



Lecture Summary – Sunday 24th August 2025

“Imam al-Ridā (a) & The Dangers of Quick Judgments” – Br Mohammed Ali Muraj

1. Introduction

- Gathering commemorates Imam ‘Ali ibn Mūsā al-Ridā (a), the *King of Khurasan*.
 - Imam al-Ridā (a): “If you greet the poor differently from the rich, Allah will be angry with you on the Day of Judgment.”
 - Theme: Human tendency to make snap judgments – often based on appearances, without knowing the deeper reality (*iceberg model*).
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2. Qur’anic Case Study: Prophet Dāwūd (a) (Qur’an 38:21–24)

- Two disputants suddenly enter Prophet Dāwūd’s private chambers, startling him.
 - Case: One man has 99 sheep, demands the single sheep of his poor brother.
 - Dāwūd (a) rules quickly in favor of the poor man, without hearing both sides.
 - Immediately realizes mistake, repents to Allah.
 - Lesson: Do not pass judgment after hearing only one side; emotional states (fear, pressure, bias) can distort fairness.
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3. Modern Parables & Lessons

- Stephen Covey’s Train Story: Misjudging a father with unruly kids until learning their mother had just died → new compassion.
 - Iceberg Model: We only see 10% of someone’s life; hidden trauma, sincerity, and struggles remain unseen.
 - Malcolm X: “Be careful of newspapers – they can make the oppressor look oppressed and the oppressed look oppressor.”
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4. Qur’anic Guidance on Verification

- Qur’an 49:6 – If a sinner brings you news, verify it before acting, lest you wrong people in ignorance.
- Context: Misreport about Banū Mustaliq nearly caused conflict; Allah corrected through this verse.
- Practical lesson: Always corroborate news, reports, and rumors before forming judgments.

5. Three Steps for Self-Improvement

1. **Corroborate Information – Hear all sides, avoid half-truths. (Qur'an 49:6)**
2. **Practice Ḥusn al-Ẓann (Positive Assumptions) – Assume good of people. Imam al-Ridā (a): “Whoever thinks well of people, wins their love.”**
3. **Avoid Su' al-Ẓann (Negative Assumptions) – Thinking ill of others is itself injustice. (Qur'an 3:57 – Allah dislikes wrongdoers).**

6. Historical Reflections

- Lady Zaynab (a) in Yazīd's court – misjudged as powerless, but her speech preserved Karbala's message.
- Imam al-Ridā (a) vs. al-Ma'mūn – al-Ma'mūn misjudged the Imam as controllable, but Imam's piety transformed the people and threatened the regime.

7. Role of Imam al-Ridā (a) in Preserving Karbala

- Revived Majālis al-Ḥusayn by inviting poets (e.g., Dī'bal al-Khuzā'i) to recite elegies.
- When Dī'bal recited about the tragedies of Ahlulbayt, Imam al-Ridā (a) wept deeply and added:

“There shall be a grave in Ṭūs (Khurasan), my grave, which will be a source of relief for the Shi'a.”

Key Takeaways

- Avoid instant judgments; seek full context.
- Qur'an emphasizes verification before action (49:6).
- Positive assumptions lead to compassion and stronger bonds.
- Ahlulbayt (a) repeatedly faced misjudgment – their true strength was only revealed through patience, sacrifice, and truth.