



The Lesson of Aashura

The new Islamic year, 1447 AH, has commenced, and we are currently in the mubaarak month of Muharram.

Muharram is among the Ash-hurul Hurum (the four sacred months) of the Islamic calendar. The honour and sanctity of Muharram can be gauged by the fact that in the Qur'aan Majeed, Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى takes an oath on the first morning of Muharram. Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى says:

وَالْفَجْرِ

By the dawn! (Surah Fajr v. 1)

Imaam Qataadah رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ has mentioned that in this verse, the dawn on which Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى takes an oath is the dawn of the first morning of the month of Muharram, as it is not only the dawn of this morning – but is the dawn of the entire year which is to follow. (*Lataa'if-ul-Ma'aarif* pg. 80)

Muharram - The Month of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى

Rasulullah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said that this month of Muharram is the month of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى:

شهر الله المحرم

It is mentioned in the Hadith that the greatest month after the month of Ramadhaan is the month of Muharram, and the person who fasts on any day during this month will receive the reward of fasting for an entire month. (*Sunan Tirmizi* #741 & *Targheeb* #1529)

In the month of Muharram, the Day of Aashura, the 10th of Muharram, is the most virtuous day. The one who fasts on this day will receive the reward of fasting for an entire year. Apart from this, Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى will also forgive his past year's sins. (*Saheeh Ibnu Hibban* #3631 & *Saheeh Muslim* #1162)

It is also mentioned in the Hadith that the one who generously spends on his family on this occasion of Aashura, then Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى will bless him with halaal sustenance for an entire year. (*Targheeb* #1536)

Just as the Day of Aashura is an auspicious day in this ummah, it was also an auspicious day among the previous ummats.

Prior to the Hijrah, Rasulullah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would observe the fast of Aashura in Makkah Mukarramah, and after the hijrah to Madinah Munawwarah, Rasulullah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ continued fasting on this day.

On the occasion of the hijrah, when Rasulullah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ came to Madinah Munawwarah, he witnessed the Jews of Madinah Munawwarah fasting on the Day of Aashura.

When Rasulullah ﷺ inquired from them as to why they were fasting on this day, they mentioned that it was on this day that Allah تبارك وتعالى had saved Nabi Musa عليه السلام and the Bani Israa'eel from the tyranny and oppression of Fir'oun and his people and Allah تبارك وتعالى destroyed Fir'oun and his army. Hence, in an expression of gratitude and thanks to Allah تبارك وتعالى, Nabi Musa عليه السلام fasted on this day, and it was in emulation of Nabi Musa عليه السلام that we are fasting.

Hearing this, Rasulullah ﷺ remarked, "We have closer ties with Nabi Musa عليه السلام than you." Thereafter, Rasulullah ﷺ continued fasting on this day, and commanded the Sahaabah رضى الله عنهم and the ummah to fast on this day as well. (Saheeh Bukhaari #2004 & Saheeh Muslim #1130)

In the narration of Hazrat Ibnu Abbaas رضى الله عنهما, it is reported that prior to Rasulullah ﷺ passing away, he commanded the Sahaabah رضى الله عنهم and the ummah to not only fast on the 10th, but to also fast an extra day in order to oppose the Jews. Rasulullah ﷺ said:

صوموا يوم عاشوراء وخالفوا فيه اليهود صوموا قبله يوما أو بعده يوما

"Observe the fast of Aashura and oppose the Jews by also fasting a day before or after i.e. the 9th and 10th or 10th and 11th of Muharram." (As-Sunan-ul-Kubra lil-Bayhaqi #8406 & Talkhees-ul-Habeer #931)

The month of Muharram and the occasion of Aashura is a time when one can acquire great blessings and immense rewards from the side of Allah تبارك وتعالى through observing the fast and carrying out good deeds.

However, the occasion of Aashura has also come to teach us an important lesson – the lesson of preserving our Islamic identity at all times and completely refraining from emulating the kuffaar (disbelievers, Jews and Christians) in their religion and culture.

When Rasulullah ﷺ did not want his Ummah to resemble the Jews in the aspect of fasting (which is an ibaadah), then one can well imagine how displeased he would be to see his Ummah emulating the disbelievers in their culture, dressing and other aspects of life.

When one ponders over the beautiful teachings of Islam, one finds that Islam is a complete, perfect and comprehensive way of life which has provided man with complete guidance in all spheres of worldly and deeni life. Hence, there is absolutely no need for a believer to emulate the kuffaar in his lifestyle, dressing, culture or in any aspect of life.

With the Nubuwwat of Hazrat Rasulullah ﷺ, the religion of every Nabi has been terminated and every path besides the path of Rasulullah ﷺ has been closed. Now it is not possible for any person to reach Allah تبارك وتعالى through following any other deen besides the deen of Hazrat Rasulullah ﷺ, the deen of Islam.

Showing Appreciation for the Bounty of Islam and the Sunnah

The greatest favour of Allah تبارك وتعالى upon this ummah is the favour of Islam. Allah تبارك وتعالى has blessed us with the greatest Nabi, Hazrat Rasulullah ﷺ, the greatest kitaab, the Qur'aan Majeed and the greatest deen, the deen of Islam.

When Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى has blessed us in this manner, then it is only befitting that we should show gratitude to Him for these great bounties.

How Should One Show Gratitude and Appreciation to Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى?

Rasulullah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had given the ummah a golden piece of advice through which we will be able to show gratitude and appreciation to Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى for the deen of Islam.

The advice which Rasulullah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had given is to oppose the ways of the kuffaar.

خالفوا اليهود

In other words, to show appreciation for our deen, we must ensure that we only follow our deen and the sunnah of our Nabi صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - and we must never emulate the Jews, Christians and disbelievers or have any inclination to their ways and culture in our hearts. This is the lesson of Muharram.

The Incident of Hazrat Abdullah bin Salaam رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

Hazrat Abdullah bin Salaam رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was a Sahaabi of Rasulullah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Prior to him embracing Islam, he was a Jewish rabbi. He accepted Islam with a few other Jews.

Once, after embracing Islam, Hazrat Abdullah bin Salaam رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and his friends who had also embraced Islam were discussing among themselves that there were certain things that were very important to them in their previous religion while they were Jews. One of these aspects was observing the Sabbath (honouring the day of Saturday).

They felt that though they were now observing the importance of Jumu'ah, however since apparently there is no prohibition in Islam from also observing Saturday as a big day, they would observe that as well.

Likewise, it was forbidden for the Jews to consume camel meat or camel milk. They felt that in Islam, it is not compulsory to eat camel meat or drink camel milk. Therefore, together with regarding camel meat as permissible, they will just stay away from it out of consideration for their previous religion - Judaism.

They felt that in doing so, they will be doing good as they will be practicing upon both religions.

It was on that occasion that Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى revealed the following verse of the Qur'aan Majeed:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ادْخُلُوا فِي السِّلْمِ كَافَّةً ۚ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ۚ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٠٨﴾

“O you who believe, enter into Islam fully, and do not follow the footsteps of Shaitaan. Indeed, he is, for you, a clear enemy.”

(Surah Baqarah v. 208)

In this verse, Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى shows us that a mu'min has only one way of life – the way of Islam. That is what Rasulullah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ came and gave da'wah towards. (Tafseer Jalaalain pg. 31 & Ma'aarif-ul-Qur'aan 1/498)

Rasulullah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ also said that if Nabi Musa عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام was alive in his lifetime, then he too would have no option but to follow him. (Shu'abul Imaan #174)

Hence, Islam is the only path to Jannah, and it is only through entering into Islam fully, and shunning the ways of the Jews, Christians and mushrikeen, that we can be perfect Muslims.

The Greatest Followers of Deen and the Sunnah were the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ

When we examine the lives of the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ, then we find that the secret to their success and their acceptance by Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى was that they always maintained their Islamic Identity by upholding the Sunnah wherever they went. In every facet of their lives, they gave preference to practising upon deen and the sunnah over every other way and culture that the world offered.

There are many incidents that occurred in the life of Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ that show how Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ taught the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ to refrain from emulating the mushrikeen, Jews and Christians.

Not Emulating the Kuffaar in Calling People for Salaah

When Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ arrived in Madinah Munawwarah after the hijrah, he first built the masjid. However, since the azaan was not yet revealed by Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ would all perform their fardh salaah at different times in the masjid.

Rasulallah's صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ desire was that all the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ should perform their fardh salaah together at one time in the masjid. For this, there was a need that some method be utilized through which people will know that it was the time for salaah.

In this regard, Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ made mashurah with the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ, asking them what method could be used.

Some suggested that a fire be lit. On seeing the smoke, people would know that it is the time of salaah. Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was not pleased with this suggestion as this was emulating the way of the fire worshippers.

Some suggested that a horn be sounded. On hearing the sound of the horn people will know that it was the time for salaah. However, Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did not approve of this suggestion as this was emulating the way of the Jews.

Some suggested that the naaqoos be adopted (i.e. two sticks be struck together) and upon hearing the sound, people will understand that it is time for salaah. However, Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ did not approve of this suggestion as well as it was emulating the way of the Christians.

Thereafter, a certain Sahaabi was shown a dream in which he was taught the words of the azaan. Upon relating the dream to Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, "This is a true dream (shown to him from the side of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى)." It was then that the azaan was prescribed in Shari'ah.

From this incident, we see that Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was displeased with the Ummah emulating the kuffaar in the manner they used to call people to their places of worship.

Just as Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was displeased with his Ummah emulating the kuffaar in this aspect, then we should ask ourselves "Will Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ever be pleased with his Ummah adopting the haraam methods of the kuffaar to propagate and promote deen?" Definitely, Rasulallah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ will not be pleased with this haraam.

Hence, for Muslims to propagate deen through the TV channels, Youtube videos and other similar haraam methods and ways of the kuffaar (which contain pictures of animate objects, music, non-mahram males and females intermingling, etc.) is not permissible. The kuffaar utilize these methods to propagate their deen and promote their evil ideologies and wrong agendas.

Similarly, we should not follow those people who promote interfaith programs and join up with the kuffaar in the name of unity. This method of accommodating and pleasing the kuffaar while distorting and adulterating deen is a means of jeopardizing one's imaan and destroying the deen of Islam.

Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى and His beloved Rasul ﷺ have prohibited us from committing such haraam. Rasulallah ﷺ commanded his Ummah to follow the Ulama-e-Haq who remain firmly upon deen and uphold and protect deen at all times.

Lengthening the Beard and Shortening the Moustache

In the Mubaarak Hadith, Rasulallah ﷺ instructed the ummah to lengthen their beards and shorten their moustaches in order to oppose the disbelievers. Rasulallah ﷺ said:

خالفوا المشركين أحفوا الشوارب وأوفوا اللحى (صحيح مسلم، الرقم: ٢٥٩)

In the time of Rasulallah ﷺ and also in today's times, we see that it is the way of the kuffaar to lengthen the moustache and shave the beards. Hence, we see in this Hadith, Rasulallah ﷺ did not want the Muslims to emulate the ways of the disbelievers.

The Disastrous Fate of the Aalim who Loved the Way of the Christians

Qari Fatah Muhammed رحمه الله was the ustaad of Hazrat Thaanwi رحمه الله. He once mentioned to Hazrat Thaanwi رحمه الله that he heard the following incident from Sheikh Dahhaan رحمه الله who was a great aalim of Makkah Mukarramah. Sheikh Dahhaan رحمه الله mentioned that once, a certain aalim of Makkah Mukarramah passed away. Accordingly, the aalim was given ghusl, the janaazah salaah was performed and he was buried in the cemetery.

A few days later, another person passed away. Since graves in Makkah Mukarramah are often shared, the same grave was reopened so that this person could also be buried inside. However, on opening the grave, Sheikh Dahhaan رحمه الله and the other people present were surprised to find that the body of the aalim was not there, and in his place was the body of a young European girl.

Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى made it such that present at that burial was a Muslim who had come from France. On seeing the young girl's body, he exclaimed, "I know this girl! She is from France and her parents are Christians! She was learning Urdu from me, and she had embraced Islam in secret. I had also taught her some basic books on deen. Unexpectedly, she fell ill and passed away, after which I left France and came here."

Hearing this, the people said, “We can understand why the French girl’s body has been transferred to Makkah Mukarramah. It was brought here on account of her embracing Islam and trying to lead a life of piety.” However, the people said, “If the girl is here, then where is the body of the aalim now?”

Some people felt that the aalim’s body must have been transferred to France, in place of the girl’s body. Hence, they addressed the Muslim who had come from France and said, “After performing haj, go to France, open the grave of this girl in France and see if it now contains the aalim’s body.” Saying this, they gave the man a description of the aalim who had passed away so that he would be able to recognize his body.

After performing haj, when the man returned to France, and opened the girl’s grave, he found that instead of her body – it was the body of the aalim of Makkah Mukarramah that was in her coffin, matching the description of the aalim that the people in Makkah Mukarramah had given him.

When this man thereafter sent the news to Makkah Mukarramah that the he had found the aalim’s body in the girl’s grave in France, then the people of Makkah Mukarramah said, “This girl’s body being transferred to Makkah Mukarramah is a sign of her being accepted by Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. However, the aalim’s body being moved from Makkah Mukarramah to the land of the Kuffaar is a sign that he was not accepted by Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى. What weakness in his life could have been the cause for this?”

The people then said, “The people who will know one best will be the people of one’s household. Let us ask his wife.” The wife of this aalim was then approached and was asked regarding whether her husband had any weakness in his deen due to which this had transpired. She replied, “My husband was a good man, but he had one weakness in him which used to affect me and trouble me. His weakness was that after we would have relations, he would say, ‘How nice is the way of the Christians that after relations, ghusl is not obligatory on them, whereas we Muslims have to have a ghusl after having relations!’”

Hence, though he lived in Makkah Mukarramah, he liked the way of the Christians and was not happy with the way of Islam. On the contrary, the Muslim girl in Europe lived Islam, though she lived in difficulty and was forced to keep her Islam a secret. Therefore, Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى transferred her body to Makkah Mukarramah and transferred the body of the Aalim to Europe. (*Jawaahir Paare 2/140-143*)