

# Significance of Muharram and `Ashura` IN THE SUNNAH

By E-Da`wah Committee



لجنة الدعوة الإلكترونية

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## Introduction



Allah (Glory be to him) has made the occasions of goodness, where the rewards are multiplied and souls are purified, never ending. Once an occasion comes to an end, another occasion follows. And whenever a worship finishes, another worship starts. Thus, the loving worshipper of God remains in continuous connection with his God, the Almighty. Among the great occasions of goodness is the month of Muharram which the Prophet (peace be

upon him) made fasting during it among the best fasts following the fasting in Ramadan.

Moreover, during the month of Muharram, there is one of the best days of the year, namely `Ashura', the 10<sup>th</sup> day. On this day, Allah has saved Musa (Moses, peace be upon him) from Pharaoh. The Jews have venerated this day, and the Messenger of Allah commanded Muslims to venerate this day and celebrate it with performing good deeds and fasting.

The below texts are a number of selected authentic hadiths from the sayings of the best of mankind, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). These texts show us the merits of the month of Muharram and its status among all other months as well as the excellence of the day of `Ashura' from among all days. They cover the significance of the day of `Ashura' and the importance of observe fasting on it. We ask Allah to make them beneficial for all those who are keen on seeking knowledge, especially the knowledge about the hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

## On Muharram and `Ashura'

1. Narrated Abu Bakrah (may Allah be pleased with him): "The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "Time has come back to its original state which it had when Allah created the Heavens and the Earth; the year is twelve months, four of which are sacred. Three of them are in succession; Dhul-Qi`dah, Dhul-Hijjah and Al-Muharram, and (the fourth being) Rajab Mudar (named after the tribe of Mudar as they used to respect this month) which stands between Jumada (the second) and Sha`ban." (Al-Bukhari and Muslim)
2. Abu Hurairah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported: "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "The best month for observing fasting after Ramadan is Muharram, and the best Prayer after the prescribed prayer is prayer at night." (Muslim)

3. `Abdullah ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) reported that the Arabs of pre-Islamic days used to observe fast on the day of `Ashura' and the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) and Muslims observed fasting in it before fasting in Ramadan was made obligatory. But when it became obligatory, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "`Ashura' is one of the days of Allah, so he who wished should observe fast and he who wished otherwise should abandon it." (Muslim)
  
4. Ibn `Abbas reported that when the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) fasted on the day of `Ashura' and commanded that it should be observed as a fast, they (his Companions) said to him: "O Messenger of Allah, it is a day which the Jews and Christians hold in high esteem." Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "When the next year comes, God willing, we would observe fast on the 9<sup>th</sup>. But the Messenger

of Allah (peace be upon him) died before the advent of the next year." In another narration, "If I remained to the next year, I will fast the 9<sup>th</sup>." (Muslim

5. It was narrated that Ibn `Abbas said: "The Prophet (peace be upon him) came to Al-Madinah, and he found the Jews observing a fast on the day of `Ashura'. He said: "What is this?" They said: "This is the day when Allah saved the people of Israel from their enemy. Thus, Musa fasted this day in gratitude." The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "We have more right to Musa than you do.' So, the Prophet Muhammad fasted that day and enjoined (others) to be fasted." (Agreed upon)

6. Narrated `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her): "Quraish used to fast on the day of `Ashura' in the Pre-Islamic period, and Allah's Messenger. When the Messenger of Allah came to Al-Madinah, he fasted on that day and ordered others to fast it too.

Later when the fasting of the month of Ramadan was prescribed, he gave up fasting on the day of `Ashura' and it became optional for one to fast on it or not." (Agreed upon)

7. Narrated Abu Musa (may Allah be pleased with him): "The day of `Ashura' was considered as `Eid (festival) day by the Jews. So the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "I recommend you (Muslims) to fast on this day." (Agreed upon)

8. Al-Hakam ibn al-A`raj reported: "I went to Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) and he was reclining using his mantle as a pillow near the fountain of Zamzam. I said to him: "Tell me about fasting on `Ashura'." He said: "When you see the new moon of Muharram then count the (days) and observe fast on the 9<sup>th</sup>." I said to him: "Is it how the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) observed the fast on it?" He said: "Yes." (Muslim)

## **Excellence of `Ashura'**

9. Abu Qatadah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "The observance of three days' fast every month, and Ramadan to the other (i.e. the fast of Ramadan every year) is (equivalent to) a perpetual fast. I seek from Allah that fasting on the day of `Arafah may atone for the sins of the preceding and the coming year, and I seek from Allah that fasting on the day of `Ashura' may atone for the sins of the preceding year." (Muslim)

10. Narrated Ibn `Abbas: "I never saw the Prophet (peace be upon him) seeking to fast on a day more preferable to him than this day, the day of `Ashura', or this month, i.e. the month of Ramadan."

## **Fasting on the Day of `Ashura'**

11. Narrated Salamah ibn Al-Akwa` : "The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered a man from the tribe of Aslam to announce amongst the people that whoever had eaten should fast the rest of the day, and whoever had not eaten should continue his fast, as that day was the day of `Ashura'." (Agreed upon)
12. Ibn `Abbas narrated: "The Messenger of Allah ordered fasting the tenth day for the Day of `Ashura." (At-Tirmidhi)
13. Ibn `Abbas narrated: "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, "Fast on the day of `Ashura', and be different from the Jews in it; by fasting a day before or after it." (Ibn Khuzaymah)
14. Narrated Ar-Rubay` bint Mu`awwadh: "The Prophet (peace be upon him) sent a messenger to the villages of the Ansar in

the morning of the day of `Ashura' (10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram) to announce: "Whoever has eaten something should not eat but complete the day fasting, and whoever is observing the fast should complete it." She further said, "Since then we used to fast on that day regularly and also make our boys fast. We used to make toys of wool for the boys and if anyone of them cried for food, he was given those toys till it was the time of the breaking of the fast." (Agreed upon)

15. Narrated Humayd ibn `Abdur-Rahman that he heard Mu`awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan on the day of `Ashura' during the year he performed Hajj, saying on the pulpit, "O the people of Medina! Where are your religious scholars? I heard Allah's Messenger saying, "This is the day of `Ashura'. Allah has not enjoined its fasting on you but I am fasting it. You have the choice either to fast or not to fast (on this day).'" (Agreed upon)

16. Jabir ibn Samurah said, "The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) would command us to observe fast on the day of `Ashura' and exhort us to do it and was particular about it. But, when (fasting) in Ramadan was made obligatory, he henceforth neither commanded us nor forbade us, nor was he so particular about it." (Muslim)
17. Narrated Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) "The Prophet (peace be upon him) fasted the day of `Ashura' and commanded people to observe fasting in it. Later when the fasting of the month of Ramadan was prescribed, he gave up fasting on the day of `Ashura'." Ibn `Umar would not fast it unless it coincides with his fast." (Al-Bukhari)