

## **MODULE 1**

**Class Title:** The Honey Bees

**Aim of the lesson:** To understand the similarities in the characteristics of a honey bee & a Momin

**Category:** Islam & Science

**Lesson Format:** Power point presentation with discussion

Greeting to students) *Assalam alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

(*Taooz*) *Aoodhubillahi min AsShaytanir Rajeem*

(*Tasmiyah*) *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*

(*Du'a*) *Rabbish rahli sadri wa yassirli amri wahlul uqdatum millisani yafqahu qawli* (Surah Ta-Ha 20: Verse 25-28)

Slide 1:

How many of you like honey bees? Why do you like honey bees?

Student: They make honey which is really nice and they are beautiful.

Teacher: Yes, they are beautiful creatures. So, you like their color, the black and yellow color. Ok, fine. Everybody has their reasons. And why don't the others like honey bees?

Student: They sting you and when they sting you then you have a bump

Teacher: Have you ever been stung by a honey bee?

Student: No, but my cousin has.

Slide 2:

### **Play honey bee clip 1**

Teacher: Today we shall be talking about the honey bee and a lot of things that the honey bee does. Basically, the honey bee is a little insect that you find in a garden, wherever there are flowers, you find honey bees. Ok? And what do they do? They take pollen from the flowers and they collect nectar from the flowers, they take it to their home and they store this nectar in hexagonal shaped chambers in their hives. This hexagonal shaped chamber is called a honey comb. Have you wondered why it is a hexagon?

Student: Otherwise the honey would leak. The hexagon covers the whole space.

Teacher: Research shows that the hexagon shape results in very little wastage of space. In fact, no space is wasted. And when there are circles and pentagons, there are a lot of gaps in the middle. The red parts are the gaps. You see? This is the wasted space. They tried with triangles and squares. Again, there was no space wasted but the amount of material needed to make the

squares was more as compared to the amount needed to make the hexagon. The hexagon has the shortest circumference. The amount of building material required to make hexagonal store houses is lesser than the amount required for squares and triangles.

So, *Alhamdulillah*, they make hexagons. You might think that the honey they are storing is in one block that starts from one end and goes to the other end. Meaning, we might think that they start building from one end and then they move to the other end. But that's not so. They don't start from one spot. What happens is that all these millions of bees start making their honey comb in different parts of the hive. And when they reach the center, the resulting honey comb is perfect.

Now how come? They all begin from different parts and they join up in the middle and they are perfect. No space is wasted. Isn't that amazing? And then they make their chambers, honey chambers at a degree of 13 degrees, a little slanted. It's not straight, but slightly slanted. Why? So that the honey doesn't spill out.

So, isn't this amazing. If we take a sheet of paper and four different people start drawing hexagons from four different corners. Will it join up perfectly at the middle? Do you think so? No. We are bound to make errors. So how can this tiny creature know how to perfectly design the comb? Allah (swt) tells it how to!

The honey bee starts working right from the minute it is born. It starts whatever task it is assigned to do. It doesn't complain. It doesn't say, I want to rest for a while before I start working. I just came into this world. That's not what the honey bee says.

Slides 3 – 6:

Allah (swt) says in the Holy Qur'an

“And your Lord revealed to the bee saying, make hives in the mountains and in the trees and in what they build”. (*Surah An- Nahl*16: Verse 68)

Then Allah (swt) goes on to say:

“Then eat of all the fruits and walk in the ways of your Lord, submissively... there comes forth from within it a beverage of many colors in which there is healing for men. Most surely, there is a sign in this for a people who reflect”. (*Surah An- Nahl*16: Verse 69)

Allah (swt) is telling us that honey has healing qualities and it comes in various flavors and colors. Do you think that honey from different plants looks different and tastes different?

Slide 7:

And you might think that Allah (swt) is only informing us that honey is good for health. But when Allah (swt) is giving us the example of the honey bee, what else is there in it for us?

Student: That Allah (swt) made this creature and He also made us. We are much taller and we have more sense and everything. So He's expecting it from us, not from their point of view, but He's expecting it from us that we can't do anything perfect but they are doing it perfect. He wants us to do like honey bee as much as possible.

Teacher: Ok, *MashaAllah*.

Slide 8:

A bee and a *mo'min* are quite similar. A bee is disciplined, hardworking, obedient and cooperative. It follows the commands of its Lord perfectly.

Slide 9:

How is the bee disciplined? The bee does the chore it has been assigned without complaining. The minute the bee is born, it starts doing the chore it has been assigned without saying, "Not now, I'll do it later!"

The bee hive is a very organized environment and sometimes more than half a million bees can live in a hive.

Slide 10:

### **Play beehive clip**

The bee starts off with an egg, the egg hatches and the bee is born and immediately, the bee starts doing its work. There are three kinds of bees. There are 'worker bees', there are 'male bees' and there is the 'queen bee'. The worker bee has to clean the hive, feed the young, make the honey, and collect the nectar.

The male bee is there to increase the bee population and the female bee, the queen bee is the leader. They have to obey the queen bee. The queen bee eats the royal jelly and that's why she is bigger than all the other bees. Do you know what this royal jelly is made of? It's made of bee saliva and is extremely nutritious. There are different types of secretions (these have been discussed later in slide 13) that come from the bees. We will discuss these in a while.

So, the bee starts working the minute it is born. The worker bee does not complain saying why do I have to do all the work? And why is that other one just sitting doing nothing? They do what they are supposed to do. How does the bee that has just been born know which category it falls into? There is some command they are getting from somewhere. Allah (swt) is giving them that command. They already know what they are supposed to do. They are doing it without complaining.

What do we do? What do we do if one of us has a test and our other brother or sister does not? We complain, why do I have to study when she is watching TV or he is watching TV? He can

rest and he can go to the park. And she can go shopping and go to a friend's house. Why do I have to sit at home and study? Do we do that?

Slide 11:

Allah (swt) ordered the Prophet (pbuh) and the believers to be disciplined.

Allah (swt) said,

“Stand firm, oh *Muhammad* (pbuh), firm and straight on Islam, as you are commanded and those who are with you, your companions and do not transgress.” (Surah Hud 11: Verse 111)

So by giving the example of the bee, such a tiny thing, so seemingly irrelevant for us, we being the people who occupy the earth and think the earth is for us Allah (swt) is teaching us a lesson. He (swt) is telling us to be firm. Stay firmly on the straight path and be disciplined.

Slide 12:

What does *salah* teach us? It teaches us discipline. How does *salah* teach us discipline? You have to pray five times a day. And it is at fixed timings. You can't just pray *fajr* in the middle of the night and *zuhr* in the middle of the evening. It has to be done on time. And when people go to the mosque, they stand in rows. Or whenever we have our *jama'at*, we stand in rows. We make *saffs*.

You are following the leader i.e. the *imam* and doing the same things. Whatever the leader does, you follow. This also teaches us discipline. So, again, Allah (swt) is telling us, look how disciplined the honey bee is. So, we should also try to be disciplined. We have these big brains. [Quite huge compared to the bee]. We should try to use them.

Slide 13:

Again, a honey bee is quite hard working. Do you all agree? It is very hard working. It spends its whole life working for the benefit of the others, that is, it provides honey. But that's not the only thing the honey bee does. There are a few other things that the honey bee does for us as well. Supposing, all the bees say that we are feeling lazy, we are going to go on a vacation. What do you think will happen? No more honey?

Student: No more pollination.

Teacher: Yeah, no more pollination. Scientists have been doing a lot of research that if the bees stop pollinating, they'll be no plants. No green food. If there is no food for the herbivores, then there won't be any food for the carnivores. Consequently there will be no food for us!

And if the bees die somehow or they stop doing what they are doing, a lot of green plants will be affected. Lots of green plants will die. So, they play a big role in pollination.

Slide 14:

“The Momin dies with his sweat on his brow.”

[An-Nasai]

A Momin is always hard working, making the best use of time in ways that are most rewarding. (a Momin is very clever and knows where he / she gets the most rewards).

Slide 15:

The bee is quite selfless and generous.

Slide 16:

Apart from pollination and honey, we also get bees wax. Candles are made from bees wax and it is used in a lot of makeup. And there is propolis which is a kind of resin. It is a sticky substance. The bee uses it to repair cracks in its hives. We use this resin for health purposes and medicine and it is also used in varnishing wood.

They produce royal jelly for the queen bees. It has loads of vitamin B in it and is used in medicines.

Bee venom, the stingy bit, the bad bit... even the bad bit is useful. Scientists have been doing research in this field and bee venom therapy is being utilized in a lot of western countries these days. It is used for treating arthritis, high blood pressure and many other illnesses. Some people might be allergic and they might get swelling and itching due to bee venom but it does have medicinal properties.

So the bee is quite selfless. Whom is it doing all this for? Is the bee itself getting something out of it? Are we paying the bee for it? Is it getting some other benefit from doing all this work for us? Who is getting the benefit?

Students: Us.

Teacher: We are getting so much benefit out of the honey bee. Apart from the honey which has a lot of healing. I was just doing some research for this presentation, I came across something interesting... In Canada, there was this research institute where there was a dog who was badly burnt. The burns got a lot of infections, skin infections. And they could not treat it then suddenly someone doing research put honey on the burns and the burns started healing. It has antibiotic qualities as well. So the burns started healing and then they made these honey bandages. You know? Honey wraps for burn patients! These bandages have honey on them. So, somehow, people are doing research and discovering many new ways. And Allah (swt) has already said in the Qur'an that there is healing in it for man.

The honey bee is selfless; it is not at all selfish and is benefiting others all the time. So how is it like a good *mo'min*? A good *mo'min* is supposed to benefit others at all times. Can't be selfish,

can't be like, "*I want this! I want that, My wish, My life!*" *Meri marzi aur meri zindagi!*(my wish , my life) It's my life... That's not what the *mo'min* is like, right?

Slide 17:

"Allah is helping the servant as long as the servant is helping his brother."

(Muslim)

Slides 18:

And then the honey bee is very obedient. It follows the directions given by the 'forager bee'. What is a forager bee? The forager bee is the guide bee. It guides the rest of the bees. And the rest of the bees follow the guidance.

Slide 19:

This is a forager bee. Now what does this forager bee do?

### **Play Bee Dance clip**

The forager bee goes out, looks for food and then it comes back to the hive and does this waggle dance. You can see the bee wagging? And with this wagging, the bee is telling all the other bees where the source of the honey is i.e. the flowers. So it goes zigzag and it turns around and comes back. Then it goes the other way, zigzags, turns around and comes back.

So what is this telling the bees? It's making a perpendicular, this zigzag line and the curve. The curve ends, you take it as a straight line. So, it says, you have fly 90 degree to the sun, and the honey source is there. When it comes this way, it says, you have to fly to the right 60 degrees to the sun and the honey source is this way. This is how it tells the other bees. And what do the other bees do? What do the other bees do? They follow the directions. What will happen if some bee decides not to follow the directions? It will get lost. The bee will get lost and it might die or it might lose its way, might get hurt. Ok?

Slide 20:

Allah (swt) says in the Holy Qur'an:

"O' you who believe, Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, *Muhammad* (pbuh) and those of you *Muslims* who are in authority. (Surah An-Nisa: verse 59)

So we Muslims who want to become *mo'mins* have to obey what our leaders say, provided the leaders are talking in the light of Islam.

Slide 21:

This forager bee is very generous. It shares the knowledge that it has with others. Do you know about the scholars of *Bani Israel*? What they used to do? They hid the true knowledge from the people. Why? ...Because they were selfish. They wanted benefits for themselves. They used to tell people about things only if they received some benefit in return. And they didn't even give the right knowledge! They just said whatever they liked. People obeyed them and agreed with them because they didn't have the true knowledge.

The forager bee is sharing its information with the other bees. What is a good *mo'min* supposed to do? Share knowledge with others or hide it? Share knowledge with others. And sometimes others might not be asking him to share... but anyway, you have to give the knowledge to others even if they don't ask for it, ok? You can't be rude and say: "do this, do that". That's not the way. You have to politely inform them, look for the right time. Ok, so the forager bee wants to guide the others to the right path.

Slide 22:

A *muslim* should also try to prevent harm in the society where he lives by guiding others. Prophet (pbuh) gave a parable of a boat with two decks, the upper deck and the lower deck. The people on the lower deck were thirsty but they did not have any water. Those on the upper deck had water. The lower deck people were too shy to ask the upper deck people for it. So, what happened? They started drilling a hole in the middle of the boat to get water. They were totally unaware of what was going to happen when they drilled that hole.

Now, if the upper deck people don't and tell them of the wrong that they are doing, what will happen? The boat will sink! And who will sink with the boat? ...Just the people on the lower deck? ...Because they were the ones drilling the hole. What's the fault of the upper deck people? They were not drilling the hole. But they too will sink! Right? So it is their duty, to tell the people on the lower deck that, "hey! stop drilling. All of us are going to drown. What you are doing is wrong." It's their responsibility, right?

In the same way, a *mo'min* has to tell people of the wrong that they are doing. You have to. You just can't say. "We're doing the right thing. Why should we interfere? Why should we go and tell that person that what you are doing is not right?" You have to. It's your responsibility. But it should be done in the right way. You just can't say, *pointing a gun on someone's head* ... "Hey! What you are doing is wrong?" *Dhoosh!* (Sound of a gun) No, that's not the right way. You have to sort of persuade that person, talk to that person. Explain properly and pass on the knowledge that you gained to that person. It is our responsibility. So, that's exactly what the forager bee is doing. It's showing the other bees where the right direction is. Ok? You too have to do that.

Slide 23:

Again, the bee is very cooperative. It works with the other bees for the betterment and protection of the whole colony. So what is in it for us? We have these group projects in class. Do you all have them, group projects? And then the teacher makes the groups. So what is our worry? What is our worry when these groups are being made? Good partners. Are our friends going to be with us? That is exactly what we are worried about. What should we be worried about?

Student: Grades?

Teacher: We should be worried about what the project is. And how can each and every one contribute and what quality does each member have and how to use those qualities in the best possible way to get the best result. But no, we are just worried about, am I going to be with my friend. Is she going to be with me? Why is that one with me? I don't like her. I don't like that person. Oh, I wish I could be in that group. That's our worry!

We should be worried about the main thing. Concentrate on the work. That's what the bee does, concentrates on the work. Not that, "Who is flying with me to get the honey from that particular flower?" No, it is not worrying about that. It is worrying about what it has to do. You know, get the work done regardless of who is coming with it. Right? So we should also keep our mind on the work that is required of us.

Slide 24:

We should also try our best to maintain Islamic brotherhood ... And....Good morals. How are good morals connected to this? Good morals are very important. Because when we say, we don't want to work with that person, we are judging that person, right? And then again, passing judgments, you are not behaving nicely with that person because you don't particularly like that person. So if we don't follow good morals, we are not promoting Islamic brotherhood.

Slide 25:

The believers are like brothers to one another; so, promote peace & reconciliation among them, & fear Allah, that you may receive mercy.

(Surah 49: Ayah 10)

So regardless of who you are working with, your attitude has to be good. You'll be asked about your attitude, not about how well the other person did the work, or how badly she did the work or how she affected the whole group's grade. You can't blame others, you know.



Slide26:

Truly The Faithful Are To One Another Like Components Of A Building—Each Part Supports The Other. [Agreed Upon]

The Faithful Are Like A Single Body: If His Eye Suffers, Then His Constitution Will Suffer; And If He Has A Headache, Then His Whole System Will Suffer. [Muslim]

He has weak faith until that person loves for his brother what he loves for himself. [Bukhari]

Teacher: And no matter how tired, angry or upset we are, we have to control ourselves. We have to keep on remembering that it's *our action* we are responsible for not somebody else's. We wouldn't be asked *kay us nay aap ko* disturb *kyuon kia?* (Why did so and so disturb you?) You'll be asked how you reacted when you were disturbed. Right? When we try to improve ourselves, Allah (swt) helps us. If we have good intentions that we want to work towards our betterment, then Allah (swt) will also help us and make things easy for us.

Slide 27:

The honey bee follows the commands of its Lord completely. Allah (swt) has commanded it to go to the mountains, to the flowers, to go and collect nectar and bring it back and turn it into honey. This is for the benefit of mankind. The bee knows this, and does not complain about all the work it has to do. It fulfills the purpose it has been created for. It does not question. Why? Why me? Why not someone else? Why do I have to do it?

We live in an age in which we are constantly being bombarded with un-Islamic sights and sounds, much of which we have no control over. It's nearly impossible to go through an entire day without seeing or hearing something that is haram in nature, especially for those of us who are living in “developed” areas. Whether we are at school, at work, or at home, we must strive to maintain our Muslim identities and live according to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Allah has made clear to us the path that leads us to Paradise and the path that leads us to the Hellfire, and obeying Allah and His Messenger (pbuh) is a must if we want to continue down the path that will lead us to Jannah.

There are numerous ayaat in the Qur'an that teach us the importance of obeying Allah and of learning and following the guidance that Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was sent with. So, it is up to us to learn and adhere to what has been prescribed for us. We simply cannot pick and choose the commands that we want to follow, or disobey Allah in some things because we fear what others might think of us.

If the *Muslims* do not fulfill the purpose for which they are created, they lose their morals. If they are unjust, harm people, are unkind, mean towards others, think themselves to be ‘high and mighty’ and treat others who are less privileged badly, what happens? Everybody goes off track and the whole society turns into a big garbage dump and again we don't like the smell of a

garbage dump. We like the smell of beautiful flowers, bouquets, flower shops and perfumes. We love all that, right?

Slide 28:

Allah (swt) says that:

“If you obey most of those on earth, they will mislead you far away from Allah (swt)’s path. They follow nothing but conjectures and they do nothing but lie.”

(Surah Al An’aam: Verse 116)

Who is Allah (swt) talking about? Those who disobey Allah? And how do you think they are taking us away from the right path? How are we following them? How are we obeying them? Very true. She is saying, we obey them by following the things that they do and practicing the ways and methods that they have taught us. Whatever they say is right

Student: We are also following them in the way that we are worrying more about this world and what people think of us rather than the hereafter.

Teacher: Ok. We fall into the trap. What she is saying is that we fall into the trap and start thinking more about this world instead of the hereafter. And how do we think that? We want more things in this world. If we have a TV, we want a bigger TV. If we have a car, we want a bigger and better car. If we have a house, we want a bigger and better designer house and designer clothes etc. We want more and more and more of everything until there is no end to it.

It just keeps on increasing. We are worried about what people are going to say and we are worried that they might think we are backward and unfashionable. We want to look fashionable all the time. And who is creating all this fashion? Who is saying this is the right kind of fashion? Fashion keeps changing, you see. It’s never the same. So, there is always this big confusion about what is the right style. You know. It’s never the same.

Student: We should also stay on the right path.

Teacher: It’s ok to have some things, some or more things. But the basic idea is that you have to think about those people who do not have many things and you have to be merciful towards them. You have to share your things with them. Maybe if I make one dress less I can help someone with the money that I save. If I am less greedy I can give half my slice of cake to somebody who has never tasted cake.

I went to this poor *basti* (community/area) and there is this school over there and we were just talking about heaven and hell and when I asked them, “What would you like to have in heaven?”, because I was used to talking to kids in my family. And they would be like, Xbox and Mercedes and stuff like that. When I asked these children what would you like in heaven? Can you imagine what the answer was? They said, “I want *samosa* and *biryani*.” I had tears in my

eyes, because they had never tasted *samosa* and *biryani* all their lives and for them it was like heaven! For them it was heaven! *Biryani* was heaven, can you imagine? What do we do when we see *biryani*? We say, awww, why did you have to make *biryani* today? That's our reaction.

So it's ok to have things. But then we also have to think about people who do not have things and be kind and helpful towards them. People who do not have the knowledge, you have to go and teach them. You just can't shout and scream at them. Because you know, they don't know. You have to teach them nicely.

Slide 29:

And then, Allah (swt) says again:

“Whatsoever message *Muhammad* (pbuh) gives to you, take it and whatsoever he forbids, abstain from it”. (*Surah Hashr* 59: Verse 7)

There is this big misconception in our society that it's ok to just follow whatever is in the *Qur'an* only. The *Sunnah* is not important for you? Maybe they didn't come across this *ayat*. Because here, Allah (swt) is saying that follow what Prophet (pbuh) is saying, and stop from whatever Prophet (pbuh) has asked you to stop. So in the *Qur'an*, Allah (swt) is saying, follow the Prophet (pbuh) and that again is the *Sunnah*. So it is only by following these two things we can reach *jannah*.

For example, there is this clean glass of water and there is this dirty glass of water, ok? If I mix both of them, is it going to be half clean and half dirty? Fully dirty! Even if I take a drop of the dirty water and put it in the clean glass, will it be clean? It will become dirty. Ok. If I put a drop of clean water in the dirty glass, will it become clean? It'll still be dirty. So, what is clean? Only that one glass of water is clean, all the others are dirty, contaminated and impure! So likewise, it's just that one straight way that goes to *jannah*. All other ways are incorrect. So, you have to follow the guidance the Prophet (pbuh) has given us and that's the only way we can reach *jannah*. Just like the honey bees follow the forager bee, they don't they lose their way. It's as simple as that. There's no other way in between. Right? It's just that.

## Q & A

So would you like to ask any other questions? Or any other point that you would like to add? How can we be like the honey bee? You just said you like the yellow and black colors. So if you are not going to ask me anything, I'm going to ask you. Quiz you.

Student: They don't make honey for us they make it for themselves.

Teacher: No, The queen eats the royal jelly. They don't eat the honey. The honey is for us. And what they eat is the pollen. They eat the pollen from the flowers. They don't eat the honey. They make the honey for us. After they eat the pollen, they make the honey for us. And the honey is

stored in different chambers. And their babies are born elsewhere. Not inside the honey chambers. I also read somewhere (the Early Learning Program by Time Life Inc.- book “Guess Who?”) that one honey bee makes just 1 teaspoon of honey in its whole life. So the whole life, the honey bee works and makes 1 teaspoonful of honey. And how long does the honey bee live? 10 weeks. The honey bee lives for 10 weeks and how long does the queen bee live? 2 years. And how long does it take us to eat that one teaspoon of honey, which is a lifetime achievement for the honeybee. Less than 2 seconds.

There is a lot of stuff that you can find out about honey bees when you go on the net. There are lots of things that honey bees help us do and honey helps us do.

Student: Why are we just talking about the honey bee, there are other animals as well?

Teacher: Sure, there are other animals but this class is about honey bees that is why we are talking about the honey bees. *In shaa’ Allah*, we will talk about other animals. The honey bee has been mentioned in the Holy *Qur’an*. There are other creatures mentioned in the Holy *Qur’an* and other insects too like the spider, and the mosquito. There are some *Ahadith* about cats and dogs. There are lots of other animals, *In shaa’ Allah* we can talk about the other animals as well.

Right now we are talking about the honey bee because.... who can tell me why we are just talking about the honey bee?

Student: Because it is most like a *mo’min*.

Teacher: It is most like the *mo’min* and it has been mentioned in the *Qur’an*. It is like the *mo’min* in many ways. How many ways? Bee has very good characteristics and we should be like the bee. We should try to be like the bee. Even though it is a very small thing, it matters a lot. Like the pollination. If pollination was to stop, it would be harmful for everybody. So, it’s a tiny creature but it is helping us in many ways.

How can we be hard working, organized and cooperative in our lives? Can you give me an example? Work on time, ok. And organize your work. If you can’t do your work in one go, you divide your work into bits and pieces and think about how you can stop wasting your time?

We should have good company. Do you think friends matter? How do friends affect us?

Student: When you go in a coal shop, there will be some coal on you and when you go in a scent shop, there will be some scent on you.

Teacher: *Maa shaa’ Allah*, this is again from a *hadith*.

Student: If you hang out with good friends, you will also become good; if you hang out with bad company....they have a bad effect on you.

Teacher: Excellent, yeah. Did you read that somewhere?

Student: My mom tells me.

Teacher: *Maa shaa'Allah*, that's really nice. So that's how your company affects you. You might be under some pressure and you might end up doing what you are not supposed to be doing. Yes, you were asking me something? Yes a man is known by the company he keeps and again you will be judged with the people you hang about with. There is also a *hadith* which talks about it. You'll be raised with those you have been spending time with. Because then, you tend to be like them.

Du'a for end of a gathering) *Subhana Rabbika Rabbul Izzati 'amma yasifun wa salamun 'alal mursaleen, walhamdulillahi Rabbil 'alameen*

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalam alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

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