

'Āshūrā' - 10th of Muharram

'Āshūrā' was a day upon which Nabi Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam fasted from the Makkan Period.

Upon migration to Madīnah Munawwarah, he (Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam) found the Jews fasting on this day as well. Upon enquiry, they said: "This is a very significant day. It is the day on which Allāh Ta'ālā saved the Banī Isrā'īl from their enemy (Fir'aun and his army), so Mūsā 'Alayhis Salām fasted on it (as a sign of gratitude to Allāh Ta'ālā)." Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam said: "I am more entitled and closer to Mūsā 'Alayhis Salām than you."

Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam then (continued fasting) on this day and ordered the Sahābah Radhiyallāhu 'Anhum to do so as well. (Bukhāri, 2004)

Virtues of Muharram and 'Āshūrā'

Sayyidunā 'Ali Radhiyallāhu 'Anhu reported that Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam said: "If you wish to fast after the month of Ramadan, then fast in Muharram; for indeed, it is the month of Allāh. [In this month] is a day on which Allāh Ta'ālā accepted the repentance of a nation, and on which He will accept the repentance of other people." (Tirmidhi, 741)

The virtue of Muharram and 'Āshūrā' was established during the lifetime of Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam and far pre-dates the tragic martyrdom of the beloved grandson of Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam at Karbala.

Fasting on the Day of 'Āshūrā'

Hadhrat Abdullāh ibn Abbās Radhiyallāhu 'Anhu said: "Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam anxiously awaited the fast of 'Āshūrā' more than any other day." (Bukhāri, 2006)

Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam said: "(Fasting on 'Āshūrā') will expiate the sins of the past year." (Muslim, 1162)

It is Sunnah to fast on either the 9th and 10th or the 10th and 11th of Muharram.

Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam commanded: "Observe the fast of 'Āshūrā' and oppose the Jews- fast a Day before it or a day after it (as well)." (Sahih Ibn Khuzaymah 2095)

Opposing the Jews was the initial reason Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam cited for this command. Once this action has been established as Sunnah and become the continuous practice of the Ummah, it will not change. This is irrespective of whether the Jews still fast on this day. There are numerous examples where an action of Shariah was established for a certain reason. Despite that reason no longer applying, the practice remains Sunnah.

The "Ramal" (walking in a soldierly manner) during the Tawāf of Hajj and 'Umrah was initially prescribed for displaying the strength of the Muslims who had arrived from Madīnah Munawwarah. Despite the reasoning no longer applying, Ramal is still carried out as a Sunnah practice in Tawāf. Similar is the case of Ghusl on a Jumu'ah. Despite the initial reasoning (averting the odour of perspiration) no longer applying, this remains Sunnah.

An important lesson- Remaining distinct from the non-believers!

Even in acts of 'Ibādāt, Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam taught us to oppose the actions of the disbelievers.

While we interact with the disbelievers, our Īmān demands that we remain distinct from them in our ways and mannerisms. Islām has given us our own identity based on the Pure Sunnah of Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam.

Never mind participating in any festivals of other nations, we should not even wish them a "Merry this" or a "Happy that." Doing so is a tacit acceptance of their Shirk. We should also distance ourselves from the other customs of the disbelievers that have crept into our communities. This includes engagements, birthday parties, etc!

'Increase' your sustenance

Rasūlullāh Sallallāhu 'Alayhi wa Sallam also said: "The one who generously spends on his family and his dependents on 'Āshūrā', Allāh Ta'ālā will (increase his provisions) throughout the year." (Mu'jamul Awsat, 9302)

Spending extra on one's dependents (according to one's means) will be praiseworthy, while not being wasteful or extravagant.

A recent innovation

The Hadith refers to spending upon those reliant on one, those upon whom one usually spends. Recently, people have begun exchanging "Āshūrā' gifts" and making a celebration of the day. This should be discouraged and avoided.

May Allah Ta'ala grant us a genuine appreciation of the great bounty of 'Āshūrā', and may He forgive our sins and open avenues of sustenance for us, Āmīn!

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