

MODULE 2

Class Title: Heroes

Aim of the lesson: To inspire the students to become heroes

Category: Personal Development

Lesson Format: Power point presentation with discussion

(Greeting to students) *Assalamu 'alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*

(Ta'awwudh) A 'oodhu billahi min Ash Shaytaanir Rajeem

(Tasmiyah) Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

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

Slide 1:

Today we will discuss a very inspiring topic; "heroes".

Slide 2:

Before we do that however, I want to know how many of you have heard or read this epic poem called "The Odyssey". It is a poem about a Greek warrior, whose name was Audacious. Audacious fought a war for ten years, and the next ten years after that he spent finding his way back home. During his journey he faced monsters, sorcerers, temptations, etc; it was a huge struggle. One of the reasons why he was so eager to return home was to protect his wife and family from people who were trying to steal his fortune. This is the gist of the poem.

Audacious believed in gods, he had faith in the Super Power and he knew that there was someone controlling the fates; and although his struggle was immense, because he was fearless and he felt strongly that he had to do something for his family, Audacious became a hero for the Greeks.

So who is a hero? When you hear the word 'hero', what comes to your mind?

Slide 3:

The word 'hero' is actually derived from the ancient Greek term for "Protector". I'm not giving you the exact term, but it means Protector. So when the Greeks used the word hero, it had something to do with protecting others. This does not mean that this was the ONLY quality that Audacious had however; this wasn't the only reason people considered him a hero; he had other qualities as well.

Slide 4:

In our times too, we have heroes; let's do a small activity; a competition. I will make groups and you will be given two minutes to write the names of as many heroes as you can think of. When I say you have to think about heroes, there are two ways to look at it, particular names might come to

your mind and particular deeds might come to your mind; one of the names might be Nelson Mandela, a deed could be a guy saving a drowning child...you get my point? It has to be a combination of both, make two columns and try and do both, use one minute per list. I will time you all.

Pens down! Let's see what you have. Who is going to read it out?

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when I say heroes? Superman? Is it because of this?

Slide 5:

We've got soldiers because they show a lot of courage and fight wars for citizens, we've got astronauts...why are astronauts heroes? Because they risk their lives to explore outer space and they do it for us. We have people who come up with medicine... life-saving medicines, and there are people who dedicate their careers to helping out the poor and needy; they're heroes too, or people who fight social injustices; they're also heroes.

Then we've got people like 'Dr. Junaus Halth', what did he do? He conquered polio. So you've got such doctors as well. We have Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, there are a lot of people... and then the long list that you've got, they all come in the category of hero and they have a lot in common with Audacious. There are certain common things among all of them which Audacious also had.

I'm going to show you two images and I want you to tell me what you think about or what kind of deed comes to your mind when you see these kind of heroes.

Slide 6:

This is the first image; what do they do? Is he a hero? An actor? What about this? Who is he? Maulana Abdus Sattar Edhi. What action comes to mind? Helping the poor.

Now tell me something; if there are two people in front of you and one says, this is my hero and the other one says this is my hero, what can you tell about these people?

Slide 7:

We define our ideals by the heroes that we choose, and in return our ideals, i.e. courage or honor, define us; who I look up to, defines me. So, heroes symbolize the qualities that we ourselves would like to possess. If I think that my hero is that model on the stage, it will tell you a lot about me. So, who you choose as a hero, has a lot to do with what kind of personality you have and what kind of thought process and values you have. Having said that, certain qualities tend to stand out particularly as heroic; there are certain things that heroes generally speaking, have across the board.

Slide 8:

Let's do another activity. I want you to list the traits that you think a hero SHOULD have; I am not talking about the qualities that they do have, it can be something that they usually don't, but you think they should have them. I will give you a minute and this time I will shuffle you all.

Your time starts now!

And pens down! Who will read first?

I want one of each group to stand in the corner with your paper and the rest of you can come back, just come and sit, I am going to give you certain points of views, comments made by certain psychologists who talk about the qualities of the leader; e.g. in Cornell University, they did research on eighty-three individuals who were a part of world-war two - they were given the Badge of Honour, so they were brave and courageous people and when these people described themselves, what were the words and qualities that they talked about?

I want you to circle whatever qualities I talk about. They talked about loyalty, self-discipline, selflessness and being adventurous. So what do you have?

Slide 9:

Then there are other people who feel that heroes have three very prominent qualities: bravery, leadership and the ability to find solutions to the problems that confront society.

Slide 10:

There are various people who have listed down the eight traits of heroes. Let's see what they are.

They talk about a hero being smart, strong, resilient, selfless, caring, charismatic and reliable. How many of these do you have?

Slide 11:

Based on this, when you think about who a hero is, it is said that it is any person who takes action on behalf of a person, for a moral cause. The most important thing is that they take action for moral causes; to save someone's life, aware of possible risks. For example, if a child is drowning and he jumps in to save him, there is a risk factor that is he is jumping in the cold water, and he is doing it for a cause, which is to save the child. There is a good reason, and he does it without expecting any gains. He is not doing it because he needs praise from other people. What should be the reason for us to do any kind of deed? Our focal point has to be Allah (swt).

Slide 12:

Let's say a baby is born in your family, and some guests come over and say, "*MashaAllah* you had a baby, is it a girl or a boy? Or is it a hero? What is it?" Does that happen? What is the usual

question that they ask? Have you ever heard anyone saying “*Arey un key haan hero paida huwa hai*”? You haven’t. What does this tell you about the personality of the hero?

Slide 13:

You have to acquire it, and most heroes are ordinary people like you and me, born like ordinary babies. It is the heroic act that makes him extra ordinary, not the person in itself.

Slide 14:

The question is, “Can you become a hero?” How many of you think that you can become a hero? In fact, all of you can become heroes, but the question is, how?

Slide 15:

How do you become a hero? What do you need to do to become a hero? There are certain things that you need to add in your lifestyle, certain things that you need to keep in mind, which will take you towards success, where you will be titled a hero; maybe not by other people, you may not become as famous as Mother Teresa or Nelson Mandela, but you can become a hero nevertheless.

Slide 16:

We will quickly brush through the six steps to success in becoming a hero:

Slides 17 - 20:

1) Study the greats; quickly tell me who your hero is? If you have a hero, how much do you know about him? Why is it important to know your heroes? The idea of having a hero is not to worship him, the idea is that you need to find and recognize the qualities of that hero that make him a great person. You need to instill those qualities in your personality. We have a lot of books available, for those who aren’t alive, whereas when you say your hero is your father, then you have to think about why he is your hero. What is that heroic quality that he has? You need to really understand him well, know him well, and then you have to make sure that you nurture those qualities in yourself as well. There are a lot of books available if you want to know more about almost all the heroes that you have talked about who aren’t among us today.

Slide 21:

2) Walk the talk; you need to be the change you want to see in the world, this is very important, it is a paraphrased quote from Gandhi which is 'drenched in truth and wisdom'. What does it mean? How can you tell if a person is a hypocrite? What does he do? He claims something, but his actions do not correlate with what he claims; for example he could be talking about conserving natural resources and on other hand when he goes home, he is wasting water, wasting electricity, so he is not walking his talk. There are very few heroes that live the word that they speak.

Slide 22:

3) Listen for the call; because there is a famous comparative mythologist, Joseph Campbell; have you heard of him? He compared different myths coming from different cultures, and identified the themes that are shared among all these cultures, and he noticed that all heroes in world literature are 'called on a heroic journey'; how do they explain this call? They say we have a strong intuition, or a sudden realization or someone might consider it a divine transition, or you might hear, "I was sleeping and I had this dream", or have you experienced sometimes that all of a sudden you think of a good deed? You feel like sharing a burger with your maid, just that thought, that is the call, and of course that is coming from Allah (swt), angels sometimes put these thoughts in our mind, and this call has to be recognized, it is very important.

Slide 23:

4) Look for opportunities. There is a psychologist by the name of Phil Zimbardo, who says that all of us are potential heroes looking for the right moment to fulfill that potential. Do we feel like heroes? How do you become a hero? We already possess those qualities and then the opportunities come into your life where you can actually do what your gut feeling tells you, and you become a hero.

Slide 24:

What do you thus always need to keep in mind? I'm a hero-in-waiting. Repeat after me, say it with confidence; I am a hero-in-waiting, and I am waiting for the right situation to come along when I can act heroic. We must keep reminding ourselves and we can only remind ourselves when we are actually working towards it and trying to adhere to those qualities that we spoke about, and only then will we feel that we are all prepared, all set.

Slide 25:

5) Do random acts of kindness; usually when we do kindness what do we do? Somebody is nice to us and we repay that person; that is not really a random kindness, it is more of a give and take thing; my friend is very good to me and when she needs me, I am good to her. That's good, but that's not random kindness, or what we are talking about; what we are talking about here is that when somebody does good to you then you repay that person by doing a good deed to someone else, the third person, from whom you are not expecting anything, maybe you don't even know that person, you are doing it because you should be doing it, because you are really grateful to Allah (swt). There are times when you can actually start a wave of human kindness. What can you do? Do small things. How can you become a mini hero?

Slide 26:

Volunteer work is good. Is there any risk and cause in it? Remember we talked about the definition? There has to be a moral reason for it, it should be a courageous act, and you should do

it being fully aware of the risk and cause in it, and you don't expecting anything in return. There are a lot of things that you need to keep in mind when you think about becoming a hero.

Slide 27:

How can you give to community, how can you give to the people around you? The cause may be in the form of time, or in the form of money, or the talent that you have. Are we doing that in our lives? That will eventually lead to the opportunity of becoming a hero. Random acts of kindness; what comes to your mind? Let's just discuss it and see what we can do with the resources that we have. We need to reach out to people who need us, who are financially strained, or need our advice and counseling, etc. These are very small things but these will lead to the things that we are talking about.

Do we have good listeners here? People who can empathize? That's a talent! Can somebody bake? That's a talent! Can somebody teach the Qur-an? How to read it? That's a talent! You must be having servants at home, can somebody go and teach them English or Urdu or maybe Mathematics? That's a talent, are we sharing? That's the question, we all have talents, but are we sharing? So why is it that we don't consider sharing the talents that we have? Why don't we consider these examples that I have given you, as talents? These are talents and these are things that we need to share with people around us. I can be a hero by sharing the talents that Allah (swt) has given me, and the cause is that there will be times where I will not be feeling well but I still sit and make sure I honour whatever commitment I have with the other person; I make sure I fulfill it.

All of us need to think about what we can share with others; money? If you think you need to share money, and this money is not your dad's money, this is the money that you earned yourself, it is a great idea to earn money; you can have a bake sale, earn that money and go and spend it on the poor, you can do that.

If you have a talent, you can share that talent with other people, and if you don't have any money or any talent, then you can give your time! Go and sit with people who just need to be heard, this is all they want, so you just have to be a good listener. We seriously need to start working on it, we don't become heroes over night, but we have talked about the trends and traits that lead us to become heroes.

Slide 28:

We have been focusing on the list of heroes and we have even made a list of traits; but rather than struggling with these long lists and thinking about the people around us, how about just becoming heroes ourselves? That was the whole idea behind reading about the greats; in order to understand the common factors that we share with these heroes. We need to cultivate these in our personality, because we all have a hero hidden within ourselves; it is all about discovering the hero, that's the challenge and that is something we need to focus on.

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

(Parting salutation to students) *Assalamu 'alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh*