

## Fasting on Ashoorah (10<sup>th</sup> of Muharram)

### 'Aashooraa' in History

Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: "The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) 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 Israel 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." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 1865).

"This is a righteous day" – in a report narrated by Muslim, [the Jews said:] "This is a great day, on which Allaah saved Moosa and his people, and drowned Pharaoh and his people."

"Moosa fasted on this day" – a report narrated by Muslim adds: "... in thanksgiving to Allaah, so we fast on this day."

According to a report narrated by al-Bukhaari: "... so we fast on this day to venerate it."

A version narrated by Imaam Ahmad adds: "This is the day on which the Ark settled on Mount Joodi, so Nooh fasted this day in thanksgiving."

"and commanded [the Muslims] to fast on that day" – according to another report also narrated by al-Bukhaari: "He said to his Companions: 'You have more right to Moosa than they do, so fast on that day.'"

The practice of fasting on 'Aashooraa' was known even in the days of Jaahiliyyah, before the Prophet's mission. It was reported that 'Aa'ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said: "The people of Jaahiliyyah used to fast on that day..."

Al-Qurtubi said: "Perhaps Quraysh used to fast on that day on the basis of some past law, such as that of Ibraaheem, upon whom be peace."

It was also reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) 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 different from the Jews, who took it as a festival, as was reported in the hadeeth of Abu Moosa (may Allaah be pleased with him), who said: "The Jews used to take the day of 'Aashooraa' as a festival [according to a report narrated by Muslim: the day of 'Aashooraa' was venerated by the Jews, who took it as a festival. According to another report also narrated by Muslim: the people of Khaybar (the Jews) used to take it as a festival and their women would wear their jewellery and symbols on that day]. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: 'So you [Muslims] should fast on that day.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari). 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.

(Summarized from the words of al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar – may Allaah have mercy on him – in *Fath al-Baari Sharh 'ala Saheeh al-Bukhaari*).

Fasting on 'Aashooraa' was a gradual step in the process of introducing fasting as a prescribed obligation in Islam. Fasting appeared in three forms. When the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came to Madeenah, he told the Muslims to fast on three days of every month and on the day of 'Aashooraa', then Allaah made fasting obligatory when He said (interpretation of the meaning): "... observing the fasting is prescribed for you..." [*al-Baqarah 2:183*] (*Ahkaam al-Qur'aan* by al-Jassas, part 1).

The obligation was transferred from the fast of 'Aashooraa' to the fast of Ramadaan, and this one of the proofs in the field of Usool al-Fiqh that it is possible to abrogate a lighter duty in favour of a heavier duty.

Before the obligation of fasting 'Aashooraa' was abrogated, fasting on this day was obligatory, as can be seen from the clear command to observe this fast. Then it was further confirmed later on, then reaffirmed by making it a general command addressed to everybody, and once again by instructing mothers not to breastfeed their infants during this fast. It was reported from Ibn Mas'ood that when fasting Ramadaan was made obligatory, the obligation to fast 'Aashooraa' was lifted, i.e., it was no longer obligatory to fast on this day, but it is still desirable (mustahabb).

### The virtues of fasting 'Aashooraa'

Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them both) said: "I never saw the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) 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." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, 1867).

The meaning of his being keen was that he intended to fast on that day in the hope of earning the reward for doing so.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "For fasting the day of 'Aashooraa', I hope that Allaah will accept it as expiation for the year that went before." (Reported by Muslim, 1976). This is from the bounty of Allaah towards us: for fasting one day He gives us expiation for the sins of a whole year. And Allaah is the Owner of Great Bounty.

### Which day is 'Aashooraa'?

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "'Aashooraa' and Taasoo'aa' are two elongated names [the vowels are elongated] as is stated in books on the Arabic language. Our companions said: 'Aashooraa' is the tenth day of Muharram and Taasoo'aa' is the ninth day. This is our opinion, and that of the majority of scholars. This is the apparent meaning of the ahaadeeth and is what we understand from the general wording. It is also what is usually understood by scholars of the language." (*al-Majmoo*)

'Aashooraa' is an Islamic name that was not known at the time of Jaahiliyyah. (*Kashshaaf al-Qinaa'*, part 2, *Sawm Muharram*).

Ibn Qudaamah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

"'Aashooraa' is the tenth day of Muharram. This is the opinion of Sa'eed ibn al-Musayyib and al-Hasan. It was what was reported by Ibn 'Abbaas, who said: 'The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded us to fast 'Aashooraa', the tenth day of Muharram.' (Reported by al-Tirmidhi, who said, a saheeh hasan hadeeth). It was reported that Ibn 'Abbaas said: 'The ninth,' and reported that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to fast the ninth. (Reported by Muslim). 'Ataa' reported that he said, 'Fast the ninth and the tenth, and do not be like the Jews.' If this is understood, we can say on this basis that it is mustahabb (encouraged) to fast on the ninth and the tenth, for that reason. This is what Ahmad said, and it is the opinion of Ishaaq."

It is *mustahabb* (encouraged) to fast Taasoo'aa' with 'Aashooraa'

'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with them both) said: "When the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) fasted on 'Aashooraa' and commanded the Muslims to fast as well, they said, 'O Messenger of Allaah, it is a day that is venerated by the Jews and Christians.' The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, 'If I live to see the next year, in sha Allaah, we will fast on the ninth day too.' But it so happened that

the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) passed away before the next year came.” (Reported by Muslim, 1916).

Al-Shaafa'i and his companions, Ahmad, Ishaq and others said: “It is mustahabb to fast on both the ninth and tenth days, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) fasted on the tenth, and intended to fast on the ninth.”

On this basis it may be said that there are varying degrees of fasting ‘Aashooraa’, the least of which is to fast only on the tenth and the best of which is to fast the ninth as well. The more one fasts in Muharram, the better it is.

#### The reason why it is mustahabb to fast on Taasoo’aa’

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “The scholars – our companions and others – mentioned several reasons why it is mustahabb to fast on Taasoo’aa’:

1. the intention behind it is to be different from the Jews, who only venerate the tenth day. This opinion was reported from Ibn ‘Abbaas...
2. the intention is to add another day’s fast to ‘Aashooraa’. This is akin to the prohibition on fasting a Friday by itself, as was mentioned by al-Khattaabi and others.
3. To be on the safe side and make sure that one fasts on the tenth, in case there is some error in sighting the crescent moon at the beginning of Muharram and the ninth is in fact the tenth.”

The strongest of these reasons is being different from the People of the Book. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade imitating the People of the Book in many ahaadeeth, for example, his words concerning ‘Aashooraa’:

‘If I live until the next year, I will certainly fast on the ninth day.’” (*al-Fataawa al-Kubra*, part 6, *Sadd al-Dharaa’i’ al-Mufdiyah ila’l-Mahaarim*)

Ibn Hajar (may Allaah be pleased with him) said in his commentary on the hadeeth “If I live until the next year, I will certainly fast on the ninth day”: “What he 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*, 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...” (*al-Fataawa al-Kubra*, part 5). In *Tuhfat al-Muhtaaj* by Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, it says: “There is nothing wrong with fasting only on ‘Aashooraa’.” (part 3, *Baab Sawm al-Tatawwu*).

#### Fasting on ‘Aashooraa’ even if it is a Saturday or a Friday

Al-Tahhaawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) allowed us to fast on ‘Aashooraa’ and urged us to do so. He did not say that if it falls on a Saturday we should not fast. This is evidence that all days of the week are included in this. In our view – and Allaah knows best – it could be the case that even if this is true (that it is not allowed to fast on Saturdays), it is so that we do not venerate this day and refrain from food, drink and intercourse, as the Jews do. As for the one who fasts on a Saturday without intending to venerate it, and does not do so because the Jews regard it as blessed, then this is not makrooh...” (*Mushkil al-Aathaar*, part 2, *Baab Sawm Yawm al-Sabt*).

The author of *al-Minhaaj* said: “It is disliked (makrooh) to fast on a Friday alone...’ But it is no longer makrooh if you add another day to it, as mentioned in the saheeh report to that effect. A

person may fast on a Friday if it coincides with his habitual fast, or he is fasting in fulfilment of a vow, or he is making up an obligatory fast that he has missed, as was stated in a saheeh report.”

Al-Shaarih said in *Tuhfat al-Muhtaj*:

“ ‘If it coincides with his habitual fast’ – i.e., such as if he fasts alternate days, and a day that he fasts happens to be a Friday.

‘ if he is fasting in fulfilment of a vow, etc.’” – this also applies to fasting on days prescribed in sharee’ah, such as ‘Aashooraa’ or ‘Arafaah. (*Tuhfat al-Muhtaj*, part 3, *Baab Sawm al-Tatawwu*)

Al-Bahooti (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “It is makrooh to deliberately single out a Saturday for fasting, because of the hadeeth of ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Bishr, who reported from his sister: ‘Do not fast on Saturdays except in the case of obligatory fasts’ (reported by Ahmad with a jayyid isnaad and by al-Haakim, who said: according to the conditions of al-Bukhaari), and because it is a day that is venerated by the Jews, so singling it out for fasting means being like them... except when a Friday or Saturday coincides with a day when Muslims habitually fast, such as when it coincides with the day of ‘Arafaah or the day of ‘Aashooraa’, and a person has the habit of fasting on these days, in which case it is not makrooh, because a person’s habit carries some weight.” (*Kashshaaf al-Qinaa’*, part 2, *Baab Sawm al-Tatawwu*).

#### What should be done if there is confusion about the beginning of the month?

Ahmad said: “If there is confusion about the beginning of the month, one should fast for three days, to be sure of fasting on the ninth and tenth days.” (*al-Mughni* by Ibn Qudaamah, part 3 – *al-Siyaam – Siyaam ‘Aashooraa*).

If a person does not know when Muharram began, and he wants to be sure of fasting on the tenth, he should assume that Dhoo’l-Hijjah was thirty days – as is the usual rule – and should fast on the ninth and tenth. Whoever wants to be sure of fasting the ninth as well should fast the eighth, ninth and tenth (then if Dhoo’l-Hijjah was twenty-nine days, he can be sure of having fasted Taasoo’aa’ and ‘Aashooraa’).

But given that fasting on ‘Aashooraa’ is mustahabb rather than waajib, people are not commanded to look for the crescent of the new moon of Muharram as they are to do in the case of Ramadaan and Shawwaal.

#### Fasting ‘Aashooraa’ – for what does it offer expiation?

Imaam al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

“It expiates for all minor sins, i.e., it brings forgiveness of all sins except major sins.”

Then he said (may Allaah have mercy on him):

“Fasting the day of ‘Arafaah expiates for two years, and the day of ‘Aashooraa’ expiates for one year. If when a person says ‘Aameen’ 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*, part 6, *Sawm Yawm ‘Arafaah*).

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: “Tahaarah, salaah, and fasting in Ramadaan, on the day of ‘Arafaah and on ‘Aashooraa’ expiate for minor sins only.” (*al-Fataawa al-Kubra*, part 5).

## Not relying too much on the reward for fasting

Some people who are deceived rely too much on things like fasting on ‘Aashooraa’ or the day of ‘Arafaah, to the extent that some of them say, “Fasting on ‘Aashooraa’ will expiate for the sins of the whole year, and fasting on the day of ‘Arafaah will bring extra rewards.” Ibn al-Qayyim said: “This misguided person does not know that fasting in Ramadaan and praying five times a day are much more important than fasting on the day of ‘Arafaah and ‘Aashooraa’, and that they expiate for the sins between one Ramadaan and the next, or between one Friday and the next, so long as one avoids major sins. But they cannot expiate for minor sins unless one also avoids major sins; when the two things are put together, they have the strength to expiate for minor sins. Among those deceived people may be one who thinks that his good deeds are more than his sins, because he does not pay attention to his bad deeds or check on his sins, but if he does a good deed he remembers it and relies on it. This is like the one who seeks Allaah’s forgiveness with his tongue (i.e., by words only), and glorifies Allaah by saying “Subhaan Allaah” one hundred times a day, then he backbites about the Muslims and slanders their honour, and speaks all day long about things that are not pleasing to Allaah. This person is always thinking about the virtues of his *tasbeehaat* (saying “Subhaan Allaah”) and *tahleelaat* (saying “Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah”) but he pays no attention to what has been reported concerning those who backbite, tell lies and slander others, or commit other sins of the tongue. They are completely deceived.” (*al-Mawsoo’ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, part 31, *Ghuroor*).

## Fasting ‘Aashooraa’ when one still has days to make up from Ramadaan

The fuqahaa’ differed concerning the ruling on observing voluntary fasts before a person has made up days that he or she did not fast in Ramadaan. The Hanafis said that it is permissible to observe voluntary fasts before making up days from Ramadaan, and it is not makrooh to do so, because the missed days do not have to be made up straight away. The Maalikis and Shaafa’is said that it is permissible but is makrooh, because it means that one is delaying something obligatory. Al-Dusooqi said: “It is makrooh to observe a voluntary fast when one still has to make up an obligatory fast, such as a fast in fulfilment of a vow, or a missed obligatory fast, or a fast done as an act of expiation (kafaarah), whether the voluntary fast which is being given priority over an obligatory fast is something confirmed in sharee’ah or not, such as ‘Aashooraa’ and the ninth of Dhoo’l-Hijjah, according to the most correct opinion.” The Hanbalis said that it is haraam to observe a voluntary fast before making up any fasts missed in Ramadaan, and that a voluntary fast in such cases does not count, even if there is plenty of time to make up the obligatory fast. So a person must give priority to the obligatory fasts until he has made them up.. (*al-Mawsoo’ah al-Fiqhiyyah*, part 28, *Sawm al-tatawwu*).

Muslims must hasten to make up any missed fasts after Ramadaan, so that they will be able to fast ‘Arafaah and ‘Aashooraa’ without any problem. If a person fasts ‘Arafaah and ‘Aashooraa’ with the intention from the night before of making up for a missed fast, this will be good enough to make up what he has missed, for the bounty of Allaah is great.

## Bid’ahs common on ‘Aashooraa’

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked about the things that people do on ‘Aashooraa’, such as wearing kohl, taking a bath (ghusl), wearing henna, shaking hands with one another, cooking grains (huboob), showing happiness and so on. Was any of this reported from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in a saheeh hadeeth, or not? If nothing to that effect was reported in a saheeh hadeeth, is doing these things bid’ah, or not?

Is there any basis for what the other group do, such as grieving and mourning, going without anything to drink, eulogizing and wailing, reciting in a crazy manner, and rending their garments?

His reply was: Praise be to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Nothing to that effect has been reported in any saheeh hadeeth from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or from his Companions. None of the imaams of the Muslims encouraged or recommended such things, neither the four imaams, nor any others.

No reliable scholars have narrated anything like this, neither from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), nor from the Sahaabah, nor from the Taabi'een; neither in any saheeh report or in a da'eef (weak) report; neither in the books of *Saheeh*, nor in *al-Sunan*, nor in the *Musnads*. No hadeeth of this nature was known during the best centuries, but some of the later narrators reported ahaadeeth like the one which says, "Whoever puts kohl in his eyes on the day of 'Aashooraa' will not suffer from eye disease in that year, and whoever takes a bath (does ghusl) on the day of 'Aashooraa' will not get sick in that year," and so on. They also reported a fabricated hadeeth that is falsely attributed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), which says, "Whoever is generous to his family on the day of 'Aashooraa', Allaah will be generous to him for the rest of the year." Reporting all of this from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is tantamount to lying.'

Then he [Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him)] discussed in brief the tribulations that had occurred in the early days of this ummah and the killing of al-Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him), and what the various sects had done because of this. Then he said:

'An ignorant, wrongful group – who were either heretics and hypocrites, or misguided and misled – made a show of allegiance to him and the members of his household, so they took the day of 'Aashooraa' as a day of mourning and wailing, in which they openly displayed the rituals of jaahiliyyah such as slapping their cheeks and rending their garments, grieving in the manner of the jaahiliyyah... The Shaytaan made this attractive to those who are misled, so they took the day of 'Aashooraa' as an occasion of mourning, when they grieve and wail, recite poems of grief and tell stories filled with lies. Whatever truth there may be in these stories serves no purpose other than the renewal of their grief and sectarian feeling, and the stirring up of hatred and hostility among the Muslims, which they do by cursing those who came before them... The evil and harm that they do to the Muslims cannot be enumerated by any man, no matter how eloquent he is. Some others – either Naasibis who oppose and have enmity towards al-Husayn and his family or ignorant people who try to fight evil with evil, corruption with corruption, lies with lies and bid'ah with bid'ah – opposed them by fabricating reports in favour of making the day of 'Aashooraa' a day of celebration, by wearing kohl and henna, spending money on one's children, cooking special dishes and other things that are done on Eids and special occasions. These people took the day of 'Aashooraa' as a festival like Eid, whereas the others took it as a day of mourning. Both are wrong, and both go against the Sunnah, even though the other group (those who take it as a day of mourning) are worse in intention and more ignorant and more plainly wrong... Neither the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) nor his successors (the khulafa' al-raashidoon) did any of these things on the day of 'Aashooraa', they neither made it a day of mourning nor a day of celebration...

As for the other things, such as cooking special dishes with or without grains, or wearing new clothes, or spending money on one's family, or buying the year's supplies on that day, or doing special acts of worship such as special prayers or deliberately slaughtering an animal on that day, or saving some of the meat of the sacrifice to cook with grains, or wearing kohl and henna, or taking a bath (ghusl), or shaking hands with one another, or visiting one another, or visiting the mosques and mashhads (shrines) and so on... all of this is reprehensible bid'ah and is wrong. None of it has anything to do with the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or the way of the Khulafa' al-Raashidoon. It was not approved of by any of the imaams of the Muslims, not Maalik, not al-Thawri, not al-Layth ibn Sa'd, not Abu Haneefah, not al-Oozaa'i, not al-Shaafa'i, not Ahmad ibn Hanbal, not Ishaq ibn Raahwayh, not any of the imaams and scholars of the Muslims.' (*al-Fataawa al-Kubra* by Ibn Taymiyah)

Ibn al-Haaj (may Allaah have mercy on him) mentioned that one of the bid'ahs on 'Aashooraa' was deliberately paying zakaat on this day, late or early, or slaughtering a chicken just for this occasion, or – in the case of women – using henna. (*al-Madkhal*, part 1, *Yawm 'Aashooraa'*)

We ask Allaah to make us followers of the Sunnah of His Noble Prophet, to make us live in Islam and die in a state of faith. May He help us to do that which He loves and which pleases Him.

We ask Him to help us to remember Him and be thankful to Him, to worship Him properly and to accept our good deeds. May He make us of those who are pious and fear Him. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad and all his family and companions.

### Recommendation to fast a day before or a day after, with 'Ashoora'

'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Abbaas (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: When the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) fasted on the day of 'Ashoora and told the people to fast, they said, "O Messenger of Allaah, this is a day that is venerated by the Jews and Christians." The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said, "Next year, if Allaah wills, we will fast on the ninth day." But by the time the following year came, the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) had passed away.

Narrated by Muslim, 1916.

Al-Shaafa'i and his companions, Ahmad, Ishaq and others said: It is mustahabb [recommended] to fast both the ninth and the tenth, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) fasted the tenth and intended to fast the ninth.

Based on this, there are different ways of fasting 'Ashoora', the least of which is to fast the tenth only, but it is better to fast the ninth as well. The more one fasts in Muharram, the better.

If one were to ask, what is the wisdom behind fasting the ninth as well as the tenth? The answer is:

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: The scholars among our companions and others said that there are several reasons for recommending fasting on the ninth day (Tasoo'a):

- 1 – The intention behind it is to be different from the Jews who limit their fasting to the tenth day. This was narrated from Ibn 'Abbaas.
- 2 – The intention was to join the fast of 'Ashoora' to another day, just as it is not allowed to fast on a Friday on its own [but it is allowed if one fasts the day before or the day after as well].
- 3 – The idea is to be on the safe side and make sure one is fasting on the tenth, in case the moon sighting was not accurate and what people think is the ninth is actually the tenth.

The strongest of these reasons is in order to be different from the People of the Book. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) forbade resembling the People of the Book in many ahaadeeth. For example, he said concerning 'Ashoora': "If I live until next year I will certainly fast the ninth." Al-Fataawa al-Kubra, part 6.

Ibn Hajar (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, commenting on the hadeeth "If I live until next year I will certainly fast the ninth":

His concern to fast the ninth may be understood as meaning that he would not limit himself to that, rather that he 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 to be correct; this is what may be understood from some of the reports narrated by Muslim."

From Fath al-Baari, 4/245.

### The Shia and Ashoorah

What the Shi'ah do on 'Ashoora' of beating their chests, slapping their cheeks, striking their shoulders with chains and cutting their heads with swords to let the blood flow are all innovations that have no basis in Islam. These things are evils that were forbidden by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who did not prescribe for his ummah to do any of these things or anything similar to them to mark the death of a leader or the loss of a martyr, no matter what his status. During his lifetime (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) a number of senior Sahaabah were martyred and he mourned their loss, such as Hamzah ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib, Zayd ibn Haarithah, Ja'far ibn Abi Taalib and 'Abd-Allaah ibn Rawaahah, but he did not do any of the things that these people do. If it was good, he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) would have done it before us.

Ya'qoob (peace be upon him) did not strike his chest or scratch his face, or shed blood or take the day of the loss of Yoosuf as a festival or day of mourning. Rather he remembered his missing loved one

and felt sad and distressed because of that. This is something no one can be blamed for. What is forbidden is these actions that have been inherited from the Jaahiliyyah, and which Islam forbids.

Al-Bukhaari (1294) and Muslim (103) narrated that 'Abd-Allaah ibn Mas'ood (may Allaah be pleased with him) said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "He is not one of us who strikes his cheeks, rends his garment, or cries with the cry of the Jaahiliyyah."

These reprehensible actions that the Shi'ah do on the day of 'Ashoora' have no basis in Islam. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not do them, nor did any of his companions. None of his companions did them when he or anyone else died, although the loss of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) was greater than the death of al-Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him).

Al-Haafiz Ibn Katheer (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: Every Muslim should mourn the killing of al-Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him), for he is one of the leaders of the Muslims, one of the scholars of the Sahaabah, and the son of the daughter of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who was the best of his daughters. He was a devoted worshipper, and a courageous and generous man. But there is nothing good in what the Shi'ah do of expressing distress and grief, most of which may be done in order to show off. His father was better than him and he was killed, but they do not take his death as an anniversary as they do with the death of al-Husayn. His father was killed on a Friday as he was leaving the mosque after Fajr prayer, on the seventeenth of Ramadaan in 40 AH. 'Uthmaan was better than 'Ali according to Ahl al-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaa'ah, and he was killed when he was besieged in his house during the days of al-Tashreeq in Dhu'l-Hijjah of 36 AH, with his throat cut from one jugular vein to the other, but the people did not take his death as an anniversary. 'Umar ibn al-Khattaab was better than 'Ali and 'Uthmaan, and he was killed as he was standing in the mihrab, praying Fajr and reciting Qur'aan, but the people did not take his death as an anniversary. Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq was better than him but the people did not take his death as an anniversary. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is the leader of the sons of Adam in this world and the Hereafter, and Allaah took him to Him as the Prophets died before him, but no one took the dates of their deaths as anniversaries on which they do what these ignorant Raafidis do on the day that al-Husayn was killed. ... The best that can be said when remembering these and similar calamities is that which 'Ali ibn al-Husayn narrated from his grandfather the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who said: "There is no Muslim who is afflicted by a calamity and when he remembers it, even if it was in the dim and distant past, he says Inna Lillaahi wa inna ilayhi raaji'oon (verily to Allaah we belong and unto Him is our return), but Allaah will give him a reward like that of the day when it befell him."

Narrated by Imam Ahmad and Ibn Majaah, end quote from al-Bidaayah wa'l-Nihaayah (8/221).

And he said (8/220): The Raafidis went to extremes in the state of Bani Buwayh in the year 400 and thereabouts. The drums were beaten in Baghdad and other cities on the day of 'Ashoora', and sand and straw was strewn in the streets and marketplaces, and sackcloth was hung on the shops, and the people expressed grief and wept. Many of them did not drink water that night, in sympathy with al-Husayn, because he was killed when he was thirsty. Then the women went out barefaced, wailing and slapping their faces and chests, walking barefoot in the marketplaces, and other reprehensible innovations... What they intended by these and similar actions is to impugn the state of Banu Umayyah (the Umayyads), because he was killed during their era.

On the day of 'Ashoora, the Naasibis of Syria do the opposite of what the Raafidis and Shi'ah do. They used to cook grains on the day of 'Ashoora and do ghusl and perfume themselves, and wear their finest garments, and they took that day as an Eid for which they made all kinds of food, and expressed happiness and joy, intending thereby to annoy the Raafidis and be different from them.

Celebrating that day is an innovation (bid'ah), and making it an anniversary for mourning is also an innovation. Hence Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

Because of the killing of al-Husayn (may Allaah be pleased with him), shaytaan caused the people to introduce two innovations: the innovation of mourning and wailing on the day of 'Ashoora', by slapping the cheeks, weeping, and reciting eulogies. ... and the innovation of rejoicing and celebrating. ... So some introduced mourning and others introduced celebration, so they regarded the day of 'Ashoora' as a day for wearing kohl, doing ghusl, spending on the family and making special foods. ... And every innovation is a going astray. None of the four imams of the Muslims or any other (scholars) regarded either of these things as mustahabb. End quote from Minhaaj al-Sunnah (4/554).

It should be noted that these reprehensible actions are encouraged by the enemies of Islam, so that they can achieve their evil aims of distorting the image of Islam and its followers. Concerning this Moosa al-Musawi said in his book al-Shi'ah wa'l-Tas-heeh:

But there can be no doubt that striking heads with swords and cutting the head in mourning for al-Husayn on the tenth day of Muharram reached Iran and Iraq and India during the British occupation of those lands.

The British are the ones who exploited the ignorance and naiveté of the Shi'ah and their deep love for Imam al-Husayn, and taught them to strike their heads with swords. Until recently the British embassies in Tehran and Baghdad sponsored the Husayni parades in which this ugly spectacle appears in the streets and alleyways. The aim of the British imperialist policy of developing this ugly spectacle and exploiting it in the worst manner was to give an acceptable justification to the British people and the free press that opposed British colonialism in India and other Muslim countries, and to show the peoples of these countries as savages who needed someone to save them from their ignorance and savagery. Images of the parades that marched in the streets on the day of 'Ashoora', in which thousands of people were striking their backs with chains and making them bleed, and striking their heads with daggers and swords, appeared in British and European newspapers, and the politicians justified their colonization of these countries on the basis of a humane duty to colonize the lands of these people whose culture was like that so as to lead these peoples towards civility and progress. It was said that when Yaseen al-Haashimi, the Iraqi Prime Minister at the time of the British occupation of Iraq, visited London to negotiate with the British for an end to the Mandate, the British said to him: We are in Iraq to help the Iraqi people to make progress and attain happiness, and bring them out of savagery. This angered Yaseen al-Haashimi and he angrily walked out of the room where the negotiations were being held, but the British apologized politely and asked him with all respect to watch a documentary about Iraq, which turned out to be a film about the Husayni marches in the streets of al-Najaf, Karbala' and al-Kaazimiyyah, showing horrific and off-putting images of people striking themselves with daggers and chains. It is as if the British wanted to tell him: Would an educated people with even a little civility do such things to themselves?! End quote.

And Allaah knows best.

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