

The Virtues of the Ten Days of Dhul-Hijjah

O people fear Allah and be dutiful to Him (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى), and benefit from the seasons of goodness before they end—and from them is the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah which Allah swore by in His Book:

وَالْفَجْرِ
وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ

“By the dawn and by the Ten Nights.” (Al-Fajr: 1-2)

The ten nights referred to here are the ten of Dhul-Hijjah—and Allah swears by whatever He wills, and He does not swear except by that which has status and virtue.

These ten days are the best days for a person to perform righteous deeds and show obedience to Allāh through acts of piety such as prayer, *dhikr*, fasting, *sadaqah* and sacrifice.

Jābir bin Abdillāh narrated that Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

أَفْضَلُ أَيَّامِ الدُّنْيَا أَيَّامُ الْعَشْرِ

“The best days in the world are the ten days (of Dhul-Hijjah).” (Ibn Hibbān, Al-Bazzār, declared *saheeh* by Al-Albānī in *Saheeh Al-Jāmi‘*, no. 133)

Ibn ‘Abbās (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) narrated that Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

مَا مِنْ أَيَّامٍ الْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ فِيهَا أَحَبُّ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْأَيَّامِ يَعْنِي أَيَّامَ الْعَشْرِ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ قَالَ وَلَا الْجِهَادُ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ خَرَجَ بِنَفْسِهِ وَمَالِهِ فَلَمْ يَرْجِعْ مِنْ ذَلِكَ بِشَيْءٍ

“There are no days during which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allāh than these ten,” meaning the ten of Dhul-Hijjah. They said: **“O Messenger of Allah, not even Jihād in Allāh’s cause?”** He replied: **“Not even Jihād in Allāh’s cause, except for the man who left out with life and his wealth and does not return back.”** (Abu Dawud, no. 2438 and graded *saheeh* by Al-Albānī)

These are the *known days*, days of plentiful *dhikr*: glorifying Allāh and mentioning His greatness. Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) stated:

وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْلُومَاتٍ

“And they mention the name of Allāh on the *known days*.” (Al-Hajj: 28) And these are the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah. And Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) said:

وَاذْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَعْدُودَاتٍ

“And remember Allāh during [specific] the *numbered days*.” (Al-Baqarah: 203) This verse refers to the days of *Tashrīq* which are the 11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah—all three, the additional days of ‘Eid, beginning with the 10th.

So, it is recommended to be plentiful in these ten blessed days with the performance of righteous deeds, especially with the utterance of the *Takbeer* (i.e., *Allāhu akbar*) which should be mentioned over and over, with a raised voice¹ in the homes, in the market-places, and the places of work. Vocalising the *Takbeer* encourages others to do the same.

It is legislated for the men to raise their voices with Allah's remembrance. As for the woman then she raises her voice to the extent that she can hear herself and those surrounding her — such that it is a low voice different to the men. The following is from the *Takbeers* recited by the Sahābah:

الله أكبر الله أكبر لا إله إلا الله

Allāhu akbar, Allāhu akbar, lā ilāha illallāh

الله أكبر الله أكبر والله الحمد

Allāhu akbar, Allāhu akbar, walillāhil-hamd

It is recommended in these ten days to fast because fasting is a righteous deed encouraged by the Prophet (ﷺ) in these days as narrated by his wife, Hafsa (رضي الله عنها) who said:

¹ This does not entail shouting or disturbing others.

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَصُومُ يَوْمَ عَاشُورَاءَ وَيَتَسَعًّا مِنْ ذِي الْحِجَّةِ وَثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ
مِنَ الشَّهْرِ أَوَّلَ اثْنَيْنِ مِنَ الشَّهْرِ وَخَمِيسَيْنِ

“The Prophet used to fast on the day of ‘Ashoorā’, the nine days of Dhul-Hijjah, and three days each month: the first Monday of the month, and two Thursdays.” (An-Nasā’ī no. 2372, graded *saheeh* by Shaikh Al-Albānī, see *Saheeh Abī Dawood* no. 2106)

Ash-Shawkānī (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said: “We have mentioned the narrations that prove the virtue of righteous deeds that are performed in the ten days of Dhul-Hijjah, and fasting is included among those deeds. As for what has been reported by Muslim (no. 2010) from ‘Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا) that she said: **‘I did not ever see the Allāh’s Messenger fast during the *ten days*’** and in a narration, ‘He never fasted the ten days’, then the scholars have said that intent [of her words] that he never fasted the ten days is due to illness, or journey or other than that—or the fact that she did not see him [or notice him] fasting does not necessitate its absence when [it is known] that it is established from his speech that which proves the fasting in the ten days is legislated, as is shown by the *hadeeth* in this chapter, which is the *hadeeth* of Umm Hafsah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا)...”

Fasting ‘Arafah—the 9th Day of Dhul-Hijjah

In these ten days is the day of ‘Arafah. Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

مَا مِنْ يَوْمٍ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ أَنْ يُعْتَقَ اللَّهُ فِيهِ عَبْدًا مِنَ النَّارِ مِنْ يَوْمِ عَرَفَةَ وَإِنَّهُ لَيَدْنُوهُمْ
يُبَاهِي بِهِمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ فَيَقُولُ مَا أَرَادَ هَؤُلَاءِ

“There is no day on which Allāh frees more of His servants from the Hellfire than He does on the Day of ‘Arafah. Indeed, He draws close and then He boasts of them to the Angels and He says: ‘What is it that they want?’” (Muslim, no. 1348)

In a narration, Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) stated: **“Bear witness, my Angels, that verily I have forgiven them!”** (Graded *saheeh* by Al-Albānī in *Saheeh At-Targheeb*, no 1154)

It is from the Sunnah to fast the day of ‘Arafah. The Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated:

“Fasting the day of ‘Arafah expiates the sins of the previous year and the coming year.” (Muslim) This encouragement is for those who did not travel to Hajj—as for those who are present at ‘Arafah, it is disliked for them to fast as Ibn Khuzaymah explained in his *Saheeh*. So, those performing Hajj, they do not fast this day because the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stood in ‘Arafah and he did not fast. This is so the *Hujjāj* have the strength to endure and supplicate for the day.

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said regarding the supplication on the Day of ‘Arafah:

خَيْرُ الدُّعَاءِ دُعَاءُ يَوْمِ عَرَفَةَ وَخَيْرُ مَا قُلْتُ أَنَا وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ قَبْلِي

“The best supplication is that of the Day of ‘Arafat—and the best that I and the Prophets before me have said is:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

None has the right to be worshipped but Allāh alone, He has no partner. His is the dominion and His is the praise, and He is able to do all things.” (At-Tirmidhī no. 3509, and graded *saheeh* by Al-Albānī) The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) would supplicate with these words while he was at ‘Arafah—it is the day on which Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى) boasts to the Angels regarding those who are present at the plain of ‘Arafah.

Then at the end of these ten days, there is the Day of ‘Eid al-Adhā, that is *Yawmul-Hajj il-Akbar*, the greatest of Hajj because the pilgrims fulfil the rites of Hajj: It is the time when the *Hadyī* animal is sacrificed in Minā for the pilgrims performing *Hajj at-Tamattu’* and *Hajj al-Qirān*. As for the other lands, the Muslims sacrifice their animals for ‘Eid al-Aḍhā.

So, whoever intends to sacrifice (*uḍ’hiyyah*) for himself (and his family), then when the ten days enter, he should not remove his hair, neither cut, shave or trim them, nor clip his nails until he sacrifices his *uḍ’hiyyah* animal or until it is sacrificed for him. This is due to the saying of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ): **“When the month of Dhul-Hijjah begins, and one of you intends to make a sacrifice (*uḍ’hiyyah*),**

then let him not take anything from the hair of his body, or his nails until he has sacrificed.” (Muslim, no. 1977 from Umm Salamah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا)). The time begins from sunset, the night before the first day of Dhul-Hijjah. As for the one who is slaughtering on behalf of someone else (not for himself) then he does not enter into the restrictions of this *hadeeth*.

So, the *uḍ'hiyyah* is an established Sunnah for the one who able to afford it, he slaughters at his residence, his home, or nearby and he eats from it at his home with his family, he gives some to his neighbours, and he gives some of it away in charity to those near him from the poor people.

Al-‘Allāmah, Ash-Shaikh Sālih Al-Fawzān (may Allāh preserve him): “As for that which has been innovated by some of the people whereby they send money for the *uḍ'hiyyah* sacrifice to charitable organisations for them to slaughter animals outside of their country, far away from the home of the one offering the sacrifice, then this is in opposition to the Sunnah—and it is a changing of worship. So, it is *wājib* (obligatory) to leave this act—and to instead to slaughter the *uḍ'hiyyah* in their homes or in the land of the one offering the sacrifice. This is what the Sunnah proves, and this is what the Muslims in the time of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) were upon up until these newly introduced matters appeared. I fear that this act may be an innovation (*bid‘ah*)—and the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

“Whoever innovates into this affair of ours that which is not from it, then it is rejected.” (Muslim no. 3242, Al-Bukhārī no. 2499)

And he (صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **“Beware of newly invented matters, for every newly invented matter is an innovation, and every innovation is misguidance.”** (An-Nasā’ī no. 1560, Muslim no. 1435, Ibn Mājah no. 44)

Whoever wishes to give charity to those in need, then the door of *Sadaqah* is open, so do not alter the act of worship from its legislated method in the name of *Sadaqah*. Allāh (سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى) stated:

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ



‘And whatever the Messenger has given you, take it, and what he has forbidden you, refrain from it. And fear Allāh, indeed, Allāh is severe in punishment.’ (Al-Hashr: 7)” (Al-Khutub Al-Mimbariyyah 6/350-351)

So, the least one should sacrifice is one goat (or sheep or ram) and that will suffice him and his family. Abu Ayyūb Al-Ansāri (رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ) said:

كَانَ الرَّجُلُ فِي عَهْدِ النَّبِيِّ - صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - يُضَجِّي بِالشَّاةِ عَنْهُ وَعَنِ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ
فَيَأْكُلُونَ وَيُطْعِمُونَ ثُمَّ تَبَاهَى النَّاسُ فَصَارَ كَمَا تَرَى

“A man in the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) would sacrifice one sheep for himself and his household — they would eat from it and feed others. Then later, people started boasting with their sacrifices as you can see.” (Ibn Mājah, no. 3147, graded authentic by Al-Albānī)

It is allowed for seven families (or seven people) to share in the sacrifice of a cow or camel. Jābir bin Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) said that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) stated:

الْبَقَرَةُ عَنْ سَبْعَةٍ وَالْجَزُورُ عَنْ سَبْعَةٍ

“A cow is shared between seven, and a camel is shared between seven.” (Abu Dāwūd, no. 2808, graded *saheeh* by Al-Albānī)

The *ud’hiyyah* is to be performed on the day of *Nahr* which is the first day of ‘Eid, the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah and on the days of *Tashreeq*, i.e. 11th, 12th and 13th of Dhul-Hijjah. Any of these days is allowable for sacrifice. The sacrifice is to be performed every year.

Ahmad and Ibn Hibbān reported from Jubayr bin Mut‘im that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: **“All the days of Tashreeq are for slaughtering.”** (A *hasan hadeeth*, see *As-Silsilatus-Saheehah*, no. 2467).

So, the cattle are the following animals: **Camels, cows (or buffalo), sheep and goats — whether male or female, even though the male animal is better as a sacrifice.**

As for the ages, then in all categories, the animal should be of *Thaniyy* age. A *Thaniyy* animal is one that is old enough to lose its front teeth permanently:

For a camel (الإبل): Five years old and entered into its sixth year.

For a cow (البقر): Two years old and entered into its third year.

Sheep (الضأن): One-year-old and entered into its second year.

Goat (المعز): One-year-old and entered into its second year.

Any animal less than these ages is not acceptable as a sacrifice except in the case when one finds it difficult to acquire a sheep of *thaniyy* age, then he is permitted to sacrifice a *jadha'* (الجدغ) which is a sheep that has reached six months in age. This is due to the saying of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

لَا تَذْبَحُوا إِلَّا مُسِنَّةً إِلَّا أَنْ يَعْسَرَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَذْبَحُوا جَذْعَةً مِنَ الضَّأْنِ

“Do not sacrifice except a mature animal unless that is difficult upon you—then you should sacrifice a *jadha'ah* (younger) sheep.” (Muslim, no. 1963)

والحمد لله رب العالمين وصلى الله على نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين.

سبحانك اللهم وبحمدك أشهد أن لا إله إلا أنت أستغفرك وأتوب إليك

Abu Khadeejah Abdul-Wāhid.

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