

# THE MONTH OF

# MUHARRAM AND 'ĀSHURĀ'

## ALLAH AWARDS VIRTUE TO CERTAIN PLACES AND TIMES

Allah ﷻ has fashioned all things, apportioned them, and awarded them merit and virtue. It is through the infinite wisdom of Allah ﷻ that he has awarded special virtue to certain lands, places, times, and acts. For example, the land of Arabia is the most blessed of all lands, Makkah the most blessed of all cities. From all the days of the week it is the day of Friday that is most blessed and from all the nights it is the Night of Qadr that has the most virtue and is most blessed.

## THE FOUR SACRED MONTHS

Similarly, Allah states in the noble Qur'ān:

Indeed, the number of months with Allah is twelve [lunar] months in the register of Allah [from] the day He created the heavens and the earth; of these, four are sacred. [Tawbah: 36]

These four sacred months are: Rajab, Dhū al-Qa'dah, Dhū al-Hijjah, and Muharram. The fourth of these months is the month of Muharram, which is known as Shahr Allāh (Allah's month).

## FASTING IN MUHARRAM

Abū Hurayrah رضى الله عنه reported, "The best fast after the month of Ramadan is fasting in the month of Allah, al-Muharram." [Sahih Muslim: # 1163]

It also is reported in Sunan al-Nasā'ī, "The best fast after the fast of Ramadān is the fast of Muharram and the best fast of this month is the fast of 'Āshurā'."

Ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه said, "I never saw the Messenger of Allah ﷺ so keen to fast any day and give it priority over any other than this day, the day of 'Ashura', and this month, meaning Ramadān." [Sahih al-Bukhārī, # 1867]

'Āshurā' has been narrated by more than 22 Sahābah and their narrations can be found in the six books of Hadīth: Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Abū Dāwūd, and Ibn Mājah. As well as in the Musnad of Imām Ahmad, Mu'jam of Tabarānī and many other books as well.

It is mentioned in Ihyā of Imām al-Ghazzālī that the reason for this virtue is that it is the beginning of a new year and it is best to begin it with a fast.

## REAPING FULL BENEFIT

While we may perform the requirements of a particular act and thereby earn reward for doing so, yet we still do not to reap its full benefit. For example, during Dhū al-Hijjah many may slaughter a sacrificial animal but few have truly sacrificed. During Dhū al-Hijjah we re-enact the devotion of Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm رضى الله عنه, but while we may slaughter as he did—fulfilling what is incumbent upon us—we are yet to sacrifice in the same manner as Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm رضى الله عنه.

When Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm رضى الله عنه set out to fulfil the command of Allah, he was ordered to sacrifice his son, that which he held most dear, in Allah's name. It was solely through the mercy of Allah that a ram from paradise was sent down instead. Thus, when we slaughter we too should remember this sacrifice. And as we place that knife on the animal's throat we should envisage us sacrificing all that we hold dear: our children, our wealth and all we own for Allah's sake.

We may be absolved of our obligation with the physical completion of the act according to its stipulated laws, but the inner objective requires deliberation and sincere submission to the laws of Allah.

## THE FAST OF 'ĀSHURĀ'

The same is found in the fast of 'Āshurā'. Ibn 'Abbās رضى الله عنه narrated, "The Prophet ﷺ came to Madīnah and saw the Jews fasting on the day of 'Āshurā' and enquired why they were fasting. They said, "This is a righteous day, it is the day when Allah saved the Children of Israel from their enemies, so Mūsā fasted



## FASTING ON THE DAY OF 'ĀSHURĀ', 10 MUHARRAM

The virtue of fasting on the day of



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on this day.” The Prophet ﷺ said, “We have more right to Mūsā than you,” so he fasted on that day and commanded [the Muslims] to fast on that day.” [Sahīh al-Bukhārī, # 1865]

It was also reported that the Prophet ﷺ would fast on 'Āshurā' in Makkah, before he migrated to Madīnah. When he migrated to Madīnah, he found the Jews celebrating this day, so he asked them why, and they replied as described in the Hadīth quoted.

The Prophet ﷺ thus ordered the fast of this day, mentioning great virtue for it:

It is an expiation for the year that went before.  
[Sahīh Muslim, # 1976]

But along with this instruction there is a deeper objective as well. It can be understood from the words of Rasūlullāh:

Fast on the Day of 'Āshurā' but oppose the Jews in doing so. Fast a day before it or a day after it as well. [Musnad Ahmad, # 2155]

## DO NOT IMITATE THE DISBELIEVERS

Even in an act of worship, something meritorious and praiseworthy in the sight of Allah, the Nabī of Allah ﷺ did not want his ummah to imitate the Jews and Christians. There were many other similar instances like this as well, where the Prophet ﷺ disliked that the Muslims mimic the practices of the disbelievers. One such example is when the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions wished to have a call that would summon the people for prayer, some gave suggestions of ringing a bell or lighting a fire which were all rejected by the Prophet ﷺ because it was the way of the disbelievers.

## HE WHO IMITATES A NATION IS OF THAT NATION

It is sad that today we have forgotten this profound lesson of our beloved Nabī ﷺ. We dress like them, look like them—abandoning the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ in his dressing and appearance—and we even act like them. Whereas the Prophet ﷺ has said:

Whoever imitates a nation is of that nation.  
[Abū Dāwūd, # 4031]

## FEEL PROUD TO FOLLOW THE SUNNAH

Our pious predecessors prided themselves in following the

Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. During the conquest of Persia, the Persian general invited the Sahābah to a reconciliatory negotiation. During the negotiations some food was brought before them and they began to partake. Amongst them was the esteemed Sahābī, Sayyidunā Ma'qil ibn Yasar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. While eating, a morsel fell from his hands to the ground. The teaching of our Nabī ﷺ is that the morsel should be picked up, cleaned or dusted off, and then eaten; which Sayyidunā Ma'qil رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ immediately did. Some of his companions urged him not to do so, as this might degrade them in the eyes of the Persians who were the Superpower of that time. However, Sayyidunā Ma'qil رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ reprimanded them saying, “I will not abandon what I heard from the Prophet ﷺ because of these non-believers.” And he then went on to act in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. [Sunan al-Dārimī, # 2029]

The Sahābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ understood that respect and honour is in following the Sunnah of our Nabī ﷺ. Sadly, we feel embarrassed and have discarded the Sunnah of the Best of Mankind to please those who will never be pleased with us until we become exactly like them and believe in what they believe. Allah سبحانه وتعالى has said:

And never will the Jews or the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion. [Baqarah: 120]

Allah سبحانه وتعالى then tells the believers:

Say, “Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance.” If you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you would have against Allah no protector or helper. [Baqarah: 120]

## NEW RESOLUTION FOR THE NEW YEAR

So, with the New Year let us take these lessons which the Prophet ﷺ has imparted to us, let us take heed and reap full benefit from this month. Let us begin the new year with fasting, and keeping the fast of 'Āshurā'.

Let our year begin with pledging ourselves to Allah, vowing to uphold and imitate the Sunnah of our Nabī ﷺ, to distance ourselves from and oppose the practices, habits, morals, and acts of the disbelievers, those who our Nabī ﷺ refused to imitate even in acts of worship.

We ask Allah to guide us, keep us steadfast upon the truth, and grant us the ability to adhere to the Sunnah, which is the true path to success.



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