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EDITORIAL

As millions of Muslims all over the world prepare for this year's once in a life time journey to the House of Allah (SWT) , in answer to the call of Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and fulfil the obligations of Hajj, we are happy to present this issue's feature article on Hajj.

While we congratulate those that would witness this year's congregation, and also wish them a successful journey as well as performing an acceptable Hajj, we should not forget the significance of and the lessons to be learnt from this act of worship. The significance and some of the lessons to be learnt are effectively tackled in the feature article.

The author of the article, Dr Muhammad Ashiru Sani Daura was the second Amir of Forum (1994 to 1996). He is currently a Senior Lecturer at the Nigeria Defence Academy (NDA), Kaduna. May Allah (SWT) reward his effort abundantly, ameen.

The other two articles are about the months of DhulHijjah - the last month and Muharram - the first month of the Islamic Calendar.

We pray to Allah (SWT) to grant us the wisdom and ability to read, understand, and practice the lessons in these articles, bless and reward the writers with Jannatul Firdous, ameen.

HAJJ AND OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS AN ISLAMIC WAY OF LIFE (Significance and lessons for the Islamic Movement)

And proclaim the Pilgrimage among men: they will come to thee on foot and (mounted) on every camel, lean (on account of journeys) through deep and distant highways; That they may witness the benefits (provided) for them, and celebrate the name of Allah, through the days appointed, over cattle which He has provided for them (for sacrifice): then eat ye thereof and feed the distressed ones in want. Then let them complete the rites prescribed for them, fulfill their vows, and (again) circumambulate the ancient House. (Al-Hajj 27-29)

Introduction

This was the order given to Ibrahim (AS) to call people towards the Hajj: a call to which millions answer every year, and will continue to answer till the time Allah (SWT) wishes. Various reasons have been mentioned in the verses for the call, but at the foremost, significantly, is *'that they may witness benefits (provided) for them'*. These benefits have not been specified nor limited. Thus, they can be spiritual and mundane, for the individual and the group, and could be of varying degrees and nature to different persons or groups. We learn from Hajj issues relating to Aqeedah and Ibadaat, Politics and Economics, morality and social responsibilities, etc. For example, all the fundamentals of Aqeedah are reaffirmed: Tauhid, belief in the Angels, in the Books and the Prophets, and in Qadr and the Last day. We are taught the essence of Ibadah and its reward. Our hearts are purified with remembrance of Allah, remembrance of the death, the rejection of the devil, and the revival of emotions and memories of old! We also learn patience and perseverance,

sacrifice and mercy, humbleness and piety. In the social sphere, we see unity and brotherhood, equality and human relations, group attitudes and understanding. Politically, the Hajj season is the only time a representative group of the Muslim Ummah comes practically under a common leadership, thus reminding us of the khilafah.

We also meet to discuss our problems and take stands in matters that affect us. We also learn of Muslim problems, which we report back to our 'constituencies'! It is the greatest single medium and opportunity for the dissemination of information, and also the single greatest opportunity for the Muslims to 'be known' by the world. Besides, it is a journey of peace, to the Land of peace in the months of peace.. so peaceful that not even the plants or insects should be hurt! The Hajj season is, undoubtedly, that occasion where the greatest economic transactions take place: big enough to bail out many of the poor Muslim masses if properly managed. Imagine how much is exchanged in terms of currencies, and how much is exchanged in goods (from food to Ihram dresses to animals of sacrifice etc) and services (from airlifting to accommodation etc). But, unfortunately, it is the non-Muslims who benefit most from this. These are some of the benefits. They are too many to discuss. As such we will concentrate on some which may be of greatest significance to the Islamic movement, the group of people who realise the situation the Ummah is, and who also realise the responsibilities that are on them of

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bringing it back on the path of revival towards an Islamic way of life in all spheres.

Significance

The significance of the Hajj to the Islamic movement lies in many things. Some of these will be mentioned:

i) **As an obligation:** Allah (SWT) said, meaning,

Pilgrimage thereto (the House) is a duty Men owe to Allah,- Those who can afford the journey; [Q3:97]

And the Prophet (SAW) said,
Islam is built on five pillars... performing pilgrimage to the House of Allah, for those who can afford the journey. [AlBukhari and Muslim]

The Islamic movement that strives to establish the system of Allah (SWT) on earth has to take special significance in any of the fundamental pillars of the deen.

ii) **The call of Ibrahim(AS):** The fact that the Hajj is the call of Ibrahim (AS), and a reconstruction of his life and struggle, is of great significance. Ibrahim (AS) is rightly the father of the Islamic movement. He is the father of the Prophets, who led the movement through times. He was one whose whole life was sacrificed for the struggle to eliminate false deities and establish true worship of Allah. He called his father and admonished his offspring; he admonished leader and the led; he left his home and family for the sake of Allah; he was always on the move through most of the civilised world of his time-from Iraq to Egypt to Syria to the Arabian Peninsula; he fought evil with his heart, tongue and hand and

eventually established the symbol of Allah's worship on earth; he faced all odds and suffered all tribulations; he was indeed a model:

Ibrahim was indeed a model, devoutly obedient to Allah, (and) true in faith, and he joined not gods with Allah. (An Nahl, Q7 6:120)

iii) **A Jihad:** Hajj is a form of jihad in itself. The Prophet (SAW) has categorically mentioned this in many hadiths, among which are:

a. *What a good jihad Hajj is!* [Bukhari]

b. *The best jihad (for women) is an accepted Hajj.* [Bukhari and An Nasa'i]

c. *Hajj is the jihad of every weak person.* [Ibnu Majah]

In other places he (SAW) made many parallels between Hajj and jihad: he used to make loud dhikr during both; he used to thank Allah (SWT) and say, *Allah has fulfilled His promise, and helped His servant, and defeated the allies alone* when he returned from any of them; and in the treatment of the shaheed and the one who dies performing Hajj, there is a parallel.

But the most striking connection between the two is in the Qur'an, where the mention of the duties of Hajj always comes before or after the mention of jihad (fighting or da'wah)[see Baqarah, 2:154-158 & 189-203 and Hajj, 22:26-41]. In fact, one of the verses that commands the formation of the Islamic movement comes a few verses after, but closely related to, the verse that comes with the obligation of Hajj in surat Al Imran[verses 96-110]!

The link between Hajj and jihad can easily be seen: both require material and human sacrifice; both require discipline and patience; both have been described as 'fi sabilillah' by the Prophet(saw):

Verily, the Hajj and Umrah are fisabilillah;- [Al Hakim]

and in Hajj are rehearsed all the prerequisites of a successful jihad, both in its form and in its history, as we will see, insha'Allah.

iv) **A turning point:** The Hajj season marks an important turning points in the history of the first Islamic movement of this Ummah. It was during Hajj that the famous allegiance of al-aqabah(bay'atul aqabah) that led to the establishment of the first Islamic state was made; then there was the 'manifest victory' of Hudaibiya; then the famous declaration of immunity (bara'ah) which marked the final state of relationship between the Islamic state and the disbelievers; then the final declaration that the deen of Allah has come to stay, a declaration which the Jews said they would have celebrated if it was revealed to them. Not to forget that the Hajj season has been the most fruitful for the da'wah throughout the Makkan period!

v) **A confluence and a symbol:** Hajj is a confluence, a meeting point. It is a meeting point of the mundane and the spiritual, of the dunya and akhirah, of various cultures and personalities, of varying colours and languages; something that distinguishes Islam from any other religion or ideology. It is also a symbol of the established deen, that is to be made dominant over all other systems. These are things the Islamic movement is struggling to establish on the earth as a whole. Besides, Hajj is a meeting point of the Islamic movement in time and space. When and where the pilgrims rub and step on the same soil, and kiss the same stone, that was stepped and kissed by Ibrahim and Isma'el (AS), and all the generations up to Muhammad (SAW) with that group of the chosen companions, the vanguard who made that 'unique generation.' Then Islamic workers meet and see all others who are on the same path with them throughout this 'tiny' world!

Lessons

The Islamic worker, looking at the Hajj as a form of Jihad, relates whatever preparations, sacrifice, effort, mental and spiritual preparation he made or he achieved, with what he

is expected to do in his life-long struggle. From this angle we can enumerate lessons as: the need for effective planning with clear goals and vision; unity of purpose and direction; brotherhood; allegiance and immunity (al wala' and al bara'); role of women and children; division of labour; da'wah with affection for the called; da'wah as a full time activity; patience and perseverance; firmness and determination; stock taking and self appraisal; meeting place for exchange of ideas and putting together strategies; co-operation and coordination between various groups; resoluteness; need for economic base for da'wah; appreciation of the enormous nature of da'wah; consolation and encouragement; need to be careful with financial sponsorships from someone external to the movement; effective time management e.t.c. e.t.c.... But let us look at three which seem to run through the whole activities and history of Hajj:

i) **Importance of effective tarbiyah(training):** A careful look at the Hajj reveals a significant amount of tarbiyah that is needed, and also achieved. In the spiritual domain, the Hajj is dominated with dhikr in nearly every rite and place. So is the constant reminder of the hereafter-in fact it looks like a rehearsal to that imminent journey -the farewell (death), the journey (grave), the ihram (shroud and grave), the standing at arafah (resurrection and judgement) etc.. . Then the witnessing of

the 'clear signs' of Allah's greatness that abound in the 'First House' as the Qur'an has told us. Then the memories, when the heavens and the earth meet; the dunya and the akhirah meet, and the first and the last meet! It is so much of a spiritual experience that the pilgrim returns home 'like the day his mother gave birth to him.' [hadith] Since before one starts the journey, the mental preparation starts. Struggling to learn the rites-to many, more than they learn about salat-, then the guidelines about the unique journey, then the great exposure that one gets. Allah (SWT) said, meaning,

Do they not travel through the land, so that their hearts(and minds) may thus learn. wisdom and their ears may thus learn to hear? Truly it is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts which are in their breasts. (Al Hajj:46)

Could there be a travel more momentous than the Hajj? In the physical sphere, we are first reminded of the conditions of 'ability' to perform Hajj, which includes that of the body. In Hajj the body is forced to 'live up to the circumstances.' New environment, different type of food, harsh weather, congestion, new and unusual type of dress, different accommodation etc.. all one has to live up to, and get used to. Is this not the essence of physical training for the life long Jihad? In summary, the Hajj teaches us that an effective training program for Islamic workers in all three spheres is a must for a success!

ii) **Absolute submission and surrender to Allah (SWT):** Many scholars have observed that the Hajj is unique among the other forms of Ibadaat. Not only because it involves money and the body, but because many of its rites are not within the domain of human reasoning. We kiss the black stone, knowing well that it is a stone. We go round a House, the Owner of which we believe is beyond and above His creation; Most acts of worship are not tied to any individual's remembrance, or to a place, except Hajj; We are asked to hit

the shaytan with pebbles even though we know it is a pillar of concrete; Moreover, one cannot even hit 'to hurt' the devil, as some will prefer. And, why seven rounds of tawaf or sa'y? etc... All these do not simply appear to the human intellect as Salat,

Zakat or Siyam appear. Omar(ra) was quoted as saying to the black stone..

if not that the Prophet (SAW) has kissed you I will not have kissed you.

The scholars say the wisdom most apparent is that it is a test of our unquestionable submission and surrender to the orders of Allah (SWT), just in tune with the life of Ibrahim (AS). He was ordered to do da'wah, he did; he was ordered to leave home, father and relatives, he did; he was asked to take his family, - including a little child- from a 'blessed land' to a barren one, he did; and he was asked to slaughter that only son ..and he did submit, without an iota of contemplation. And this is what Hajj is set to remind and teach us. As long as we are Allah's servants and property, and we have voluntarily sold ourselves to Him, we have to behave like that. We have to realise that no movement can succeed without absolute commitment to the cause, and absolute submission to the commands of Allah (SWT) and the Prophet (SAW). Any slight deviation can be very costly. The lesson of Uhud is there in surat Ali-Imran we read always. That is why the greatest fear of the Sahabah (RA) when they go out for an expedition was not in the enemy but in the presence of somebody disobeying Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (SAW) in their midst.

iii) **The Sunnah of Allah with regards to victory:** This is another important lesson we should always remember when we perform or reflect upon Hajj. And it is an issue that many workers fail to understand, a thing that leads them to losing hope and end up in one of two extremes. We start with Hajar, the wife of Ibrahim, who struggled and roamed the barren mountains of

Makkah for water to give her child-an episode we reconstruct during Sa'y. She was full of confidence and trust in Allah (SWT)'s aid, but was not ready to give up her struggle, until Allah (SWT) brought forth a spring that continues to flow to the day this earth is folded up. That was her victory! Then the struggle of Ibrahim. He spent all his life in it; travelled nearly the whole civilised world of his time calling his people. All this period he didn't establish a state, nor did he get many followers! At least we are not told; nor are we told of what happened to his detractors. And he slackened! Didn't he get a victory then? "We gave him his reward in this dunya, and in the hereafter he is among the righteous." "We left for him a remembrance in those to follow." etc.. are Allah's testification. Ibrahim could easily be said to be the most victorious of all Prophets (AS) before Muhammad (SAW). The foundation he raised is now the symbol of Allah's worship on earth to the day of judgement! He is remembered everyday by all those who pray among the Muslims many times till the day of judgement. That is the real victory; a befitting reward for a hard work well blessed. It may be coincidental that it was during the Hajj season that two significant successes were recorded during the life of the Prophet (SAW); they may as well be the most important breakthroughs in the history of the da'wah. If not because Allah (SWT) has categorically stated that they were victories many of those who do not understand the yardstick will have disagreed!

If ye help him not (the Prophet), (it is no matter): for Allah did indeed help him, when the unbelievers drove him out.. (At Taubah,40)

referring to the Hijrah, the agreement for which was concluded at al Aqabah, during the Hajj; and,

Verily We have granted thee a manifest victory: (Al-Fath, 1)

referring to the treaty of Hudaibiyah, which also was concluded on the way to Hajj! This teaches us that victory is not in the establishment of a state-by hook or by crook- but in the level of our effort and its acceptance by Allah (SWT), Who then makes it effective in the minds of people even after us.

May Allah (SWT) accept our works and give us the ability to reap the benefits He has put in Hajj, amen.

Muhammad Ashiru Sani

Dhul-Hijjah: A Month of Blessings

Dhul-Hijjah is the twelfth month of the Islaamic calendar, and in it there are thirteen special days; the first ten days, which include the Day of 'Arafah (the ninth); and the tenth, which is the day of 'Eid ul-Adh'haa (sacrifice), also known as the Day of Nahr (slaughter). The three days following the Day of 'Eid are known as the Days of Tashreeq (this refers to the process of drying the meat in the sun). All of these days are special days for Muslims. The following are some important points for emphasis, hoping that they will benefit those who are not performing Hajj this year.

1. The Importance of the Ten Days

About the importance of the first ten days, the Messenger said:

There are no days during which good deeds are more beloved to Allaah than these days. (Al-Bukhaaree and at-Tirmithee)

Many people may believe that all of these days, with the exception to the day of 'Eed, are special only for the pilgrims performing hajj. This is not the case.

2. Things to Avoid From the Beginning of Dhul-Hijjah

The Prophet has ordered those able to obtain a sacrifice for 'Eid ul-Adh'haa to refrain from cutting their hair and nails after the beginning of Dhul-Hijjah:

For the one who has a sacrifice to perform, then once the hilaal of Dhul-Hijjah is sighted, let him not cut any of his hair or nails until he sacrifices. (Muslim and an-Nasaa'ee, similar with others)

3. The Takbir

It is common among the Muslims to say the takbeeraat on the days of 'Eid. However we find that many of them are under the impression that this is to be done for a duration of three days for both 'Eid ul-Adh'haa and 'Eid ul-Fitr. This is not the case. The takbir for 'Eid ul-Fitr is done on the way to the musallaaa, and ends with the 'Eid prayer.

But during the month of Dhul-Hijjah the takbir begins on the Day of 'Arafah, (the ninth), it continues after the prayer of 'Eid ul-Adh'haa (the tenth), as well as the three days following it.

It also should be noted that the takbir is said by the individuals, it is not to be sung in a group as unfortunately is common among the people now. As for the wording of the takbir there are a few authentic reports from the companions about that. The most common takbir on 'Eid is that of Ibn Mas'ood;

"Allaahu Akbar, Allaahu Akbar, laa ilaha illa 'l्लाah; Allaahu Akbar, Allaahu Akbar, wa lillaah il-hamd."

4. Fasting the Day of 'Arafah

The Day of 'Arafah is the ninth day of Dhul-Hijjah, about which the Prophet said:

Fasting the Day of 'Arafah expiates the sins of two years; a fast one and a coming one...

(Muslim)

5. The 'Eid Prayer

Of course the prayer is an important part of the 'Eid celebration, for those not performing Hajj. The Prophet commanded even menstruating women to attend the place of the prayer, although they were not to perform Salaah.

The status of the 'Eid prayer is that it is waajib (obligatory) on the non-pilgrim, this is deduced from the command of the Prophet to attend it, and the fact that he never neglected it. This is the view of a number of scholars, among them Abu Haneefah, Ahmad and ash-Shaafi'ee, Ibn Taymiyah, ash-Shawkaanee and others.

6. The Sacrifice of Adh'haa

The Prophet said:

He who has the capacity, but does not sacrifice, may not approach our musallaa (for 'Eid prayer). (Ahmad, Ibn Maajah and others)

This address commands the intent for those capable, because the sacrifice is not performed until after the prayer! So if one is able, but he does not intend to perform the sacrifice, then he is not to come to the prayer. Since the prayer is waajib, and not intending the sacrifice is preventive from attending it, then it has been made a condition for the prayer. This is why most of the scholars who do not consider it waajib, still consider it sinful to leave it off without an excuse!

7. The Type of Animal

There are a number of different animals that may be sacrificed for al-Adh'haa. Examples include camels, cows, goats, sheep and rams:

"During the time of the Prophet one man used to sacrifice a goat for himself and his household, from which they would eat some and feed others..." (At-Tirmitheh, Ibn Maajah and others)

It has not been reported from the Prophet, nor his companions - that they sacrificed other than camels, cows, or sheep/goats.

8. The Celebration of the Days of Tashreeq, and the Prohibition of Fasting During them

The Prophet said:

Do not fast these days, the days of Tashreeq, for they are days of eating and drinking. (Ahmad, an-Nasaa'ee and al-Haakim) and:

The days of Tashreeq are days of eating, drinking and mentioning Allaah (SWT). (Muslim and Ahmad)

These are the three days following the 'Eid as mentioned earlier.

According to the statements of the companions, fasting on these days is allowed only in the case of the pilgrim who cannot afford the sacrificial animal for hajj.

9. Particular Blessings for the Non-Pilgrim

Allaah (SWT) has given the Muslims a wonderful opportunity for good deeds. He (SWT) has ordered them to perform Hajj, and for those capable, who perform it properly, they will be forgiven their past sins. Yet for those performing the rites of Hajj, there is no 'Eid prayer on 'Eid ul-Adh'haa, instead they are involved in the rites of Hajj. But it is for those who stay behind that the 'Eid prayer has been legislated!

The same is the case with the sacrifice of Adh'haa; although the pilgrims offer a sacrifice (called had'yee), and that sacrifice is part of Hajj for those who are capable of going and can afford the animal, yet Allaah (SWT) has left a similar means of blessing with those

who cannot perform Hajj, that is the sacrifice of al-Adh'haa!

In summary, between fasting on the Day of 'Arafah (for which one may be forgiven for the sins of the previous and upcoming year), the 'Eid prayer, the sacrifice, the additional takbeeraat, and the three extra days of celebration, the beginning of the last month of the year is full of blessings for the believing non-pilgrims.

[An extract from an article by Abu Khaliyl. Full version of the article is available online at: <http://www.qss.org>]

Virtues of the Month of Muharram

Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, the Seal of the Prophets and Chief of the Messengers, and upon all his family and companions.

Allah's sacred month of Muharram is a blessed and important month. It is the first month of the Hijri calendar and is one of the four sacred months concerning which Allah says:

"Verily, the number of months with Allah is twelve months (in a year), so it was ordained by Allah on the Day when He created the heavens and the earth; of them, four are sacred. That is the right religion, so wrong not yourselves therein..." [al-Tawbah 9:36]

Abu Bakr (RA) reported that the Prophet (SAW) said:

"The year is twelve months of which four are sacred, the three consecutive months of Dhu'l-Qa'dah, Dhu'l-Hijjah and Muharram, and Rajab Mudar which comes between Jumaada and Sha'baan." (al-Bukhaar).

Muharram is so called because it is a sacred (muharram) month and to confirm its sanctity.

Allah's words (interpretation of the meaning): *"so wrong not yourselves*

herein...”mean do not wrong yourselves in these sacred months, because sin in these months is worse than in other months.

It was reported that Ibn ‘Abbas said that this phrase “*so wrong not yourselves therein...*” referred to all the months, then these four were singled out and made sacred, so that sin in these months is more serious and good deeds bring a greater reward.

Fasting in Muharram

Abu Hurayrah (RA) said: “The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said:

‘The best of fasting after Ramadan is fasting Allah’s month of Muharram.’” (Muslim).

The phrase “Allah’s month”, connecting the name of the month to the name of Allah in a genitive grammatical structure, signifies the importance of the month. Al-Qari said: “The apparent meaning is all of the month of Muharram.” But it was proven that the Prophet (SAW) never fasted any whole month apart from Ramadan, so this hadith is probably meant to encourage increasing one’s fasting during Muharram, without meaning that one should fast for the entire month.

It was reported that the Prophet (SAW) used to fast more in Sha’ban. It is likely that the virtue of Muharram was not revealed to him until the end of his life, before he was able to fast during this month. (Sharh al-Nawawi ‘ala Saheeh Muslim).

The virtues of fasting Ashura

Ibn ‘Abbas (RA) said:

“I never saw the Messenger of Allah (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).

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 (SAW) said:

“For fasting the day of ‘Ashura’, I hope that Allah will accept it as expiation for the year that went before.” (Muslim).

This is from the bounty of Allah towards us: for fasting one day He gives us expiation for the sins of a whole year. And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty.

Which day is Ashura?

Al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“ ‘Ashura’ and Tasu’a’ are two elongated names [the vowels are elongated] as is stated in books on the Arabic language. Our companions said: ‘Ashura’ is the tenth day of Muharram and Tasu’a’ is the ninth day. This is our opinion, and that of the majority of scholars. This is the apparent meaning of the ahadiith and is what we understand from the general wording. It is also what is usually understood by scholars of the language.” (al-Majmu’)

‘Ashura’ is an Islamic name that was not known at the time of Jahiliyyah. (Kashshaf al-Qina’, part 2, Sawm Muharram).

Ibn Qudamah (RA) said:

“ ‘Ashura’ 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 ‘Abbas, who said: ‘The Messenger of Allah (SAW) commanded us to fast ‘Ashura’, the tenth day of Muharram.’ (al-Tirmidhi).

It was reported that Ibn ‘Abbas said: ‘The ninth,’ and reported that the Prophet (SAW) used to fast the ninth. (Muslim). ‘Ata’ 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 Ishaq.

It is mustahabb (encouraged) to fast Tasu’a’ with ‘Ashura’

‘Abd-Allah ibn ‘Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them both) said:

“When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) fasted on ‘Ashura’ and commanded the Muslims to fast as well, they said, ‘O Messenger of Allah, it is a day that is venerated by the Jews and Christians.’ The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, ‘If I live to see the next year, in sha Allah, we will fast on the ninth day too.’ But it so happened that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) passed away before the next year came.” (Muslim).

Al-Shafa’i and his companions, Ahmad, Ishaq and others said:

“It is mustahabb to fast on both the ninth and tenth days, because the Prophet (SAW) 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 ‘Ashura’, 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.

Ruling on fasting only on the day of Ashura

Shaykh al-Islam said: “Fasting on the day of ‘Aashoraa’ is an expiation for a year, and it is not makrooh to fast only that day...” (al-Fataawa al-Kubra).

In Tuhfat al-Muhtaaj by Ibn Hajar al-Haytami, it says: “There is nothing wrong with fasting only on ‘Ashura’.” (part 3, Baab Sawm al-Tatawwu’).

Fasting on `Ashura' even if it is a Saturday or a Friday

Al-Tahhawi (RA) said:

“The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) allowed us to fast on `Ashura' 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 Allah 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-Minhaj 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 sahih 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-Sharih 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 `Ashura' or `Arafah. (Tuhfat al-Muhtaj, part 3, Bab Sawm al-Tatawu’)

Al-Bahuti (RA) said:

“It is makrooh to deliberately single out a Saturday for fasting, because of the hadith of `Abd-Allah 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 isnad and by al-Hakim, who said: according to the conditions of al-Bukhari), 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 `Arafah or the day of `Ashura', and a person has the habit of fasting on these days, in which case it is not makruh, because a person’s habit carries some weight.” (Kashshaf al-Qina’, part 2, Bab Sawm al-Tatawu’).

Fasting Ashura when one still has days to make up from Ramadan

The fuqaha’ differed concerning the ruling on observing voluntary fasts before a person has made up days that he or she did not fast in Ramadan.

The Hanafis said that it is permissible to observe voluntary fasts before making up days from Ramadan, and it is not makruh to do so, because the missed days do not have to be made up straight away.

The Malikis and Shafa’is said that it is permissible but is makruh, because it means that one is delaying something obligatory. Al-Dusuqi said: “It is makruh 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 (kafarah), whether the voluntary fast which is being given priority over an obligatory fast is something confirmed in shari’ah or not, such as `Ashura' and the ninth of Dhul-Hijjah, according to the most correct opinion.”

The Hanbalis said that it is haram to observe a voluntary fast before making up any fasts missed in Ramadan, 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 Ramadan, so that they will be able to fast `Arafah and `Ashura' without any problem. If a person fasts `Arafah and `Ashura' 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 Allah is great.

We ask Allah (SWT) 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 (SWT) help us to do that which He (SWT) 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 (SWT) make us of those who are pious and fear Him. May Allah bless our Prophet Muhammad and all his family and companions, ameen.

[An extract from a comprehensive article on the topic available online at www.islam-qa.com]

ARRIVALS

1. Abba Yakubu Ali, M.Sc., School of Industrial And Manufacturing Science, Cranfield University, Bedfordshire.
2. Aminu Ahmed Saulawa, M.Sc., University of Abertay, Dundee.
3. Amina Imam, M.Sc. Environmental Engineering, Department of Environmental Engineering, Imperial College, London.
4. Auwalu Lawan Yola, Msc. Petroleum Geosciences, Department of Earth Sciences, University of Manchester.

5. Bande Yahaya Muhammad, M.Sc., Department of Engineering, University of Aberdeen.
6. Hassan Ibrahim, M.Sc. Hydrocarbon Enterprise, University of Aberdeen.
7. Isah Baba Akali, M.Sc. Petroleum Geosciences, Centre for Petroleum Studies, Imperial College, London.
8. Mayowa Akeem Azeez, M.Sc. Environmental Biogeochemistry, University of Newcastle.
9. Muhammad Nurudeen Almustapha, Msc. Petroleum Geochemistry, University of Newcastle.
10. Muhammad C. Aminu, M.Sc. Pipeline Engineering, Newcastle University.
11. Murjanatu Ibrahim Gamawa, M.Sc. Petroleum Geosciences, Centre for Petroleum Studies, Imperial College, London.
12. Madu Mammadi, Msc. Petroleum Geosciences, Department of Earth Sciences, University of Manchester.
13. Sammani Idris Kaura, M.Sc. Environmental Biogeochemistry, Newcastle University.
14. Suleiman Ahmed, M.Sc. Petroleum Geosciences, Centre for Petroleum Studies, Imperial College, London.
15. Umar Saidu Bamalli, M.Sc. Petroleum Geosciences, Cambourn School of Mines, University of Exeter in Cornwall.

DEPARTURE

1. Dr Shehu M. Yusuf has returned to BUK Teaching Hospital after successfully completing his Masters programme in Dermatology at Kings College and St Thomas Hospital, London.
2. Dr Sani Abdullahi has returned to Kaduna after successfully completing his Masters Programme at Kings College and St Thomas Hospital, London.
3. Dr Abdul Saganuwa returned to Nigeria after successfully completing his Masters programme in Public Health at University of Leeds.
4. Dr Isa Abdullahi returned to Kaduna after successfully completing his Masters programme in Public Health at University of Leeds and Leeds General Hospital, Leeds.
5. Dr Musa Ghandi returned to Nigeria after successfully completing his Masters programme in Public Health at University of Leeds and Leeds General Hospital, Leeds.
6. Dr Jibril Jumare returned to Nigeria after completing his Clinical Attachment with Hammersmith Hospital, London.

BIRTHS

1. Hassan Mahmoud of University of Surrey, Guildford was blessed with the birth of a baby girl. They named her A'ishah.
2. Musa Ibrahim Jega of University of Strathclyde, Glasgow was blessed with the birth of a baby girl. They named her Nafisah.

May Allah (SWT) enable both families to bring these new members up in the

right manner, according to Islamic teachings, ameen.

DEATHS

1. Dr Danladi Sadiq Abubakar lost his father. May Allah (SWT) forgive him, have mercy on him, and give his family the fortitude to bear the loss, ameen.
2. Malam Abubakar Sadiq Ajiya lost his guardian-father, Alhaji (Dr) Adamu Tafawa Balewa, Ajiyan Bauchi. May Allah (SWT) forgive him, have mercy on him, and give his family the fortitude to bear the loss, ameen.
3. The wife of Dr Ibrahim Hassan (Manchester) lost her grandmother. May Allah (SWT) forgive her, have mercy on her, and give her family the fortitude to bear the loss, ameen.



TA'ALIM SESSIONS

Brothers and sisters are reminded again of the need for holding and participating in regular ta'alim session in their various localities. This could be on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis, and could be held either in a local Mosque or in the house of one of the brothers. During such sessions, a single hadith of the Prophet (SAW) (as an example) can be discussed.

May Allah (SWT) give us the ability to hold and benefit from these sessions, ameen.