



ليتفقوها (٢)

The Day of Ashura' and Its Virtues

Prepared by
The General Iftaa' Department
In The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

In The Name Of ALLAH, The Entirely Merciful, The Especially Merciful
All perfect praise be to Allah the Lord of The Worlds. May His peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Mohammad and upon all his family and companions.

This is a pamphlet addressing the most important jurisprudential questions commonly raised regarding The Day of ‘Āshūrā’ and its virtues. Its content is derived from authoritative legal rulings (fatāwā) issued by the General Iftaa` Department, drawing upon the established juristic principles documented in the texts of the Shāfi‘ī school in particular, and the recognized texts of the four major Sunni schools of thought in general.

The Day of ‘Āshūrā’ is among the blessed seasons that Allah the Almighty has bestowed upon the nation of His beloved Chosen One, Muḥammad (peace and blessings be upon him). These are seasons for remembrance, reflection, worship, and contemplation, in which the believer elevates their faith and renews the state of their heart with Allah through acts of obedience and supererogatory worship. The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: «Perform good deeds throughout your lives, and avail yourselves of the gentle breezes of Allah’s mercy. Verily, Allah has breezes from His mercy which He bestows upon whomever He wills among His servants. And ask Allah to conceal your ‘awrah (Everything that one feels shy or ashamed of if it becomes exposed) and to grant you security from your fears». (Al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr by aṭ-Ṭabarānī, p. 720)

The Day of ‘Āshūrā’:

It is the tenth day of the sacred month of Muḥarram. This is the opinion held by the majority of scholars from the early and later generations. Imām at-Tirmidhī (No. 755) reported from Ibn ‘Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) that he said: «The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) commanded the fasting of ‘Āshūrā’, the tenth day».

The Ruling on Fasting the Day of ‘Āshūrā’:

Fasting on the Day of 'Āshūrā' is a recommended Sunnah (mustaḥabb). Our Master, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), established it for this nation and encouraged it. Ibn 'Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) said: «I never saw the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) so keen to fast a day and give it preference over others except this day, the Day of 'Āshūrā', and this month—meaning Ramaḍān». (Narrated by Al-Bukhārī, 2006, and Muslim, 1132)

The Wisdom behind Fasting 'Āshūrā':

The Day of 'Āshūrā' is the day on which Allah saved Mūsā (peace be upon him) and his people from Pharaoh and his soldiers. Mūsā fasted on this day in gratitude to Allah. Our Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also fasted on this day and commanded its observance, stating, «We have more right to Mūsā than you do». The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) and the Muslims are the people most entitled and deserving to follow Mūsā (peace be upon him) and all the other Prophets and Messengers. This is because they believe in what all the Messengers brought, without distinguishing between any of them. They believe in them all, love them, hold them in high esteem, respect them, and support their religion, which is Islam—submission to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

The Virtue of Fasting the Day of 'Āshūrā':

Fasting on the Day of 'Āshūrā' expiates the sins of the previous year. Abū Qatādah (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: « I seek from God that fasting on the day of 'Arafa may atone for the sins of the preceding and the coming year, and I seek from God that fasting on the day of 'Ashura' may atone for the sins of the preceding year». (Narrated by Muslim, 1162)

Is It Disliked to Fast 'Āshūrā' Alone?

Fasting on 'Āshūrā' has three levels of merit: The minimum is to fast

the tenth day alone. A higher level is to fast the ninth day along with it. The highest level is to fast the ninth and the eleventh days along with it.

Ibn `Abbas reported that when the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) fasted on the day of `Ashura and commanded that it should be observed as a fast, they (his Companions) said to him: Messenger of Allah, it is a day which the Jews and Christians hold in high esteem. Thereupon the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said: When the next year comes, God willing, we would observe fast on the 9th. But the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) died before the advent of the next year. (Narrated by Muslim, 1134)

Al-Hāfiẓ Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalānī stated in *Fatḥ al-Bārī* (Vol.4/P.245): «His intention to fast the ninth day likely means that one should not fast it alone, but rather add it to the tenth day, either as a precaution or to differ from the Jews and Christians—and the latter is the more preponderant view. This is indicated by some narrations in Muslim. Aḥmad reported another narration from Ibn `Abbās, attributed to the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him): «Fast the Day of ‘Āshūrā’ and differ from the Jews; fast a day before it or a day after it». This represented the final instruction».

Imām al-Khaṭīb ash-Shirbīnī, a Shāfi‘ī scholar, mentioned in *Mughnī al-Muḥtāj* (Vol.2/P.183) the wisdom behind fasting the ninth (Tāsū‘ā’) and the eleventh: «The wisdom for fasting the ninth along with the tenth is as a precautionary measure due to the potential for error in the lunar sighting... If one does not fast the ninth with it, it is Sunnah to fast the eleventh with it. Indeed, Ash-Shāfi‘ī explicitly stated in the books *Al-Umm* and *Al-Imlā’* the recommendation to fast all three days».

The Ruling on Fasting ‘Āshūrā’ if it Coincides with a Saturday or Friday:

The recommendation to fast the Day of ‘Āshūrā’ is not nullified if it coincides with a Saturday or a Friday. This is because it is a fast with a specific reason. The dislike (karāhah) applies only to voluntarily fasting a Saturday or Friday alone when it is an absolute supererogatory fast

without a specific reason. This dislike does not apply if the fast is for 'Āshūrā', making up a missed Ramaḍān fast (qaḍā'), expiation for an oath (kaffārah), fulfilling a vow (naḍr), the Day of 'Arafah, if it coincides with one's habitual fasting pattern (such as fasting alternate days), or any other day for which fasting is specifically recommended.

Imām ar-Ramlī, a Shāfi'ī scholar, stated in Nihāyat al-Muḥtāj (Vol.3/P.209, paraphrased): «Fasting Saturday alone is disliked... This applies if fasting any of the three days [Friday, Saturday, Sunday] alone does not coincide with one's habitual practice. Otherwise, such as if one fasts alternate days, or if it is for 'Āshūrā' or 'Arafah, and it coincides with their day of fasting, then there is no dislike... Fasting them alone for a vow, expiation, or making up a fast is also not disliked. This is excluded if one fasts either day with a day before or after it, in which case the dislike is negated as the reason for it ceases to exist».

The Ruling on Being Generous to One's Family on 'Āshūrā':

It is recommended for a Muslim to be generous to their family on the Day of 'Āshūrā' and to give charity to the poor and needy. This is a form of expressing joy on this blessed day, and bringing happiness to the hearts of Muslims is something beloved in the Shariah.

Imām al-Jamal, a Shāfi'ī scholar (Vol.2/P.347), stated: «It is recommended on this day to be generous to one's family and relatives, and to give charity to the poor and needy, without overburdening oneself».

If a Muslim Cannot Afford to Be Generous, What Should They Do?

If a Muslim does not have the financial means to be generous to their family, it is recommended for them to be kind and gentle with their household, to overlook their faults, and to demonstrate expansive character and forbearance.

It has been mentioned by some scholars in a poetic composition:



«On 'Āshūrā', ten acts are connected, to which two are added; thus, its transmitted virtue is complete:

Fast, pray, visit a scholar, be kind, apply kohl,

Stroke an orphan`s head, give charity, and perform ghusl.

Be generous to your family, trim your nails,

And recite Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ a thousand times to gain nearness».

دائرة الإفتاء العام المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية

هاتف دائرة الإفتاء العام: 06/2000166



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