

Fasting during the month of Muharram

The virtue of Muharram is that the fasts during this month are second in excellence to the fasts of Ramadhaan. Although every day and every month belongs to Allaah Ta'ala, Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم has mentioned that Muharram is Allaah's month. By saying this, Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم intended to emphasise the added auspiciousness of this month.

Hadhrat Abu Hurayra (R.A) reports that Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "After the fasts of Ramadhaan, the best fasts are those observed during Allaah's month of Muharram." (Tirmidhi Vol 1 Pg 157. Imam Tirmidhi has stated that the hadith is authentic).

The 10th of Muharram (Aashura)

The 10th of Muharram is a significant day in Islamic history. Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم used to fast on this day and commanded the Sahabah (R.A) to also fast. The fast of this day was initially Waajib (compulsory), but the compulsion was waived when the fasts of Ramadhaan were made Fardh. The Muslims then had a choice to either fast on this day or not to fast. However, the virtues of this fast have been expounded in the Ahadeeth. Among these is the virtue that the previous year's sins are forgiven.

Hadhrat Abu Qataadah (R.A) narrated that Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم said "I have strong hope that Allaah Ta'ala will forgive the previous year's sins for fasting on the day of Aashura." (Tirmidhi Vol.1 Pg.151)

Note: The sins referred to here are minor sins. Taubah is required to secure forgiveness for major sins.

Initially the Muslims only fasted on the 10th of Muharram but before the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم passed away; Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم mentioned that if he were alive the next year, he would fast on the 9th as well. Sadly, Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم did not live to see the following Muharram.

Hadhrat Abdullah bin Abbaas (R.A) narrates that Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم fasted on the day of Aashura and instructed the Muslims to fast as well. When the Muslims told Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم that the Jews and the Christians revere this day, he replied, "If I am alive next year, Inshaa'Allaah I shall fast on the 9th as well." However, Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم passed away before the next year. (Muslim Vol.1 Pg.359)

Therefore, **for Muslims that wish to fast**, it is necessary to do so on the 9th and 10th of Muharram or on the 10th and 11th of Muharram as mentioned in certain narrations.

Certain narrations also mention that one should fast a day before Aashura and a day after, it is therefore more virtuous to fast on all 3 days the 9th, 10th and 11th of Muharram.

Sheikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlawi (Rahmatullahi Alay) has also mentioned the above mentioned tarateeb (ranks regarding the fasting of Aashura) in the footnotes of Tirmidhi, titled "Lam'aat". (Tirmidhi Vol.1 Pg.157 footnotes)

Note: To fast on only the 10th is Makrooh Tanzihi (i.e. an act disliked by the Shari'ah) (Durrul Mukhtaar Vol.2 Pg.91 Rashidia)

Hadhrat Abdullah bin Abbas (R.A) reports that when Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم came to Madina, he noticed that the Jews fasted on the day of Aashura. When he asked them the reason for this, they replied, "This is a great day. It was on this day that Allaah Ta'ala delivered the Bani Israa'eel from their enemy. On this day Allah Ta'ala granted victory to Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) and the Bani Israa'eel. We fast because of the distinction of this day." Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم then said to the Jews, "We are closer to Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) than you." Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم also observed this fast and instructed the Muslims to follow suit. (Bukhari Vol.1 Pg.268 & 562)

Spending freely on one's Family

Hadhrat Abdullah bin Mas'ood (R.A) mentions that Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "Allaah Ta'ala will grant prosperity throughout the year to the person who spends freely on his family on the day of Aashura." (Tabraani, Bayhaqi).

Correction of Belief

The virtue of the day of Aashura (10th of Muharram), its importance and the reason for its significance have already come to our knowledge. The reason is that Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) and the Bani Israa'eel were rescued from Fir'oun and his army on this day. As a token of gratitude, Hadhrat Moosa (A.S) fasted on this day. In emulation, Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم also fasted on this day and instructed the Muslims to do the same. While the compulsion to fast on this day has been waived, the fast has still been retained in the Shari'ah as an optional **but highly commendable deed**. It is perhaps because of this same incident that people are encouraged to spend freely on their families on this day. Allaah Ta'ala knows best.

Will Qiyaamah take place on the day of Aashura (10th Muharram)?

An authentic hadith reported in Tirmidhi (pg.110) states that Qiyaamah will take place on a Friday. However, no authentic hadith says that this Friday will fall on the 10th of Muharram (i.e. the day of Aashura).

Some of the Famous virtues of the day of Aashura (10th of Muharram) that are all Fabrications, incorrect are:-

- That the repentance of Hadhrat Aadam (A.S) was accepted on this day.
- That the ark of Hadhrat Nooh (A.S) settled on Mount Judi on this day.
- That Hadhrat Ibraheem (A.S) was saved from the fire on this day.
- That on this day Allaah Ta'ala sent the ram to be sacrificed in place of Hadhrat Isma'eel (A.S).
- That on this day Allaah Ta'ala returned Hadhrat Yusuf (A.S) to his father Hadhart Ya'qoob (A.S).
- That there is a special salaah to be performed on this day..

A grave Misconception

Many people believe that the significance of Muharram and Aashura is linked to the martyrdom of Hadhrat Husain (R.A). This belief is erroneous. The Shari'ah of Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم was perfected during his very lifetime. How can any aspect of the Shari'ah then pivot on an incident that took place long after the demise of Rasulallah صلى الله عليه وسلم? In fact, it occurred many years after the period of the four Khulafa Raashideen (the four righteous Khalifs).

Conclusion

Everything said above has made it evident that the day of Aashura (10th of Muharram) is especially important because it was the day in which Hadhrat Musa (A.S) and the Bani Israa'eel were saved while Fir'oun and his army were drowned. It is also because of this that the fast is observed on this day. Everything else pertaining to its importance is unfounded. No injunction of the Shari'ah pertaining to this day is related to the martyrdom of Hadhrat Husain (R.A). There are no special salaahs to be performed and no special foods that have to be prepared either.

Source used Muharram and Aashura virtues and laws by: Sheikul Hadith Hadhrat Moulana Fazlur Rahman Saheb Azmi (D.B)