

Fasting in Allaah's month Al-Muharram

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: Is it permissible to observe fast during the whole month of Muharram?

Answer: All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

Before answering your question, I want to draw attention to a spread mistake which consists in designating the term "Muharram" without the letters Alif and Laam (Al-)¹. The correct form is to say "Al-Muharram" as it is mentioned in many prophetic hadeeths, and because the Arabs did not mention this month in their speeches and poetry but with the definite article "Al", which is not the case with the other months. So, this denomination is unwritten and not according to a rule.

Hereupon, one can fast during the month Al-Muharram, that is why it is recommended to observe much of fasting in it, in accordance with the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying: "**The most superior fasting after (the fasting of) Ramadhaan is that of Allaah's month of Al-Muharram and the most superior prayer after the obligatory (prayers) is the Night Prayer**"².

Fasting `Aashuraa' which is the tenth of the month of Al-Muharram is more recommended, in accordance with the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying: "**This is the day of `Aashuraa' (tenth of Al-Muharram). Allaah has not enjoined its fasting on you but I am fasting it. You have the choice either to fast or not**"³.

Moreover, fasting `Aashuraa' expiates the precedent year, in accordance with the Prophet's صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ saying: "**...Moreover, I expect from Allaah that the fasting of the day of `Aashuraa' will expiate (the sins of) the preceding year**"⁴. It is also recommended to fast the day preceding `Aashuraa' which is the ninth day of the month Al-Muharram as it is mentioned in the

¹ Al: a definite article in Arabic.

² Reported by Muslim, chapter of "Fasting", concerning the merit of observing fast in the month of Al-Muharram (hadeeth 2755), Aboo Dawood, chapter of "Fasting", concerning fasting during the month Al-Muharram (hadeeth 2429), At-Tirmidhee, chapter of "Prayer", concerning what is reported about night prayer (hadeeth 438), An-Nasaa'ee, chapter of "Night prayers and the supererogatory prayers of the day", concerning the merit of night prayers (hadeeth 1613) and Ahmad in his "Musnad" (hadeeth 8329) on the authority of Aboo Hurayrah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

³ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of "Fasting", concerning fasting `Aashuraa' (hadeeth 1899), Muslim, chapter of "Fasting", concerning fasting `Aashuraa' (hadeeth 2653), Maalik in "Al-Muwatta'" (hadeeth 663) and Ahmad in his "Musnad" (hadeeth 16425) on the authority of Mu'aaweeyah Ibn Abee Sufyaan رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا.

⁴ Reported by Muslim, chapter of "Fasting", concerning the recommendation of fasting three days in each month...(hadeeth 2746), Aboo Dawood, chapter of "Fasting", concerning fasting the whole year by way of supererogation (hadeeth 2425), Ibn Maajah, chapter of "Fasting", concerning fasting `Aashuraa' (hadeeth 1738) and Ahmad in his "Musnad" (hadeeth 23290) on the authority of Aboo Qataada Al-Ansaaree رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ.

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hadeeth of Ibn `Abbaas رضي الله عنهما who said: "When the Messenger of Allaah observed fast on the day of `Aashuraa, and ordered Muslims to fast on it, they said to him: "O Messenger of Allaah! This is a day which both the Jews and the Christians venerate. Upon this, the Messenger of Allaah said, "**When it is the next year, Allaah willing, we would observe fast on the ninth day (of Al-Muharram besides that day)**". But, it was not until the next year that the Messenger of Allaah صلى الله عليه وسلم had died"⁵, and in another narration: "**If I survive to the coming year, I would surely observe fast on the ninth (day of Al-Muharram)**"⁶.

Furthermore, it is recommended to fast a day after `Aashuraa', that is to say, the eleventh day of the month of Al-Muharram, as it is narrated in an authentic and Mawqoof⁷ text according to Ibn `Abbaas رضي الله عنهما: "Fast the day of `Aashuraa', be different from Jews, fast one day before it or one day after it"⁸.

Al-Haafidh (Ibn Hajar) رحمه الله said, "...Fasting `Aashuraa' comes under three categories,

- the lowest is to fast it alone,
- better than it, is to fast the ninth day with it,
- and the best is to fast the ninth and the eleventh days with it"⁹.

It is worth mentioning that it is permissible to fast during Allaah's month Al-Muharram but without specifying the last day of the year with the intention of bidding a farewell to the lunar year of Hegira, nor the first day of Al-Muharram with the intention of welcoming the new year by fasting, except what has been previously mentioned regarding fasting the day of `Aashuraa' and the two days in order to differ from Jews (i.e. the ninth and eleventh days).

In fact, those who specify the first day and the last day of the year by fasting, support their opinion with a fabricated hadeeth: "Whoever fasts the last day of Dhu Al-Hijjah and the first day of Al-Muharram, has surely ended the last year and begins the current year by a fast which has the reward of expiating fifty years"¹⁰. This is in fact an invented hadeeth which is falsely attributed to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. Abou Shaama said, "There is nothing reported

⁵ Reported by Muslim, chapter of "Fasting", concerning on which day fasting is observed for `Aashuraa' (hadeeth 2666), on the authority of Ibn `Abbaas رضي الله عنهما.

⁶ Reported by Muslim, chapter of "Fasting", concerning on which day fasting is observed for `Aashuraa' (hadeeth 2667), Ibn Maajah, chapter of "Fasting", concerning fasting the day of `Aashuraa' (hadeeth 1736) and Ahmad in his "Musnad" (3203) on the authority of Ibn `Abbaas رضي الله عنهما.

⁷ Mawqoof: A tradition attributed to a Companion.

⁸ Reported as being attributed to the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم by Ibn Khuzaymah in his "Saheeh" (hadeeth 2095), and Ahmad in his "Musnad" (hadeeth 2155). Al-Albaanee said in "Saheeh Ibn Khuzaymah" (3/290): "Its chain of narration is weak because the memorisation of Ibn Abee Layla is bad, and because `Ataa' contradicted him as well as others. In fact, `Ataa' reported this hadeeth according to Ibn `Abbaas as attributed to him; its chain of narration is authentic according to At-Tahaawee and Al-Baihaqee". This hadeeth is reported Mawqoof by At-Tabaree in "Tahdeeb Al-Aathaar" (Musnad `Umar/1430), this tradition has been judged as authentic by Al-Albaanee as it is aforementioned and by Zakariya Ibn Ghulaam Al-Paakistaani in "Fee Maa Sahha Min Aathaar As-Sahaabah Fi Al-Fiqh" (2/675).

⁹ See, "Fath Al-Baaree" by Ibn Hajar (4/246).

¹⁰ Ibn Al-Jawzee has judged this hadeeth as being fabricated in "Al-Maudhoo`aat" (2/199), As-Suyooty in "Al-La'aali" (2/108) and Ash-Shawkaanee in "Al-Fawaa'id" (page: 96).

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about the first night of Al-Muharram. Besides, I made a research concerning the reported traditions whether authentic or weak and have examined weak hadeeths, but I have found no one who mentioned something about that subject. Therefore, I fear-may Allaah preserve us- that some prevaricator invents a hadeeth concerning this topic"¹¹.

Nothing is recommended then during the month of Al-Muharram, not even in `Aashuraa' except fasting. As for performing a `Umrah on the first of Al-Muharram or observing a special supplication or an invocation, or to devote oneself during the night of `Aashuraa' to worship, supplications and invocations. Nothing of the aforesaid things were done, neither by the Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ nor by his Companions رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ not even by the noble successors. The Prophet صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said: "**Whoever does an action that is not in accordance with our tradition will have it rejected**"¹²

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah عَزَّ وَجَلَّ. Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet, his Family, his Companions and Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

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¹¹ See, "Al-Baa`ith `Ala Inkaar Al-Bida` Wal-Hawaadith" (239).

¹² This version of the hadeeth is reported by Muslim, chapter of "Judgments", concerning cancelling the invalid judgments and abrogating the heresies (hadeeth 4590). The two Shaykhs, Al-Bukhaaree in the chapter of "Reconciliation" (hadeeth 2697) and Muslim, chapter of "Judgments" (hadeeth 4589) agreed to report it according to the following version: "If somebody innovates something which is not involved in the principles of our religion, that thing will be rejected" on the authority of `A'ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا and in Al-Bukhaaree's "Saheeh" : "...which is not part of it...".