

# MUHARRAM AND ASHURA

Muharram is the first month in the Islamic calendar, so it's the start of a new year. It is one of the four sacred months. Do you know the other three? Check the Islamic Months section in your Migo & Ali: A-Z of Islam book, or find out some other way!

The Prophet Muhammad (saw) used to fast in the month of Muharram.

- Here is a hadith:

Ibn Abbas (ra) said, "I never saw Allah's Messenger (saw) so keen to fast any day and give it priority over any other than this day, the day of Ashura, and this month, meaning Ramadan" (Bukhari).

- And another:

"The Messenger of Allah (saw) said: 'The best of fasting after Ramadan is fasting Allah's month of Muharram.'" (Muslim)

Did you notice? The prophet (saw) called it Allah's month, the month of Allah. No other month has been given this title and honour! So it's a very special month indeed. Many scholars say Muharram is more sacred than the other sacred months.

On the tenth day in this month, a day called Ashura, Prophet Nuh's (as) ark finally settled down on a mountain, called Mount Judiyy. Nuh (as) and all the people that were on the ark were safe after the big flood that had come.

And it was the Day of Ashura when Musa (as) and his people were saved from Pharaoh. You know this story, from the Migo & Ali book, when Pharaoh and his army were chasing Musa (as) and his people, who wanted to leave the place in Egypt where the Pharaoh was ruling unfairly and horribly. Musa and his people were trying to get away, but there was a sea in front of them, and Pharaoh's army behind. There was nowhere to run. Then by a miracle, and the power of Allah, Musa (as) hit the ground with his stick and the sea parted, making a clear path for Musa (as) and his people to walk through, to safety. After this, Musa (as) used to fast on every Ashura.

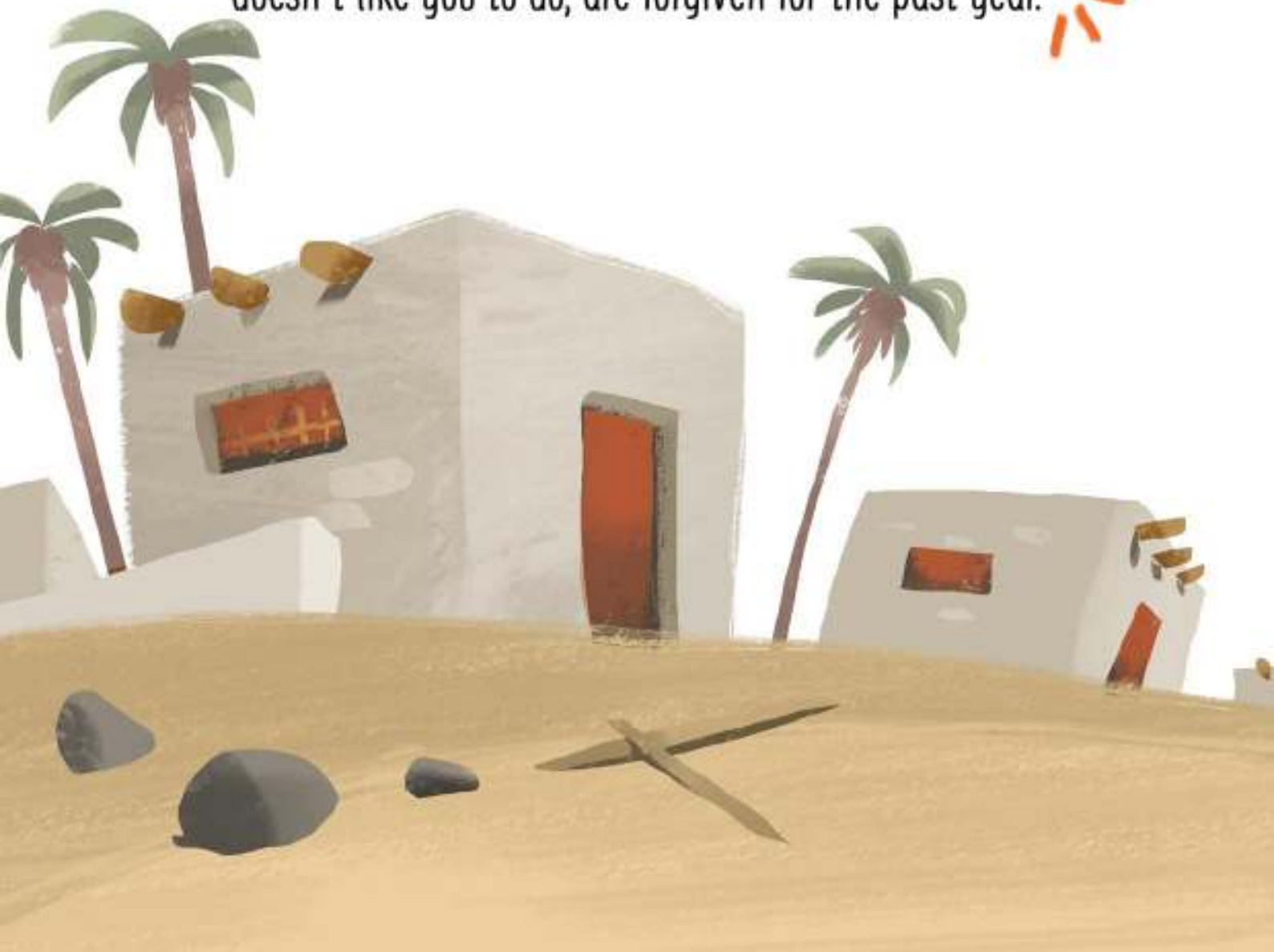




When the Prophet (saw) went to Madinah, he learnt that the Jews there would fast on Ashura because it was the day that the prophet Musa (as) and his people, the children of Israel, were saved from Pharaoh. The prophet Muhammad (saw) said to his people that we have more right to Musa (as), than the people of the book, meaning we are his true followers, so we should fast on Ashura. He also encouraged us to fast a day before it or a day after it, to be different.

So we fast on Ashura, the 10th day of Muharram, to honour Musa (as) and because it is a sunnah as our prophet (saw) did it in his lifetime.

➤ And if you fast on Ashura, all your smaller sins, things Allah doesn't like you to do, are forgiven for the past year. ➤



Another incident happened on Ashura, decades after the prophet's (saw) lifetime. It was a big event in Islamic history. The prophet's (saw) grandson, and son of the fourth caliph, Ali (ra), Hussain (ra)—became shahid in a horrible battle. The prophet (saw) loved his grandson very much, and he was an incredible and brave man.

It is not the reason why the month is sacred, or the reason why we fast, because the day was holy and fasting on Ashura was done before this happened.

As this month is holy and special, especially the day of Ashura, we should also do other things during this time that Allah loves. Other than fasting, and if you are not able to fast. You can also give to charity, be kind and do things for others, make more dhikr, make more dua, and read more Qur'an.



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