



1. Fasting the Day of ‘Aashooraa’

Delivered by His Eminence
ash-Shaykh Usaamah ibn ‘Abdillaah Khayyaat
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All praise is due to Allaah whose bounty and giving are limitless. Allaah is perfect in every way and He deserves that we offer Him praise that draws us nearer to Him and due to which He would grant us everlasting happiness. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah alone, without any partner. He favours with His mercy whomever He wills. I further bear witness that our leader and Prophet, Muhammad, is Allaah’s worshipping servant and Messenger. He was the seal of the Prophets and he is the role model for all obedient servants of Allaah. O Allaah, we implore You to grant continuous commendation and protection to Your worshipping servant and Messenger, Muhammad, as well as to his family, Companions, and all who follow their path until the Day of Resurrection and Recompense.

Servants of Allaah, you must observe taqwaa of Allaah [by fulfilling His commands and avoiding His prohibitions]. You must also remember that you will be brought before Allaah “on the day when every individual will see what his own hands have sent forth, and the person who persisted in rejecting the truth from Allaah will say, ‘How much I wish I had been mere dust.’”¹

Dear Muslims, desiring to do good things, consistently seeking them out, pursuing the channels that lead to them, imploring Allaah for guidance, and beseeching Him for assistance in accomplishing the greatest extent of the aforementioned are all traits of an individual who constantly returns to Allaah and diligently complies with His directives. Such a person is someone who has reverential fear of Allaah – the Most Merciful – even though he does not see Allaah in this world, and who strives to please Allaah – the Most Exalted – by doing all that is beloved to Him. Allaah has directed His worshipping servants to do the foregoing things, and encouraged them to prepare ample provisions of those things for themselves as they proceed along their course to Him. They are to do so hoping for admittance to the abode of their Lord’s favour, for the rewards He has promised them, and for the delight of seeing His sublime face in Jannah which is the destination that has been prepared for the people of taqwaa and whose expanse is that of the heavens and the Earth.

The manifestations of Allaah’s mercy and favour to His obedient servants – as well as the fact that He wants good for them – are clearly evident from the multitude of opportunities He has given them to earn His reward. Not only that, He has drawn their attention to those opportunities and instructed them to make the most of them. This can be found in the guidance He sent down in the Qur’aan as well as the message He sent with His beloved chosen Prophet Muhammad (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) in the authentic Sunnah. Opportunities to do good things and earn Allaah’s reward abound throughout the entire year. There is no month in the year whose days and nights are devoid of prescribed acts of worship by which a servant of Allaah can attain salvation. There are very many acts of worship throughout each day and night by which an individual can draw nearer to his Lord and attain tremendous reward.

A Muslim concludes one Hijree year worshipping his Lord by performing the rites of Hajj and ‘Umrah, mentioning Allaah during the days of tashreeq², seeking nearness to Allaah by offering a sacrifice, fasting the Day of ‘Arafah if not performing Hajj, and various other acts of obedience and

¹ See Soorah an-Naba’ (78):40.

² 11th, 12th, and 13th of the lunar month Thul-Hijjah.



worship prescribed during Thul-Hijjah which is the final month of the Hijree year. The Muslim then begins the following year worshipping his Lord by fasting in the month of Muharram which is the first month of the Hijree year. The Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) informed us that the most virtuous of fasting after Ramadaan is fasting during Muharram, as in a hadeeth collected by al-Imaam Muslim in his Saheeh, and by the compilers of the Sunan collections.³ This provides major incentive to be mindful of the objective for which we were created, and purpose for which Allaah put us upon this Earth. Allaah, the Almighty and Most Majestic, explained that in the Qur'aan by saying,

﴿ وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾ مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعَمُونِ ﴿٥٧﴾ ﴾

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ ﴾

“I did not create jinns and humans except for them to worship Me alone. I do not want any provision from them and I do not want them to feed Me. Indeed, it is Allaah alone who continually provides, and possesses infinite might.”⁴ This is something we must always remember. Despite it being a completely clear and well-established reality based on the texts of Allaah’s Book, it still escapes the minds of many people. When a person submits to Allaah in Islam, his entire life and all of his deeds are to be devoted to Allaah: his Creator, his Provider, the One to whom he belongs, and the One who regulates all matters for all people as He wills. An individual must make Allaah his objective, the focus of his heart, and the aim of his deeds. “Say: I sincerely devote my prayers, my rites of sacrifice, my life, and my death all to Allaah alone, the Lord of all creation. He has no partner. That is the command I have been given, and I am the first to submit to Him in Islam.”⁵

Servants of Allaah, the most emphasized day of fasting during this month is the tenth of Muharram, which is the day known as ‘Aashooraa’, and fasting that day merits enormous reward. A narration in Saheeh al-Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim mentions that ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) was asked about fasting ‘Aashooraa’ and he said, “I never saw Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) specify any day for fasting, regarding it as superior to other days, besides this day”, referring to ‘Aashooraa’, “and this month”, referring to Ramadaan.⁶ Al-Imaam Muslim also collected hadeeth from Aboo Qataadah (may Allaah be pleased with him) who narrated that the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) was once asked about the virtue of fasting ‘Aashooraa’ and he replied, “I hope from Allaah that it would lead to being forgiven for the sins committed during the previous year.”⁷ In addition, a hadeeth in the Two Saheeh collections mentions that ibn ‘Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) narrated that when Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) came to al-Madeenah, he found that the Jews there fasted the day of ‘Aashooraa’. Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) asked them, “What day is this that you fast?” They replied, “It is a momentous day. On it, Allaah saved the Prophet Moosaa and his people, and also drowned Fir’aawn and his followers. As a result, Moosaa fasted it out of gratitude, and that is why we fast it as well.” Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “We have even more right to Moosaa and are more entitled to him than you are.” Afterwards, Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection)

³ See Saheeh Muslim (1163).

⁴ Soorah ath-Thaariyaat (51):56-58.

⁵ Soorah al-An’aam (6):162-163.

⁶ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (2006).

⁷ Saheeh Muslim (1162).



fasted that day and he gave the instruction that it be a day of fasting.⁸

Knowing the immense reward attained by fasting ‘Aashooraa’ gives us much encouragement to ensure that we do not neglect the opportunity to fast on a day of such tremendous blessing, in emulation of our Noble Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) and in following the path of our righteous Salaf (the foremost generations of Islam), may Allaah pleased with all of them. They gave unparalleled attention to fasting this day. Al-Bukhaaree and Muslim collected a narration in which ar-Rubayyi‘ bint Mu‘awwith (may Allaah be pleased with her) said that on the morning of ‘Aashooraa’, the Messenger of Allaah (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) sent word to the villages of the Ansaar around al-Madeenah saying, “If someone began this day fasting, he should complete his fast; and if someone did not begin this day fasting, he should fast for the remainder of the day.” She added, “We would subsequently fast that day and even have our young ones fast it as well. We would take them with us to the masjid and we made toys for them out of wool. If any of them cried for food, we would give them a toy until it was time to break our fast.” The narration of the hadeeth collected by Muslim mentions that she said, “If the children asked us for food, we gave them a toy to keep them occupied so that they could complete their fast.”⁹

Based on the preceding, al-Imaam Aboo Haneefah (may Allaah have mercy upon him) had said that fasting ‘Aashooraa’ was obligatory at that time. However, its obligation was later abrogated and, as a result, it became a highly encouraged act of worship [although not obligatory]. This is also what is apparent from the statements of al-Imaam Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy upon him). As it relates to the young children, they were not obligated to fast since, due to them being minors, it was not yet obligatory for them to perform prescribed acts of worship. However, as mentioned by al-Imaam al-Qurtubee (may Allaah have mercy upon him), the Companions had the children fast in order to train them, and also due to how much they – the Companions – complied with the religion’s directives.

Servants of Allaah, you must continue to observe taqwaa of Allaah. Additionally, ensure that you strive to seize the opportunity you have to fast on this blessed day, sincerely devoting your acts of worship to Allaah and following the practice of Allaah’s Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection). By doing that, you would attain the greatest success.

I beseech Allaah to enable all of us to glean benefit from the guidance of His Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection). I say this much, and I ask Allaah, the Most Magnificent and Majestic, to forgive me, you, and all Muslims for every misdeed. Allaah is certainly the Most Forgiving, the Bestower of mercy.



All praise is due to Allaah who guides us to a straight path. I praise Allaah, as He is perfect in every way. He is the Most Kind and the Bestower of mercy. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah alone, without any partner, and I bear witness that our leader and Prophet, Muhammad, is Allaah’s worshipping servant and Messenger who traversed the soundest path and had the highest standard of conduct. O Allaah, we beseech You to grant commendation and protection to Your worshipping servant and Messenger, Muhammad, as well as to his family, Companions, and all who follow their path until the Day of Recompense.

Servants of Allaah, the Prophet Muhammad (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) fasted ‘Aashooraa’. Prior to him, the Prophet Moosaa (may Allaah grant him continued protection) fasted ‘Aashooraa’ out of gratitude to Allaah for His blessings. That was because Allaah had

⁸ Saheeh Muslim (1130).

⁹ See Saheeh al-Bukhaaree (1960), Saheeh Muslim (1136).



saved Moosaa and his people, and also drowned Fir‘awn and his followers. This clearly shows that being grateful to Allaah for His blessings requires obedience to Him. Gratitude by obeying Allaah is what causes blessings we have to remain, and it enables us to attain more of them from Allaah. “Remember when your Lord proclaimed: If you are grateful, I will grant you more.”¹⁰ Therefore, servants of Allaah, ensure that you are grateful to Allaah by doing what pleases Him and avoiding what incurs His anger.

In addition, as it relates to fasting ‘Aashooraa’, you should also fast a day prior to it or after it. The Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “If I remain alive until next year, I will most certainly fast the ninth.” This was collected by Muslim.¹¹ There is also a hadeeth collected by at-Tabaraanee (may Allaah have mercy upon him) in al-Mu‘jam al-Kabeer with a saheeh chain of narration, in which the Prophet (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection) said, “If I remain alive – if Allaah wills – until next year, I will fast the ninth lest I miss fasting ‘Aashooraa’.”¹² This was the view held by al-Imaam ash-Shaafi‘ee and al-Imaam Ahmad (may Allaah have mercy upon them). In fact, al-Imaam Aboo Haneefah (may Allaah have mercy upon him) had disliked for the tenth (i.e. the Day of ‘Aashooraa’) to be fasted on its own.

In conclusion, invoke Allaah to grant commendation and protection to the individual who was the seal of the Prophets and the Messenger whom Allaah sent to all of creation. Allaah instructed you to do so in the Qur’aan when He said,

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴾

“Indeed, Allaah grants His commendation to the Prophet, and the angels invoke Allaah to grant him even further commendation. People of eemaan, invoke Allaah to grant the Prophet commendation and to grant him protection as well.”¹³

¹⁰ Soorah Ibraaheem (14):7.

¹¹ Saheeh Muslim (1134).

¹² Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabeer (10/330), Silsilah al-Ahaadeeth as-Saheehah (350).

¹³ Soorah al-Ahzaab (33):56.