



# NIZAMIYE MOSQUE COMPLEX

*“Where heart and mind meet”*

## FRIDAY SERMON – 15 : THE MONTH OF MUHARRAM AND THE DAY OF ASHURA

وَالْفَجْرِ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ

**“By the dawn, and the ten nights,”**

The month of Muharram, which is well-known as "**Allah's month of Muharram**" is a month in which divine blessing, grace, grant and generosity increase and become abundant.

In fact, something like Allah's month, day, year is not in question but it was expressed like this by the Prophet because it is an important opportunity to attain Allah's mercy.

The Day of Ashura is the 10th day of Muharram. The Day of Ashura has a different place in the eye of Allah. On that day, Allah Almighty granted ten different things to His ten different prophets and increased its blessing. It is very virtuous to perform fasting on these days.

The 10th day of Muharram, which is the first month of the Hijri year, is the Day of Ashura. The month of Muharram has a different place among other months; similarly, the Day of Ashura has a more blessed place among other days.

We learn from the interpretation of the second verse ("By the ten nights") of the chapter of al-Fajr that Day of Ashura has a distinguished place in the eye of Allah.

In some tafsir books, it is stated that those ten nights are the ten nights up to the tenth day (Ashura) of Muharram. (1)

Allah Almighty expresses the holiness and blessing of those nights by swearing on them.

The reason why this day is called "Ashura" is the fact that it is the tenth day of the month of Muharram. According to what is stated in hadith books, the reason why that name was given to that day is the fact that Allah Almighty granted ten different things to His ten different prophets. Those grants are stated as follows:

1. Allah granted a miracle upon Prophet Moses (pbuh) and by splitting the sea into two, He drowned Pharaoh and his army in the water on this day.
2. Prophet Noah cast the anchor of his ark on the mount of Judi on this day.
3. Prophet Jonah (pbuh) was saved from the stomach of the fish on this day.
4. Prophet Adam's (pbuh) repentance was accepted on this day.
5. Prophet Joseph (pbuh) was taken out of the well into which he was thrown by his brothers on this day.

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6. Prophet Jesus (pbuh) was born on this day and he was elevated to heaven also on this day.
7. Prophet David's (pbuh) repentance was accepted on this day.
8. Prophet Ishmael (Samuel), the son of Prophet Abraham, was born on this day.
9. Prophet Jacob's eyes started to see again on this day, after being blinded by the longing for his son Prophet Joseph.
10. Prophet Job recovered from his illness on this day. (2)

According to what Hz. Aisha says, the covering (kiswah) of the Kaaba used to be changed on the Day of Ashura in the past. This blessed day and night, which corresponds to the anniversary of such significant and holy incidents, have been celebrated by Muslims since the Era of Bliss. They allocated more time to worshipping on those days and did more charity work than other days. For, there are hadiths stating that Allah Almighty will accept the deeds of worshipping and repentance on those days. The first type of worshipping that comes to the mind about the Day of Ashura is fasting.

**The month of Muharram and the Day of Ashura were regarded as holy by Christians and Jews, who are from the People of the Book, too. As a matter of fact, when the Prophet (pbuh) migrated to Madinah, he found out that the Jews living there were fasting. He asked them,**

**- "What is this fasting for?" The Jews said,**

**- "Today is the day when Allah rescued Moses (Musa) from his enemies and when He drowned the Pharaoh. Hazrat Musa performed fasting today to thank Allah." Thereupon, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said,**

**- "We are closer to Musa and reviving his sunnah than you!" and fasted that day; he also ordered his companions to fast. (3)**

The Day of Ashura was regarded as holy not only among the People of the Book but among other nations beginning from the time of the Prophet Noah (Nuh). It had been regarded as a holy day and a day of fasting among the Arabs of Ignorance (Jahiliyya) before Islam since the time of the Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim).

**Hz. Aisha, our mother, says the following regarding the issue:**

**"Ashura was a day on which Qurayshis performed fasting during the Era of Jahiliyya. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) acted accordingly. When he migrated to Madinah, he continued that fasting and ordered others to fast too. However, when the fast of Ramadan became compulsory, he stopped fasting on the day of Ashura. After that, the Muslims who wanted to fast on that day fasted; those who did not want did not fast." Bukhari, Sawm: 69.**



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At that time, fasting in Ramadan had not been rendered fard; the Prophet and the Companions performed fasting as wajib on that day. When fasting in Ramadan was rendered fard, the Prophet said they were free about fasting on the Day of Ashura: *"If you wish, you can perform fasting; if you wish, you can eat."* (4) Thus, fasting on the Day of Ashura remained as sunnah.

The following hadiths are stated about the virtue of fasting on the Day of Ashura: **Somebody came to the Prophet (pbuh) and asked:**

**"When do you recommend me to fast after Ramadan?"**

**The Prophet (pbuh) said,**

*"Perform fasting on the month of Muharram because it is the month of Allah. There is such a day in it that Allah accepted the repentance of a nation on that day; He may forgive another nation."* (5)

In another hadith in Tirmidhi, the Prophet (pbuh) said the following:

*"I certainly hope that the fasting performed on the day of Ashura will eliminate the sins committed in the previous year."* (6)

The following hadith expresses the virtue of the fasting on the day of Ashura: *"The most meritorious fasting after the fasting of Ramadan is the fasting performed in the month of Muharram, the month of Allah."* (7)

Explaining that hadith, Imam Ghazali said, *"The month of Muharram is the beginning of the Hijri year. It is nice to base the new year on a good foundation like fasting. It is hoped that the abundance will continue."* (8)

It is recommended that the fasting of Ashura should be performed on the ninth, tenth, and eleventh days of Muharram so as not to resemble the Jews and not to fast only on the day of Ashura.

The hadith in this sense was reported by Ibn Abbas. Therefore, it is mustahab to perform fasting on the Day of Ashura along with one day before or after it.

It will be appropriate to maintain nice customs like doing charity, good deeds and giving sadaqah along with fasting on that day. If everybody gives something (food, etc) to his family, relatives and neighbors by remembering the incidents showing the virtues of these days, he will definitely be rewarded many times. The Prophet advised us to entertain the family members on the Day of Ashura more than other days.

The following is stated in hadith: *"Allah Almighty bestows abundance and wealth of boons upon the ones who entertain their family and relatives on the Day of Ashura."* (9) This notion of family includes relatives, orphans, waifs and neighbors too. However, it is not necessary to spend too much and exceed the limit of home budget. Everybody should offer within the limits of their financial situation.



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The density of the darkness of Karbala is also seen above the spiritual clearness of the Day of Ashura. Hz. Imam Husayn was martyred cruelly by a traitor called Sinan bin Anas in Karbala when he was 55 years old on the tenth of Muharram, in the Hijri year of 61. The Umayyad caliph Yazid and his governor of Kufa, Ibn Ziyad, were behind this traitorousness and cruelty. This heart-wrenching incident which was informed by the Prophet (pbuh) fifty years before it happened elevated Hz. Husayn to the honor of being the lord of the youngsters of Paradise.

The martyrs were rewarded and elevated to the most honorable ranks. We do not doubt that Allah the Most Glorious will punish the cruel and unjust people with what they deserve, in the fairest way. Every believer who submits to the judgment given by qadar grieves for it but pursues their imperturbability and decency. Their emotions do not lead them to fallacy and rampage. In fact, all events that occur are the decree of the predestination of Allah. In this sense, turning this into a ceremony of mourning contradicts the creed and belief of Ahl as-Sunnah.

(1) - Hak Dini Kur an Dili, 8:5793.

(2) - Sahih Muslim Explanation, 6:140.

(3) - Ibn Majah, Siyam: 31.

(4) - Muslim, Siyam: 117.

(5) - Tirmidhi, Sawm: 40.

(6) - ibi., Sawm: 47.

(7) - Ibn Majah. Siyam: 43.

(8) - Ihya, 1:238.

(9) - at-Tarhib wa't-Tarhib, 2:116.