

The Day of
'Āshūrā

Between Correct Following and Innovation

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2

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All praise is due to Allāh who Favored us with the Blessings of Islām and the Sunnah, and may Ṣalāh and Salām be upon the one Allāh sent as a Mercy and Guidance for this ummah. May it also be upon his Family and Companions, the leaders of guidance and lanterns at times of *dhulmah* (darkness).

As for what follows, then in this exposé I have clarified the issues connected to the day of ‘Āshūrā and its position as it relates to correct following and innovation. I did this hoping for Allāh’s Bounty and Reward and seeking protection with Him from His Retribution and punishment.

The Virtue of Fasting the Month of Muḥarram

It is the Sunnah to fast the month of Muḥarram, rather it is in reality the most virtuous fasting after the month of Ramaḍān and that is based on what has come via Abū Ḥurairah ؓ who said the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

أفضل الصيام بعد رمضان شهر الله المحرم، وأفضل الصلاة
بعد الفريضة صلاة الليل

“The most virtuous fast after Ramaḍān is the month of Allāh, al-Muḥarram. And the most virtuous ṣalāh after that which is obligatory is the night prayer.” (Reported by Muslim: 1163)

The Virtue of Fasting the Day ‘Āshūrā

It is the Sunnah to fast the tenth of the month of Muḥarram, rather it is the most emphasized day in the Sunnah as it relates to the month of Muḥarram followed by the ninth (of

the month of Muḥarram). This is based on what has come via ‘Abdullāh ibn Abī Yazīd who said that he heard Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ, while being asked (in Ramaḍān) about fasting the day of ‘Āshūrā, saying: “I don’t know of any day fasted by the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ in which its virtue is sought out more than that day, nor (any month more than) this month, i.e. Ramaḍān.”

And in another version he said, ‘I did not see the Prophet ﷺ diligently seeking the virtue of fasting any particular day over another except today, the day of ‘Āshūrā.” (Recorded by al-Bukhārī: 2006 and Muslim: 1132) And on the authority of Abū Qatādah ؓ who said the Prophet ﷺ said:

صيام يوم عاشوراء، أحتسب على الله أن يكفر السنة التي
قبله

“I hope that Allāh will expiate because of fasting the day of ‘Āshūrā (the mistakes of) the previous year.” (Muslim: 1162)

The Various Ways of Fasting ‘Āshūrā

On the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās who said the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

لئن بقيت إلى قابل لأصومن التاسع

“If I am still here next year I will definitely fast the ninth.”

And in another version, he (Ibn ‘Abbās) said, “When the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ fasted the day of ‘Āshūrā and

commanded that it should be fasted his companions said to him, 'Oh Messenger of Allāh, verily it is a day that is exalted by the Jews and the Christians.' To which the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ replied:

فإذا كان العام القابل - إن شاء الله - صمنا اليوم التاسع

'If there's a next year insha Allāh we will fast the ninth.'" He (Ibn 'Abbās) went on to say, "But next year didn't come except that the Messenger of Allāh had already passed away." (Recorded by Muslim 1134)

And also, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās ؓ who said the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said:

**صوموا يوم عاشوراء، وخالفوا فيه اليهود، صوموا قبله يوماً،
أو بعده يوماً**

"Fast the day of 'Āshūrā and be different in it from the Jews by fasting a day before or after it." (Recorded by Aḥmad, Ibn Khuzaimah 2095 and al-Bayḥaqī) And it was graded ḥasan by Aḥmad Shākir in his verification of the *Musnad* of Aḥmad, but al-Albānī in his verification of Ibn Khuzaimah (ḥadīth 2095) said, "It's chain is weak but it has been narrated with a ṣaḥīḥ chain as a statement of a Companion."

Based upon this Ibn al-Qayyim mentions in *Zād al-Ma'ād* as well as Ibn Ḥajr in *Fath al-Bārī* that fasting is done in three ways:

- 1) The first way is to fast three days; the 9th, 10th and 11th.
- 2) The second way is to fast two days; the 9th and 10th.
- 3) The third way is to fast the day of 'Āshūrā by itself.

As for the first way, which is to fast three days - the 9th, 10th and 11th, then there is no ḥadīth from the Prophet ﷺ that establishes this, instead this is only authentic as a statement of Ibn ‘Abbās ؓ.

The Scholars, however, mention that this can be done in two circumstances. The first is if one is in doubt about the actual beginning of the month so he may fast the days as a precaution in order to be certain that he fasted the 9th and 10th.

The second circumstance is if by fasting these days along with ‘Āshūrā he intends it to be the fasting of three days of every month based on what is established from the ḥadīth of ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Āmr ؓ who said, the Messenger of Allāh said:

صوم ثلاثة أيام من كل شهر صوم الدهر كله

“Fasting three days of every month is the complete Ṣiyām ad-Dahr (perpetual fasting).” (Agreed upon)

As for the second way which is to fast two days - the 9th and the 10th - then this is what the Sunnah has come with as previously seen.

As for the third way which is fasting the day of ‘Āshūrā by itself than this is also from the Sunnah, but it is more preferable to fast along with it a day before it or after it.

There Is No Connection Between the Murder of Husain and the Fasting of 'Āshūrā

There is no connection between the legislation of fasting 'Āshūrā - that was legislated when the Prophet ﷺ made ḥijrah (migration) to Madīnah - and the murder of Ḥusain - ؑ that occurred in the year 61 after ḥijrah - other than the fact that his murder happened to occur on 'Āshūrā. (This is evident from what has been transmitted) on the authority of 'Ā'ishah ؓ who said Quraish used to fast the day of 'Āshūrā in jāhiliyah (the pre-Islāmic days of ignorance) and the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ used to fast it (as well) in jāhiliyah. Then when the Prophet arrived in Madīnah he fasted it (again) and commanded that it be fasted, but when Ramaḍān was legislated he left off fasting the day of 'Āshūrā. So whoever wants he may fast it and whoever wants can leave it off. (Reported by al-Bukhārī: 2001 and 2002 as well as Muslim: 1125)

The Different Classification of People with Regards to 'Āshūrā as Weighed in the Scales of the Sharī'ah

1. Ahlus-Sunnah

The position of Ahlus-Sunnah (with regards to 'Āshūrā) is balanced between two innovations. They take 'Āshūrā as a day to show gratitude, so they fast according to the Sunnah as previously explained. They don't take it as a day of festivities, celebration and splurging on their families as is done by the Jews and the Nāṣibah (those who dislike the family of the Prophet), nor do they take it as a day of sorrow and commiseration as is done by the Rāfiḍah.

2. The Jews and the People of Innovation and Desire

A. The Jews and the Nāṣibah.

And from their innovations are the following:

They take the day of 'Āshūrā as a day of celebration and festivities.

1. They splurge on their families and households.
2. They wear Kuhul (eye makeup) and use Khidāb (Henna and other face and hand paints).

On the authority of Abū Mūsā al-Asha'ri ؓ who said, "The day of 'Āshūrā was a day exalted by the Jews and they used to take it as an 'eid (celebration) so the Prophet ﷺ said (to his Companions):

صوموه أنتم

'You all should fast.'" And in a version brought by Muslim (Abū Mūsā said), "The people of Khaibar used to fast the day of 'Āshūrā and would take it as an 'eid; they would adorn their women with jewelry and their shārah so the Prophet said (to his Companions):

صوموه أنتم

'You all should fast it.'" (Reported by al-Bukhārī: 2005 and Muslim: 1131). An-Nawawī said in his explanation of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, "The shārah (شارة) spelled with a sheen and no ḥamzah (on the alif) is that which is considered as pleasant in its demeanor and beautiful, i.e. they would adorn them in

their best and most beautiful clothes.” (As for the Sunnah then) there is no authentic ḥadīth regarding splurging on one’s family on this day and Shaykh-ul-Islām as well as others denied (the authenticity) of what has been attributed to the Prophet, ﷺ from the saying: “Whoever is extra generous to his family on the day of ‘Āshūrā, Allāh will be extra generous to him for the rest of his year.”

B. The Rāfiḍah

And their innovation is as follows:

1. They commit shirk by supplicating to Ḥusain ؑ and this (shirk) is their saying ‘Oh Ḥusain!’ along with their seeking aid from him.
2. Cursing the Ṣaḥābah and reviling them.
3. They take it as a day of sorrow and commiseration.
4. Wailing and the tearing of clothes.
5. The establishment of symposiums and plays based on lies and falsified realities.

The Proofs Regarding the Prohibition of Wailing and Tearing the Clothes and Slapping the Cheeks:

His statement ﷺ:

ليس منا من لطم الخدود وشق الجيوب ودعا بدعوى
الجاهلية

“He is not from us whoever slaps their cheeks and tears their collars and speaks in the ways spoken in jāhiliyah.” (Recorded by al-Bukhārī: 1249)

Also his statement:

أربع في أمّتي من أمر الجاهليّة لا يتركوهن: الفخر
بالأحساب، والطعن في الأنساب، والاستسقاء بالنجوم،
والنياحة على الميت

“Four things in my nation are from the affairs of jāhiliyah they won’t leave them: pride in noble descent, cursing the lineage, requesting the descending of rain from the stars and wailing over the dead.” (Muslim: 93)

What is Obligatory Upon Us at Times of Calamity

One should do al-Istirjā’ (say: Inna lillāhi wa inna ilayhi rāji’ūn, i.e. ‘Surely we belong to Allāh and indeed to Him we will return’) and make du’ā to Allāh that He reward him (for his affliction) and replace it with something that is good. As is (found) in the statement of Allāh, the Most High,

وَبَشِّرِ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا أَصَابَتْهُمُ مُصِيبَةٌ قَالُوا إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ ﴿١٥٦﴾ أُوْلَئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَوَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ ۖ وَأُوْلَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾


“And give glad tidings to the patient, those who when a misfortune befalls them they say: ‘Surely we belong to Allāh and indeed to Him we will return.’ These individuals, upon

them is the ṣalāh of their Lord and Mercy and they are those who are rightly guided.” (Sūrah al-Baqarah: 155-157).

Also his statement ﷺ:

ما من مسلم يصاب بمصيبة فيقول: إنا لله وإنا إليه راجعون،
اللهم أجرني في مصيبي، واخلف لي خيرا منها، إلا أجره
الله في مصيبته وأخلفه خيرا منها

“There is no Muslim who a calamity befalls him so he says (because of it), ‘Surely we belong to Allāh and indeed to Him we will return. Oh Allāh reward me in my affliction and give me better after it,’ except that Allāh will reward him for his affliction and give him better after it.” (Reported by Muslim: 918)



This is the end of that which I wish to clarify, and all praise is due to Allāh, Lord of all that is created, and may the Ṣalāh of Allāh as well as Salām be upon our Prophet Muḥammad as well as his Family and all of his Companions.

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