



The Auspicious Month of Zul Hijjah

We are about to enter into the blessed month of Zul Hijjah. Zul Hijjah is the last month of the Islamic calendar and is one of the four sacred months in Islam. The four sacred months are Muharram, Rajab, Zul Qa'dah and Zul Hijjah.

Though the entire month of Zul Hijjah is sacred and blessed, the first ten days and nights of Zul Hijjah have even greater sanctity and virtue. Rasulallah ﷺ said, "The best days in the world are the ten days (of Zul Hijjah)." (Targheeb #1785)

The greatness of the first ten nights of Zul Hijjah can be gauged by the fact that Allah تبارك وتعالى had taken a qasm (oath) on the first ten nights of Zul Hijjah. In the Qur'aan Majeed, Allah تبارك وتعالى says:

وَالْفَجْرِ
وَلَيَْالٍ عَشْرٍ

(I take an oath) by the break of dawn and by the ten nights (of Zul Hijjah) (Surah Fajr v. 1-2)

In the Mubaarak Hadith, Rasulallah ﷺ said:

ما من أيام العمل الصالح فيهن أحب إلى الله من هذه الأيام العشر فقالوا: يا رسول الله ولا الجهاد في سبيل الله عليه وسلم: ولا الجهاد في سبيل الله إلا رجل خرج بنفسه وماله فلم يرجع من ذلك بشيء

"There are no days in which righteous actions are more beloved to Allah تبارك وتعالى than these ten days (of Zul Hijjah)." The Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ asked, "O Rasul of Allah! Not even jihaad in the path of Allah تبارك وتعالى?" Rasulallah ﷺ replied, "Not even jihaad in the path of Allah تبارك وتعالى, except for the one who comes out with (sacrificing) his life and wealth (in jihaad) and does not return with anything (due to passing away in jihaad)." (Sunan Tirmizi #757)

In one Hadith, Rasulallah ﷺ said that the rewards for actions carried out in the first ten day of Zul Hijjah are multiplied seven hundred times. (Targheeb #1787)

Hazrat Anas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ has mentioned that the Sahaabah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ would say that each of the first ten days of Zul Hijjah is equal to one thousand days in virtue, while the 9th (the Day of Arafah) is equal to ten thousand days in virtue. (Lataa'if-ul-Ma'aarif pg 460)

Eleven Special Actions to be Carried Out During the First Ten Days and Nights of Zul Hijjah

When we have understood that the first ten days and nights of Zul Hijjah are extremely sacred, then we should acquire the maximum rewards from Allah تبارك وتعالى in these ten days and nights through exerting ourselves in ibaadah. From among the virtuous deeds to be carried out during these ten days and nights are the following:

1. Honoring Zul Hijjah by Refraining from Committing Sins

Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbaas رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ mentioned, "Allah تبارك وتعالى made four months exclusive (in their sacredness and virtues). He sanctified them and increased their blessedness. He has made sinning in them more severe (compared to sinning at other times), and He has made carrying out good deeds during these months more rewarding (compared to carrying out good deeds at other times)."

In regard to abstaining from sins during the four sacred months, Allah تبارك وتعالى mentions:

So, do not wrong yourselves (by committing sins) during them (the sacred months).

2. Fasting During the First Nine Days of Zul Hijjah and Spending the Nights in Ibaadah

One should try to fast on the first nine days of Zul Hijjah. Fasting on the first nine days of Zul Hijjah is among the great sunnats of Rasulallah ﷺ. Hazrat Rasulallah ﷺ said, “There are no days in the year wherein the worship of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is more beloved to Him than the (first) ten days of Zul Hijjah. The fast during these days (excluding the tenth) is equivalent to the fast of an entire year, and standing up in ibaadah during these nights is equivalent to the reward of the night of Qadr.” (Sunan Tirmizi #758)

3. Fasting on the 9th of Zul Hijjah

If it is difficult for one to fast for all nine days, then one should at least try to fast on the 9th of Zul Hijjah, as fasting on this day is extremely virtuous and earns one great reward.

Hazrat Abu Qataadah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ reports that a Sahaabi once asked Hazrat Rasulallah ﷺ, “O Rasulallah ﷺ, what is the reward of fasting on the day of Arafah?” Rasulallah ﷺ replied, “It expiates the (minor) sins of the present year and the previous year.” (Saheeh ibnu Hibbaan #3631)

4. Engaging in Ibaadah on the Nights of the 8th, 9th and 10th

It should be borne in mind that from the first ten nights of Zul Hijjah, each night is filled with immense blessings. However, from these ten nights, special virtue has been mentioned in the Hadith regarding the nights of the 8th, 9th and the 10th.

Rasulallah ﷺ said, “The one who enlivens five nights of the year with ibaadah, Jannah becomes compulsory for him. (These five nights are) the night of Tarwiyah (8th of Zul Hijjah), the night of Arafah (9th of Zul Hijjah), the night of Nahr (10th of Zul Hijjah), the night of Eidul Fitr and the night of the 15th of Sha’baan.” (Targheeb #1656)

5. Engaging in Ibaadah on the Night of Eid

Engaging in ibaadah on the night of eid is extremely rewarding, and just as Jannah is promised for those who enliven this night with ibaadah, it is reported in the Hadith that Hazrat Rasulallah ﷺ said, “The one who stands up in salaah on the two nights of Eid with the hope of receiving reward from Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, his heart will remain alive on the day when all the hearts will die (i.e. during the times of fitnah and fasaad, when peoples’ hearts will be negligent of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى, Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى will keep his heart alive in His remembrance).” (Sunan Ibnu Maajah #1782)

6. Zikr to Recite During the First Ten Days of Zul Hijjah

Hazrat Rasulallah ﷺ said, “There are no days in the year wherein the worship of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى is greater (in reward) and more beloved to Him than the first ten days (and nights) of Zul Hijjah. Therefore, increase the recitation of tasbeeh, tahleel, tahmeed and takbeer.” i.e.

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

(Majma’uz Zawaa’id #5932)

7. Zikr On the Day of Arafah

The day of Arafah is the greatest day from the first ten days of Zul Hijjah. Similarly, the day of Arafah is the greatest day of the year. On this day, Rasulallah ﷺ would recite the following zikr in abundance:

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

(Majma'uz Zawaa'id #5550)

8. Dua on the Day of Arafah

One should also engage in abundant dua on the Day of Arafah. It is reported that Hazrat Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ mentioned that on this day, Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى emancipates more people from the fire of Jahannum than on any other day. Hence, Hazrat Ali رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ would make the following dua on the day of Arafah and also encouraged some of his companions to make the same dua:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَعْتِقْ رَقَبَتِيْ مِنَ النَّارِ وَاَوْسِعْ لِيْ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ الْحَلَالِ وَاَصْرِفْ عَنِّيْ فَسَقَةَ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسِ

O Allah! Free my neck from the fire of Jahannum, bless me with abundant halaal sustenance, and repel from me the evil and transgressive jinn and people. (Lataa'if-ul-Ma'aarif pg. 284)

9. Reciting the Takbeer-e-Tashreeq

Takbeer-e-Tashreeq should be recited by both males and females from the Fajr of the 9th of Zul Hijjah till Asr on the 13th of Zul Hijjah. Males will recite it audibly while females will recite it softly after every fardh salaah. The Takbeer-e-Tashreeq is as follows:

اَللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ اَللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اَللّٰهُ اَللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ اَللّٰهُ اَكْبَرُ وَبِلِلّٰهِ الْحَمْدُ

10. Carrying Out Qurbaani

Qurbaani (slaughtering a sacrificial animal) is also among the great acts of worship that are exclusive to the month of Zul Hijjah. If qurbaani is compulsory upon one, then he should carry out the qurbaani. Rasulullah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said:

من وجد سعة لأن يضحي فلم يضحي فلا يحضر مصلانا

“The one who possesses the means to carry out the qurbaani yet does not do so (despite it being waajib upon him), then such a person should not come close to our Eid gaah (on the day of Eid i.e. such a person should not celebrate this happy occasion of Eid with the Muslims).” (Sunan Ibnu Maajah #3123)

In regard to the immense reward that one receives for carrying out the qurbaani, Rasulullah صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “There is nothing dearer to Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى during the days of qurbaani than the spilling of blood (i.e. the sacrificing of animals). The sacrificed animal shall come on the day of Qiyaamah with its horns, hair and hooves (to be weighed). The sacrifice is accepted by Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى before the blood reaches the ground. Therefore, carry out the qurbaani in the condition that your heart is pleased and happy to fulfil the command of Allah تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى.” (Sunan Tirmizi #1493)

11. Abstaining from Cutting Hair and Nails for Those Performing Qurbaani

It is mustahab for those intending to perform qurbaani to refrain from clipping their nails and trimming their hair from the beginning of the month of Zul Hijjah until their qurbaani animal is slaughtered.

Hazrat Nabi صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said, “The one who intends making qurbaani should refrain from cutting his hair and clipping his nails from the time the crescent (of Zul Hijjah) is sighted till he completes his qurbaani.” (Saheeh Muslim #1977)