Medina saw this, they accused the wealthy Muslims of showing off and the impoverished Muslims of acting foolishly. They mocked Abu Aqeel, "Surely, God is not in need of your charity," meaning that Abu Aqeel's sacrifice was insignificant and unworthy in God's eyes. Thus, God rebuked the hypocrites for belittling Abu Aqeel's act of sacrifice.

- From this verse (and many others), we learn that sacrifice in Islam is not judged based on the amount of what we give or do, but is based on our intentions while the sacrifice is being fulfilled. Our sacrifices stem from the firm belief that God owns all of what we possess and that He will compensate each of us exponentially for what we sacrifice for His sake.
- Conclude by reassuring students that no matter how much or how little they possess of time, strength, and wealth, sacrifice is an attainable mindset for the one who possesses a billion dollars and the one who possesses just one hundred. Everyone can express their devotion to God by embodying the sacrificial mindset and spiritual state of these companions. They will have the opportunity to sacrifice something they own and explore the impact of zakat in parts two and three of the summative assessment.

name: _____ date: _____

Zakat

divine objectives and benefits

Please read through your group, study the verses in your assigned section. Pay attention to the bolded words and spend some time here to understand the worldview that gives zakat its meaning, as well as the benefits of giving zakot. Then, use your notes to formulate a final answer to your section's "Big Question" at the end. Be prepared to share your notes with the whole class. You will explore the "Imagine" prompt after the whole-class discussion.

Group 1: Worldview I Me & My Creator

"Certainly, my worship, my devotional sacrifice to my Lord, my offering to my Lord, is only for **Allah**. Lord of the worlds. He has no partners. Thus I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims."

فَإِنْ أَعْكُرْتُ لِيْلَةً وَمَنَّا لَهُ الْأَعْمَالُ
وَلَا يَرْبِطُنِي إِلَيْهِ وَلَا يَنْدِي
وَلَا يَشْرِي إِلَيْهِ وَلَا يَنْدِي

[Surat al-An'am, 6:92-93]

Notes:

"And give them from the wealth of Allah that We have given you.

وَأَنْفُقُمْ مِنْ أَنْ دَلِيلًا
[Surat an-Nur, 24:33]

Notes:

"...But whatever you give in charity, in your desire for God's approval, will earn multiple rewards."

وَمَا تَنْهَىٰ نَفْسٌ فَمَا يُنْهَىٰ فَمَنْ أَنْهَا مُنْهَىٰ
[Surat ar-Rum, 30:39]

Notes:

Big Question:

How does the sacrificial ritual of zakat help you fulfill your purpose before your Creator?

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1

Lesson plan 3

Zakat: More than just charity

Stage 3: Assessments

Formative assessment

3.2 “Zakat: Divine Objectives and Benefits”

To formatively assess students on the first and second objectives, you may use their responses to the discussion questions on **3.2**. The first Big Question—“How does the sacrificial ritual of *zakat* help you fulfill your purpose before your Creator?”—gauges student understanding of the Islamic worldview toward wealth and the core belief that God owns the wealth of which we are mere caretakers. The second Big Question aligns with the second objective: it is designed to gauge student understanding that *zakat* benefits us on the individual level by purifying our excess wealth and curbing our human tendency toward greed, miserliness, selfishness, and hoarding. We are obligated to give up a portion of our money that our *nafs* would rather obsessively hoard or mindlessly spend for the betterment of the community.

3.4 “Reframing the ‘All-Mine’ Worldview”

To formatively assess the objectives of this lesson, review student responses on **3.4**. Through the activity of distributing their allocated wealth, students should show an understanding that the wealth and provision we receive in this life is the property of God, and we are the caretakers. In their responses to the activity questions, students should indicate that a society could become more stable if the wealthy considered their excess wealth as a moral liability to others. This stabilization occurs by helping provide basic needs to the disenfranchised in a community. The final comparison in this activity helps assess the second objective by having students show an understanding of the internalization of the Islamic worldview on wealth and how it can be attained by anyone despite the amount of wealth they possess.

Summative assessment

Through each part of this summative assessment, students will demonstrate their understanding that God is the true owner of their wealth and property, and sacrificing is done in an effort to attain closeness to God and to purify their wealth. Students will independently complete the final parts of **3.5 “Winning**

“Through Loss”:

- **Part II: Sacrifice** | During the consolidation of this lesson, students learned that sacrifice is a mindset and spiritual state that can be attained by anyone, regardless of how much wealth he or she has. This summative begins by instructing students to give *zakat* (if eligible) and to then select a beloved item of their choice to give up to a local organization. The purpose of completing this task is to help students internalize the belief that all of their possessions are the property of God, and so giving something up for His sake leads to immeasurable gain in this world and the next.
 - **Part III: Discover** | In this portion of **3.4**, students will contact a local or national *zakat* organization of their choice in order to discover *zakat*'s potential to benefit various underserved and underprivileged groups in society. Their conversations with *zakat* distributors may deepen their appreciation for this Islamic ritual of sacrifice as a means of preserving the socioeconomic welfare of a community.
 - **Part IV: Conclude** | In the final portion of the summative, students will respond to three questions about sacrifice in Islam. The first question asks them to revisit their attitudes and associations with the term “sacrifice.” The second question asks them to recall the characteristics and behaviors we may adopt when we have internalized the Islamic worldview toward wealth and sacrifice. Finally, the third question asks them to explain the importance of sacrifice as a mindset and not just a physical act.



Additional Readings

References

References and Resources

Quranic References

Lesson plan 1

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ أَنْتَ تَحْدِيدَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَنَهُ

Consider the one who has taken his own desires as a god..." [Surat al-Jathiyah, 45:23]

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ * لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذِلِّكَ أُمِرْتُ وَآنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

Say, 'Certainly, my worship, my devotional sacrifices, my living, and my dying are [exclusively] for the sake of Allah, Lord of the worlds. He has no partners. Thus I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims. [Surat al-An'am, 6:162-163]

لَنْ يَنْتَلِلَ اللَّهُ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلِكِنَّ يَنْتَلِلَ اللَّهُ التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ

Neither their meat nor blood [of the animals you sacrifice] reaches Allah. Rather, it is your piety that reaches Him. [Surat al-Hajj, 22:37]

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِنْ قُرْبَةٍ أَعْيُنٌ جَزَاءً إِمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

And no soul knows what has been hidden for them of comfort for their eyes [i.e., for their satisfaction] as a reward for what they used to do." [Surat al-Sajdah, 32:17]

Lesson plan 2

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَفَقَّهُونَ

O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed upon you as it was prescribed upon the people before you—so that you may attain taqwa. [Surat al-Baqarah, 2:183]

أَيَّامًا مَعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَنْ كَانَ مِنْكُمْ مُرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّهُ مِنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخْرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامٌ مِسْكِينٌ فَمَنْ تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَهُ وَإِنْ تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

For a specific number of days, but if one of you is ill, or on a journey, then on other days later. For those who can fast only with extreme difficulty, there is a way to compensate - feed a needy person. But if anyone does good of his own accord, it is better for him, and fasting is better for you, if you only knew. [Surat al-Baqarah, 2:184]

Lesson Plan Three

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَبِذِلِّكَ أُمِرْتُ وَآنَا أَوَّلُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ

"Say, 'Certainly, my worship, my devotional sacrifices, my living, and my dying are [exclusively] for the sake of Allah, Lord of the worlds. He has no partners. Thus I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.'" [Surat al-An'am, 6:162-163]

وَآتُوهُم مِّنْ مَالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ

“And give them from the wealth of Allah that He has given you.” [Surat an-Nur, 24:33]

وَمَا آتَيْتُم مِّنْ زَكَاةٍ تُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضِعُفُونَ

“...But whatever you give in charity, in your desire for God’s approval, will earn multiple rewards.” [Surat ar-Rum, 30:39]

خُدُّمِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ صَدَقَةً تُطَهِّرُهُمْ وَزَكَّيْهِمْ بِهَا

“Take, [O Muhammad], from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase...” [Surat at-Tawba, 9:103]

لَن تَنالُوا الْبَرَ حَتَّى تُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يِهِ عَلِيمٌ

“None of you [believers] will attain true piety unless you give out of what you cherish: whatever you give, God knows about it very well.” [Surat ‘Ali-Imran, 3:92]

وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَ الَّذِينَ يَخْلُونَ إِمَّا أَنْتُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ بَلْ هُوَ شَرُّهُمْ سَيِّطُوقُونَ مَا بَخِلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَمَةِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيراثُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ مِمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ خَيْرٌ

“Those who are miserly with what God has granted them out of His grace should not think that it is good for them; on the contrary, it is bad for them. Whatever they meanly withhold will be hung around their necks on the Day of Resurrection. It is God who will inherit the heavens and earth: God is well aware of everything you do.” [Surat ‘Ali-Imran, 3:180]

إِنَّمَا الصَّدَقَاتُ لِلْفُقَرَاءِ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَالْعَامِلِينَ عَلَيْهَا وَالْمُؤْلَفَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَفِي الرُّقَابِ وَالْغَارِمِينَ وَفِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَابْنِ
السَّبِيلِ فَرِيقَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

“Alms are meant only for the poor, the needy, those who administer the zakat, those whose hearts need winning over [for Islam], to free slaves and help those in debt, for God’s cause, and for travellers in need. This is ordained by God; God is all knowing and wise.” [Surat at-Tawba, 9:60]

مَّا أَفاءَ اللَّهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْقُرْبَى فَلِلَّهِ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَى وَالْيَتَامَى وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ كَيْ لَا
يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ

“Whatever gains God has turned over to His Messenger from the people of other lands belong to God, the Messenger, the relatives, the orphans, the needy, and to the traveller in need; this is so that [the wealth] does not just circulate among the rich.” [Surat al-Hashr, 59:7]

مَثْلُ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثْلَ حَبَّةٍ أَنْبَتَتْ سَبْعَ سَنَابِلَ فِي كُلِّ سُبْنَبَلَةٍ مَّائَةُ حَبَّةٍ وَاللَّهُ
يُضَعِّفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ وُسْعٌ عَلِيمٌ

“Those who spend their wealth in God’s cause are like grains of corn that produce seven ears, each bearing a hundred grains. God gives multiple increases to whoever He wishes: He is limitless and all knowing.” [Surat al-Baqarah, 2:261]

الَّذِينَ يَلْمِزُونَ الْمُطَوَّعِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ إِلَّا جُهْدَهُمْ فَيَسْخَرُونَ مِنْهُمْ سَخِيرٌ
اللَّهُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

“It is they who criticize the believers who give freely and those who can only give a little with great effort: they scoff at such people, but it is God who scoffs at them—a painful punishment awaits them.” [Surat at-Tawba, 9:79]

أَوْلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ

“Do they not know that God provides abundantly for anyone He wills and gives sparingly to anyone He wills?” [Surat az-Zumar, 39:52]

Hadith Resources

Lesson plan 2

Aisha reported: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, sent for Uthman ibn Mazh'un and he came. The Prophet said, “O Uthman, do you not desire my practice?” Uthman said, “O Messenger of Allah, no by Allah. I seek your practice.” The Prophet said, “Verily, I sleep and I pray, I fast and I break my fast, and I marry women. Fear Allah, O Uthman, for your family has rights over you and your guest has rights over you. Verily, your own self has rights over you, so fast and break your fast, pray and sleep.” [Sunan Abi Dawud, 1369]

Abu Salih reported: A man said to Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, “What is God-fearing mindfulness?” Abu Huraira said, “Have you ever taken a thorny path?” The man said yes. Abu Huraira said, “What did you do?” The man said, “If I saw thorns, I would avoid them, pass over them, or stop short of them.” Abu Huraira said, “That is *taqwa*.” [al-Zuhd al-Kabīr, 963]

Lesson plan 2

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى لَمْ يَرْضِ بِحُكْمِ نَبِيٍّ وَلَا غَيْرِهِ فِي الصَّدَقَاتِ حَتَّىٰ حَكَمَ فِيهَا هُوَ فَجَزَّأَهَا ثَمَانِيَةً أَجْزَاءٍ فَإِنْ كُنْتَ
مِنْ تِلْكَ الْأَجْزَاءِ أَعْطِنِيَكَ حَقَّكَ

It is reported that a man once came to the Prophet and asked him for *zakat*. The Prophet responded, “Allah permitted not even a prophet to adjudge *zakat*[-worthiness]. Rather, He Himself ruled on it and permitted it in eight cases. Therefore, if you belong to any of these, I shall most surely give you your right.” [Hadith Abu Dawud]

The wealthy ‘Abdurrahman ibn ‘Awf came forth with one hundred awqiya of gold, equivalent to 4,000 dirhams. Meanwhile, a poor companion by the name of Abu ‘Aqeel mustered a small handful of dates, which he placed on top of the pile of gold. When the hypocrites of Medina saw this, they accused the wealthy Muslims of showing off and the impoverished Muslims of acting foolishly. They mocked Abu ‘Aqeel, “Surely, God is not in need of your charity,” meaning that Abu ‘Aqeel’s sacrifice is insignificant and unworthy in God’s eyes. So God rebukes the hypocrites for belittling Abu ‘Aqeel’s act of sacrifice. [Sahih Muslim, Kitab az-Zakat, #1018]

Textual Resources

Lesson plan 1

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Lesson plan 2

“7 Incredible Things Intermittent Fasting Does for Your Brain,” Amen Clinics, accessed Nov. 17, 2021, <https://www.amenclinics.com/blog/7-incredible-things-intermittent-fasting-does-for-your-brain/>.

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Lesson plan 3

"#1 Jeff Bezos," Forbes, accessed July. 30, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/profile/jeff-bezos/?sh=fbfb0c531b238>.

Multimedia Resources

Lesson plan 2

Achieving Taqwa Through Fasting | Shaykh Dr. Yasir Qadhi | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k65MvBsfit8>

Intermittent Fasting May Have Health Benefits Beyond Weight Loss | TODAY | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8jTDBsKCiS8>

The History of Fasting | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b19EwfRBeK8>

Lesson plan 3

Viral TikTok Uses Rice to Show How Rich Jeff Bezos Is | NowThis | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSOVBiEotaw>

Why Capitalism Can't Handle Climate Change | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H787Dj4oMWU&t=314s>