



Life With Allah

Connecting to The Creator

Muharram



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The Month of Allah



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الحياة مع الله

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During certain blessed moments and places, we are given a wealth of opportunities to seek the mercy, love and blessings of Allah. These moments, particularly the ‘sacred months’, have been specially selected by Allah as the best times to worship Him and attain His proximity.

From among these **sacred months**, we recently witnessed the month of Dhul Ḥijjah. We are yet again fortunate to witness another blessed month; a chance for us to begin the New Islamic Year with good deeds, righteous intentions and praiseworthy resolutions.

The Four Sacred Months

Regarding the sacred months, Allah said in the Noble Qur’ān:

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ، ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ، فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا فِيهِنَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ،

“Indeed, the [ordained] number of the months according to Allah is twelve [lunar] months, [as was decreed] in the [Preserved Heavenly] Book of Allah on the day He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred. That is the upright religion so do not wrong yourselves in them.” (9:36)

These four months are **Dhul Qa’dah, Dhul Ḥijjah, Muḥarram and Rajab.**

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: “The year is twelve months of which four are sacred: the three consecutive months of Dhul Qa’dah, Dhul Hijjah, Muḥarram, and Rajab of Muḍar (named after the tribe of Muḍar as they used to respect this month) which occurs between Jumād (al-Ākhirah) and Sha’bān.” (Bukhārī 4406, Muslim 1679)

The specific mention of these four months does not mean that other months are not sacred, because the month of Ramaḍān is unanimously the most sacred month in the year. But these four months were specifically termed as sacred months because even the Pagans of Makkah observed their sacredness, following in the footsteps of their forefather Ibrāhīm (‘alayhis-salām). Despite their frequent tribal battles and regular wrangling, they deemed it unlawful to fight in these months. The sacredness of these four months was established right from the day Allāh created the universe.

“The most virtuous of the sacred months is the ‘Month of Allāh’, Muḥarram.” (Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله)

The Magnitude of Actions During the Sacred Months

Ibn ‘Abbās رحمه الله said, “The phrase ‘so do not wrong yourselves in them’ refers to all the months, then these four were singled out and made sacred – **thus sins in these months are more serious, and good deeds bring a greater reward.**”

In regards to the phrase “so do not wrong yourselves in them,” Qatādah رحمه الله said, “Wrongdoing during the sacred months is


more serious and incurs a greater burden of sin than in other months. Wrongdoing is a serious matter in any circumstances, but Allah makes whatever He wills of His commands carry more weight.”

He further said, “Allah has selected the elite from His creation: from the angels He selected Messengers; from mankind He selected Messengers; from speech He selected dhikr (His remembrance); from the spaces on earth He selected the Masājīd; **from the months He selected Ramaḍān and the sacred months...So, venerate that which has been venerated by Allah,** for the people of understanding and wisdom venerate that which Allah had venerated.” (Ibn Kathīr ﷺ)



Start the Year on a Good Note

Whether it is the beginning and end of the day or the beginning and end of the year, these **beginnings and ends constantly remind us of our own beginning and end**. It gives us a chance to reflect and ponder on our **inevitable death**, make amends and firm resolutions.

Ibn Rajab  said, “(Two of the) sacred months mark an end and the beginning of the Islamic Year: therefore, whoever fasts in Dhul Ḥijjah (excluding the prohibited days) and in Muḥarram has ended and started the year in worship. It is thus **hoped that the entire year will be recorded as worship**, as whoever starts any action with worship and ends it in worship, will be considered to have been in a state of worship between both of these times.”



Why is Muharram Special?

Along with being from among the sacred months, Muḥarram has other characteristics which are exclusive to it. They include:

(1) The only month known as the ‘Month of Allah’

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ described Muḥarram as the “Month of Allah”. (Muslim 1163)

The virtue and honour of this month can be attested to by the fact that it is the only month **attributed to the name of Allah**. A virtue which is exclusive to it. Ibn Rajab رحمه الله said, “Such an attribution is only made by Allah to the **elite of His creation**, such as the attribution of the Prophets to Himself as His slaves, and the attribution of the House (Ka’bah) and the Camel to Himself.”

(2) The best month to fast after Ramaḍān

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “The best fasting after Ramaḍān is the sacred month of Allah (Muḥarram).” (Muslim 1163)

Ibn Rajab رحمه الله said, “The above ḥadīth makes it clear that the most virtuous optional fasts after Ramaḍān are the fasts of Muḥarram. And given that **Allah attributed fasting, amongst all acts of worship, to Himself** [saying, “It is Mine, and I Myself will give reward for it.”] it was suitable that this month, which is also ascribed to Allah, be selected for this particular form of worship.

(3) It contains within it the Day of 'Āshūrā'

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Fasting the day of 'Āshūrā', I hope Allah will **expiate thereby for the year that came before it.**" (Muslim 1162)

“ Allah initiated the year with a sacred month (Muḥarram) and ended it with a sacred month (Dhul Ḥijjah). There is no month after the month of Ramaḍān greater to Allah than Muḥarram.” (Ḥasan al-Baṣrī ؓ)



What to Do in Muharram


Below are a few things which you can do to make the most of this blessed month:

- **Make du'ā', especially while fasting.** The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "There are three prayers that are not rejected: the prayer of a father for his child, the prayer of the fasting person and the prayer of the traveller." (Tirmidhī 1905)
To learn how to make du'ā' along with the du'ās from the Qur'ān and Sunnah, order or download our free publication **'I Am Near'**.
- **Recite and reflect over the Qur'ān.** Make realistic targets which best suit your commitments, but aim to recite the Qur'ān daily. This may be a full chapter or even a few pages. Along with recitation, take time out to reflect and ponder over the message of the Qur'ān.
- **Do dhikr abundantly.** Make an intention to learn the Sunnah adhkār, especially the morning and evening adhkār, the adhkār after ṣalāh and of sleeping and the adhkār for general actions. Order or download a free copy of **'Daily Adhkār'**.
- **Give in charity.** The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Spend in charity and do not count it, lest Allah counts it against you. Do not hoard it, lest Allah withholds from you." (Muslim 1029)

May Allah make this year our best year and the days of this year our best days; both individually and collectively as an Ummah. Āmīn.

‘Ashura’: The 10th of Muharram



Although the month of Muḥarram is a sanctified month as a whole, the 10th however is the most sacred among all its days. The day is named ‘Āshūrā’ as it is derived from the word ‘Asharah, which means ten in Arabic.

‘Izz ibn ‘Abd al-Salām  said: ‘The superiority of times and places is of two types: the first is worldly and the second is religious. This second type (religious superiority) stems from **Allah bestowing His generosity on His slaves by giving a greater reward for deeds done.** An example of this is Him bestowing a greater reward for fasting in Ramaḍān than for fasting during other times. The day of ‘Āshūrā’ is another example of this. Thus, the superiority is due to Allah’s generosity and kindness towards His slaves in these times and places ...’

Virtues of Fasting on ‘Ashura’

The following narrations highlight the virtues of fasting on ‘Āshūrā’

(1) The Messenger  instructed the people of Madīnah to fast on this day

Al-Rubayyi‘ b. Mu‘awwidh  said, “The Messenger of Allah  sent a messenger to the settlements of the Anṣār surrounding Madīnah, in the morning of ‘Āshūrā’ to announce,

‘Whoever is observing the fast should complete it, and whoever has eaten something should not eat and complete the (fast of the) rest of the day.’ **After that, we used to fast on that day regularly** and if Allah willed, we would also make our young children fast; and we would go to the Masjid. We used to make toys out of wool for them: if any one of them cried for food, we would give them the toy until it was time to open the fast.” (Bukhārī 1960, Muslim 1136)

(2) Fasting on the day of ‘Āshūrā’ is a means of expiating (minor) sins

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ was asked about the fast of ‘Āshūrā’. He replied, **“It wipes away the sins of the previous year.”** (Muslim 1162)

It is from Allah’s immense mercy upon us that just by fasting one day, He expiates the (minor) sins of a whole year.

(3) The Messenger ﷺ was eager and anxiously awaited to fast on this day

‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās ؓ said, “I did not see the Messenger of Allah ﷺ **single out any day’s fasting and prioritise it except for this day** – the day of ‘Ashūrā’ – and this month i.e. Ramaḍān.” (Bukhārī 1867)

(4) Mūsā ؑ was saved from Fir‘awn on this day & and he fasted on this day

‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās ؓ narrated that when the Messenger of Allah ﷺ came to Madīnah, he found the Jews fasting on the day of ‘Āshūrā’. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked them,

“What is the (significance) of this day that you fast on it?” They replied, “This is a glorious day in which Allah saved Mūsā ؑ and his people, and He drowned Pharaoh and his people. **Mūsā fasted on this day out of gratitude, so we also fast on it.**” The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “I am closer to him (Mūsā) than you.” Subsequently, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ fasted on this day and ordered the Muslims to fast. (Bukhārī 2004)

Another narration in Musnad Aḥmad mentions that on this day, the Ark of Nūḥ ؑ settled on Mount Judi, so Nuḥ ؑ fasted out of gratitude.

(5) The virtue of fasting on ‘Āshūrā’ was common even among the pagans of Makkah

‘Ā’ishah ؓ said, “The Quraysh used to fast on the day of ‘Āshūrā’ in the Jāhiliyyah (Age of Ignorance), and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ would observe the fast...” (Bukhārī 2002)



The sea was in front, the enemy just behind.

This is it, thought the Banū Isrā'īl. But not Mūsā ﷺ.

When his people cried out, 'We're finished!' he stood firm and didn't waver. Instead, he responded:

كَلَّا إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ

“Absolutely not! My Lord is certainly with me

– He will guide me.” (26:62)




And Allah certainly was with him. His heart was with Allah. His heart was with Allah, so Allah was with him. On this auspicious day of 'Āshūrā', Allah drowned Fir'aawn and his army, and saved Mūsā ﷺ and his people.


Let us instead develop the imān and yaqīn (conviction) of Mūsā ﷺ and let us strive actively to remove oppression and tyranny.



Fasting on the 9th and 11th

Along with fasting on the 10th of Muḥarram, we should try to fast on the 9th and 11th as well due to the following narrations:

‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās  said, “The Messenger of Allah  said, ‘If I live to see the next year, if Allah wills, **we will fast on the 9th day too** (alongside the 10th Muḥarram).’ The Messenger of Allah  passed away before the next year came.” (Muslim 1134)

He  also said, “Fast the Day of ‘Āshūrā’, and **be different from the Jews** by fasting a day before it or a day after it.” (Aḥmad 2155, Ibn Khuzaymah 2095)

On this basis it may be said that there are varying degrees of fasting ‘Āshūrā’, the least of which is to fast only on the 10th and the best of which is to fast the 9th, 10th and 11th. The more one fasts in Muḥarram, the better it is.

Option 1: (and this is the best option): Fast the 9th, 10th and 11th.

Option 2: Fast the 9th and 10th.

Option 3: Fast the 10th and 11th.

Option 4: Fast only the 10th.

There are three levels of fasting on 'Āshūrā':

- (1) Fasting on the 9th, 10th and 11th which is the most complete.
 - (2) Fasting on the 9th and 10th.
 - (3) Fasting only on the 10th.
- (Ibn Ḥajar and Ibn al-Qayyim 🕌)

We ask Allah, al-Qahhār (the All-Dominant) in this blessed days to lift tyranny and injustice from the Ummah, rescue the oppressed believers and subdue the modern day Pharaohs. Āmīn.





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