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Assalaam 'alaykum warahmatullaahi wabarakaatuh

## MUHARRAM ~ Remember to FAST!

We are now in the month of Muharram, the beginning of a new year. Fourteen hundred and twenty seven years have passed since the Muslims migrated from Makkah to live in Madeenah, the Hijrah. Time changes many things but subhaanAllaah our religion is not one of change. We continue to be guided by the Qur'aan of Allaah and continue to follow our prophetic traditions (Sunnah) - in the hope that we can live up to the Promise of Allaah, the reward for eternal happiness in Paradise.

One such Sunnah of the noble Messenger (saw) is to Fast on the 9th and 10th of Muharram. This is known as the day of Aashooraa' and fasting on it expiates for the sins of the whole year.

## FASTING THE 10TH OF MUHAARAM

When the Day of Judgment comes, we will without doubt all desire to steer clear from our sins and wish that we had done more good deeds that would be a cause for removal of our bad deeds.

Muharram is the first month in the Islamic calendar. Of particular interest to us Muslims should be the fasting of the 9th and 10th of Muharram. The Prophet (saw) said about the voluntary fasting on the Day of 'Aashoraa':

*'It expiates the sins of the preceding year.'*  
[Saheeh Muslim]

Ibn Abbas (ra) reported:

*'The Prophet (saw) came to al-Madeenah and saw the Jews fasting on the day of 'Aashooraa'. He asked them about that. They replied, "This is a good day, the day on which Allah rescued Bani Israa'eel from their enemy. So Moosa (as) observed fast on this day."*

*The Prophet (saw) said, "We have more claim over Moosa than you." So the Prophet (saw) observed fast on that day and ordered (the Muslims) to observe fast (on that day)."*  
[Bukhaaree & Muslim]

Ibn 'Abbas (ra) also reported,

*"The Messenger of Allah (saw) fasted on the day of 'Aashooraa' and ordered the people to fast on it. The people said, "O Messenger of Allah, it is a day that the Jews and Christians honour." The Prophet (saw) said, "When the following year comes - Allah willing - we shall fast on the ninth." The death of the Prophet (saw) came before the following year."*  
[Muslim, Abu Dawood]

So it is recommended to fast on the 10th of Muharram and the 9th along with it as well, the additional day is to differentiate the Muslims from the People of the Book.

## EXPIATION FOR WHAT?

Imaam al-Nawawi (rh) said:  
"It expiates for all minor sins, i.e., it brings forgiveness of all sins except major sins."

Then he said:  
"Fasting the day of 'Arafaah expiates for two years, and the day of 'Aashooraa' expiates for one year. If when a person says 'Aameen' and it coincides with the 'Aameen' of the angels, he will be forgiven all his previous sins... Each one of the things that we have mentioned will bring expiation. If there are minor sins for which expiation is needed, expiation for them will be accepted; if there are no minor sins or major sins, good deeds will be added to his account and he will be raised in status... If he had committed major sins but no minor sins, we hope that his major sins will be reduced."  
[al-Majmoo' Sharh al-Muhadhdhab]

Ibn Taymiyah (rh) said: "Tahaarah, salaah, fasting in Ramadaan, on the day of 'Arafaah and on 'Aashooraa' expiate for minor sins only."  
[al-Fataawa al-Kubra]

# THE VIRTUES OF MUHARRAM

Muharram is a blessed and important month; the first month of the Hijri calendar and one of the four sacred months about which Allaah says:

**“Verily, the number of months with Allaah is twelve months (in a year), so it was ordained by Allaah on the Day when He created the heavens and the earth; of them, four are sacred. That is the right religion, so wrong not yourselves therein...”**

[9:36]

*‘The year is twelve months of which four are sacred: the three consecutive months of Dhu’l-Qa’dah, Dhu’l-Hijjah and Muharram, and Rajab which comes between Jumaada and Sha’baan.’*

[Bukhaaree]

Muharram is so called because it is a sacred (*muharram*) month and to confirm its sanctity.

Allaah’s words: **“so wrong not yourselves therein...”** mean do not wrong yourselves in these sacred months, because sin in these months is worse than in other months.

Ibn ‘Abbaas (ra) said this phrase (*so wrong not yourselves therein...*) referred to all the months, then these four were singled out and made sacred, so that sin in these months is more serious and good deeds bring a greater reward.

Qataadah said concerning this phrase (*so wrong not yourselves therein...*) that wrongdoing during the sacred months is more serious and more sinful than wrongdoing at any other time. Wrongdoing at any time is a serious matter, but Allaah gives more weight to whichever of His commands He wills. Allaah has chosen certain ones of His creation. He has chosen from among the angels Messengers and from among mankind Messengers. He chose from among speech the remembrance of Him (dhikr). He chose from among the earth the masaajid, from among the months Ramadaan and the

sacred months, from among the days Friday and from among the nights Laylat al-Qadr, so venerate that which Allaah has told us to venerate. People of understanding and wisdom venerate the things Allaah has told us to venerate.

[Summarized from Tafseer Ibn Katheer]

The Prophet (saw) said: *‘The best of fasting after Ramadaan is fasting Allaah’s month of Muharram.’*

[Muslim]

It was reported that the Prophet (saw) used to fast more in Sha’baan. It is likely that the virtue of Muharram was not revealed to him until the end of his life, before he was able to fast during this month.

[Sharh al-Nawawi ‘ala Saheeh Muslim]

## ‘AASHOORAA’ IN HISTORY

*“The Prophet (saw) came to Madeenah and saw the Jews fasting on the day of ‘Aashooraa’. He said, ‘What is this?’ They said, ‘This is a righteous day, it is the day when Allaah saved the Children of Israa’eel from their enemies, so Moosa fasted on this day.’ He said, ‘We have more right to Moosa than you,’ so he fasted on that day and commanded [the Muslims] to fast on that day.”*

[Bukhaari]

“[the Jews said:] “This is a great day, on which Allaah saved Moosa and his people, and drowned Pharaoh and his people.”

[Muslim]

In another narration: *“This is the day on which the Ark settled on Mount Joodi, so Nuh fasted this day in thanksgiving.”*

[Ahmad]

It was also reported the Prophet (saw) used to fast on ‘Aashooraa’ in Makkah, before he migrated to Madeenah. When he migrated to Madeenah, he found the Jews celebrating this day, so he asked them why, and they replied as described in the hadeeth quoted above. He commanded the Muslims to be dif-

ferent from the Jews, who took it as a festival. According to a report by Muslim: the Jews used to take it as a festival and their women would wear their jewellery and symbols on that day. The Prophet (saw) said: ‘So you [Muslims] should fast on that day.’”

[Bukhaaree]

Apparently the motive for commanding the Muslims to fast on this day was the desire to be different from the Jews, so that the Muslims would fast when the Jews did not, because people do not fast on a day of celebration.

[Fath al-Baari]

Ibn ‘Abbaas (ra) said: “I never saw the Messenger of Allaah (saw) so keen to fast any day and give it priority over any other than this day, the day of ‘Aashooraa’, and this month, meaning Ramadaan.”

[Bukhaaree]

Being keen meant he intended to fast on that day in the hope of earning the reward for doing so.

He (saw) said: “For fasting the day of ‘Aashooraa’, I hope that Allaah will accept it as expiation for the year that went before.”

[Muslim]

What he (saw) meant by fasting on the ninth day was probably not that he would limit himself to that day, but would add it to the tenth, either to be on the safe side or to be different from the Jews and Christians, which is more likely. This is also what we can understand from some of the reports narrated by Muslim.”

[Fath al-Baari, 4/245]

## RULING ON FASTING ONLY ON THE DAY OF ‘AASHOORAA’

Shaykh al-Islam said: “Fasting on the day of ‘Aashooraa’ is an expiation for a year, and it is not makrooh to fast only that day...”

[Fataawa al-Kubra]

“There is nothing wrong with fasting only on ‘Aashooraa’”

[Ibn Hajar]

## ENCOURAGEMENT TO DO GOOD

Allaah encourages his servants to perform righteous deeds and to rush to accomplish acts of obedience. Allaah says: **“And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious.”** [3:133]

*“A man came to the Prophet (saw) and asked him about Allaah’s statement - Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth - he asked, ‘Where is the Fire then?’ the Prophet (saw) replied, ‘When the night comes, it overtakes everything, so where is the day?’ the man said, ‘Where Allaah wants it to be.’ The Prophet (saw) said, ‘Similarly, the Fire is where Allaah wants it to be’.”* [Kashf al-Astaar]

Allaah describes the people of Paradise: **“Those who spend (in Allaah’s cause) in prosperity and in adversity. Those who spend their wealth by night and day, in secret and in public.”** [3:134, 2:274]

The believers spend in hard and easy times, while strong in Eemaan or otherwise, healthy or ill and in all conditions. They are never distracted from obeying Allaah, spending on what pleases Him, being kind to His servants and relatives and engaging in other acts of righteousness.

**“Those who repress anger and who pardon men.”** [3:134]

The Prophet (saw) said, ‘The strong person is not one who is able to physically overcome people. The strong person is he who overcomes his rage when he is angry.’ [Saheeh]

*“He who gives time to a debtor or forgives him, then Allaah will save him from the heat of Jahannam. Behold! The deeds of Paradise are difficult to reach, for they are on top of a hill, while the deeds of the Fire are easy to find in the lowlands... The happy person is he who is saved from the tests. Verily there is no dose of anything better to Allaah than a dose of rage that the servant controls, and whenever the servant of Allaah controls it, he will be internally filled with faith.”* [Ahmad]

This aayah and hadeeth talk of those who do not satisfy their rage upon the people. They forgive those who treat them with injustice and thus do not harbour any ill-feelings about anyone in their hearts - this is the most excellent conduct in this regard, this is why Allaah said: **“Verily Allaah loves the good-doers.”**

He (saw) said, *“I swear regarding three matters: no charity shall ever decrease the wealth; whenever one forgives people, Allaah will magnify his honour; and he who is humble for Allaah, Allaah will raise his rank.”* [Ahmad]

Allaah said: **“And those, who, when they have committed Faa-**

**hishah or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allaah and ask forgiveness for their sins.”** [3:135]

Therefore if they commit an error, they follow it with repentance and ask forgiveness.

The Prophet (saw) said, *“A man once committed an error and said, ‘O Lord! I committed an error, so forgive me.’ Allaah said, ‘My servant committed an error and knew that he has a Lord Who forgives or punishes for the error. I have forgiven My servant.’ The man committed another error and said, ‘O Lord! I committed an error, so forgive me.’ Allaah said, ‘My servant committed an error and knew that he has a Lord Who forgives or punishes for the sin. I have forgiven My servant.’ The man committed another error and said, ‘O Lord! I committed an error, so forgive me.’ Allaah said, ‘My servant committed an error and knew that he has a Lord Who forgives or punishes for the sin. Bear witness that I have forgiven My servant, so let him do whatever he likes’.”* [Ahmad, Saheeh]

Anas bin Maalik (ra) said, “I was told that when the aayah **“And those, who when they have committed Faa-hishah or wronged themselves with evil, remember Allaah and ask forgiveness for their sins..”** was revealed, Iblees cried.”

Allaah said, **“And do not persist in what (wrong) they have done, while they know.”** For they repent from their error, return to Allaah before death, do not insist on error, and if they err again, they repent from it - as they have knowledge of their sin.

Allaah said, **“Know they not that Allaah accepts repentance from His servants.”** [9:104]

And **“And whoever does evil or wrongs himself but afterwards seeks Allaah’s forgiveness, he will find Allaah Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”** [4:110] And there are several examples similar to this aayah.

Next Allaah said, **“For such, the reward is forgiveness from their Lord.”** [3:136]

As a reward for these possessing all these qualities.

**“Forgiveness from their Lord, and gardens with rivers flowing underneath (Paradise), wherein they shall abide forever. How excellent is this reward for the doers (of good).”** [3:136]

Allaah Himself praises Paradise in this aayah.

# Zakariyyah & Yahyaa (alayhis salaam)

Zakariyyah (as) was a carpenter as Daawood (as) had been before him. [Ahmad]. He was a noble and devout man, a Prophet of Allaah.

Zakariyyah (as) wanted very much to have children, but he had none. Maryam bint Imraan was given by her mother for the services of Allaah. She stayed in the temple, under the care of her uncle Zakariyyah (as). Whenever he would come to visit her, he would find that she was provided with all types of food, this was provision from Allaah. When he saw how Allaah, the Provider, could provide such foods, even when it wasn't in season, he realised that indeed Allaah could provide him with a child in his old age, even though his wife could not have any children. So in his old age, he prayed to Allaah saying:

**"My Lord! My bones within me are feeble and my head has gone grey. And in calling You my Lord, I have never been unblest"** [19:4]

He prayed, **"My Lord! Grant to me from You righteous offspring, surely You are All-Hearing of prayers... Grant me an heir from You; who shall be my inheritor, and make him, My Lord, one with whom You are well pleased."** [3:28, 19:5-6]

So Allaah answered his prayer: **"O Zakariyyah! We give you glad tidings of a boy whose name is Yahyaa, no namesake have We given him before."** [19:7]

**"The angels called to him while he was standing in prayer in the chamber: 'Allaah gives you glad tidings of Yahyaa, confirming the truth of a Word from Allaah, and noble, chaste and righteous prophet.'" [3:29]**

Zakariyyah (as) replied, **"O my Lord! How shall I have a son, seeing that my wife is barren and I have reached old age."** [19:8]

He was told by the angel: **"So shall it be. Your Lord says. 'That is easy for Me and I have created you before when you were nothing'."** [19:9]

Zakariyyah (as) asked for a sign that he might know he was to be blessed with a child and Allaah told him that he would not be able to speak for three days, except by signals and sign language. He was told that this would not damage his health or body - this would be his sign.

Yahyaa (as) was born according to Allaah's promise and Allaah taught him Wisdom and knowledge while he was still a child. Allaah said, **"O Yahyaa! Take hold of the Book with firmness' and We granted him wisdom while he was yet a child."** [19:12]

Allaah says of him: **"And he was pious. And kind to his parents, and he was never insolent, disobedient. So peace be upon him the day he was born, and on the day he dies, and the day he shall be raised to life."** [19:14-15]

Allaah commanded Yahyaa (as) to fulfil five duties and to command the Israelites to carry them out also. So he gathered the people in Jerusalem until the Masjid became full, then he sat on the pulpit and began by praising Allaah, before going on to give the commandments of Allaah. He told them

1. You should worship Allaah alone, without partner. Associating partners with Him is like one who uses his wealth to buy a slave, but the slave goes on to work for others - Allaah has created you and given you provision, so worship Him alone, and join none in worship with Him.

2. I command you to pray. Allaah turns His Face towards His slave as long as the slave does not distract himself. So once you are in prayer, do not let yourselves become distracted

3. I command you to fast because its example is like a man who has a bag of musk amongst many people, and everyone of them enjoys its fragrance. And the smell of the mouth of a fasting person is purer to Allaah than the smell of musk.

4. I command you to give in charity. The example of this is like one who was captured by the enemy and they tied his hand up with his neck and wanted to behead him. The man then asks if he can pay a ransom and free himself. After they agree, he starts paying his ransom with everything, small or big, till he has freed himself.

5. I command you to remember Allaah frequently. The example of this is a man who has been chased out by his enemy, but he finds a strong fortress which he enters. This man is more protected from his enemy, the Shaytaan, when he is in Allaah's remembrance."

Yahyaa (as) loved to be isolated from the people. He found comfort in the open country and desert, where he would eat of the natural foods around him. He was eventually murdered. It is said the king of Damascus wanted to marry his close relative whom he was not allowed to marry by law. So Yahyaa (as) forbade him from that marriage. It was that woman then who had him killed and asked for his head to be brought to her.

Zakariyyah (as) was accused falsely by his people of a crime he did not commit. They wanted to kill him, but he fled and hid inside a tree. But Shaytaan guided the people to the tree and they sawed the tree into two pieces. This was the fate of Zakariyyah (as)