

Virtues of the first Ten Days of Dhu'l Hijjah

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Summary

- 1) The purpose of creation.
- 2) Virtues of *dhikr* (the mentioning of Allaah's names) in the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah.
- 3) Virtues of the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah.
- 4) Recommended deeds to be performed in the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah.
- 5) Matters that those who will offer a sacrificial animal must avoid.
- 6) Good deeds to perform during these days of *Hajj*:
 - a. Fasting.
 - b. *Takbeer*.
 - c. Performing *Hajj* and *Umrah*.
 - d. Doing more good deeds in general.
 - e. Offering a sacrificial animal.
 - f. Sincere repentance.

All praise is due to Allaah Who has created time and has made some periods of time superior to others. He has made some days, nights and months to be of greater value than others; when rewards are multiplied many times, as a mercy towards His slaves. This encourages them to do more righteous deeds and makes them more eager to worship Him, so that the Muslim renews his efforts to gain a greater share of reward and so that he can prepare himself for death and the Day of Judgement. This season of worship brings many benefits, such as the opportunity to correct one's faults and make up for any shortcomings. Every one of these special occasions involves some kind of worship through which the slaves can draw closer to Allaah, and some kind of unique blessings through which Allaah bestows His favour and mercy upon whomsoever He wishes. The successful and exultant person is the one who makes the most of these special hours, days and months and draws nearer to his Lord during these times through acts of worship; he will most likely be moved by the blessings of Allaah and feel the joy of knowing that he is safe from the flames of Hell. (*Ibn Rajab, Al-Lataa'if*)

The Muslim must understand the value of his life, increase his worship of Allaah and persist in doing good deeds until the moment of death. Allaah says that which translates to: **"And worship your Lord until there comes to you the certainty."** (*Al-Hijr: 99*)

The *Mufasssireen* (Qur'aanic commentators) said: "*The 'certainty' refers to death.*" Among these special seasons of worship are the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, which Allaah has preferred over all other days of the year. *Ibn 'Abbaas*, may Allaah be pleased with him and his father, reported that the Prophet *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam* said: "***There are no days in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Allaah than these ten days.***" The people asked: "Not even jihaad for the sake of Allaah?" He replied: "***Not even jihaad for the sake of Allaah, except for the case of a man who went out to fight giving himself and his wealth up for the cause - and returned with nothing.***" (*Bukhaari*). *Ibn 'Abbaas*, may Allaah be pleased with him and his father also reported that the Prophet *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam* said: "***There is no deed more precious in the sight of Allaah, nor greater in reward, than a good deed done during the ten days of Sacrifice.***" He was asked, "Not even jihaad for the sake of Allaah?" He replied: "***Not even jihaad for the sake of Allaah, except for the case of a man who went out to fight giving himself and his wealth up for the cause - and returned with nothing.***" (*Ad-Daarimi*).

These texts and others indicate that these ten days are better than all the other days of the year, without exception, not even the last ten days of *Ramadaan*. But the last ten **nights** of *Ramadaan* are better than the first ten **nights** of Dhu'l Hijjah, because they include *Laylat al-Qadr* ("the Night of Power"), which is better than a thousand months. Thus the various reports may be reconciled. (*Tafseer Ibn Katheer*).

You should know, brothers in Islaam, that the virtue of these ten days is confirmed by many proofs:

Allaah swears an oath by them, and swearing an oath by something is indicative of its importance and great benefit. Allaah says that which translates to: "***By the dawn; and by the ten nights***" (*Al-Fajr: 1-2*).

Ibn 'Abbaas, *Ibn az-Zubayr*, *Mujaahid* and others of the earlier and later generations of *Mufasssireen* said that this refers to the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah. *Ibn Katheer* said: "*This is the correct opinion.*" (*Tafseer Ibn Katheer*)

The Prophet *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* testified that these are the best days of the year, as we have already quoted above from *saheeh ahaadeeth*.

The Prophet *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* encouraged people to do righteous deeds because of the virtue of this season for people throughout the world, and also because of the virtue of the location in the case of *Hujjaaj* (pilgrims) to the Sacred House of Allaah in Makkah.

The Prophet *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* commanded us to abundantly pronounce *Tasbeeh* (‘Subhan-Allaah’), *Tahmeed* (‘Al-hamdu Lillaah’) and *Takbeer* (‘Allaahu akbar’) during this time. ‘Abdullaah ibn ‘Umar , may Allaah be pleased with him and his father, reported that the Prophet *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* said: **"There are no days greater in the sight of Allaah and in which righteous deeds are more beloved to Him than these ten days, so during this time recite a great deal of Tahleel ("La ilaaha ill-Allaah"), Takbeer and Tahmeed."** (Ahmad).

These ten days include *Yawm ‘Arafah* (the Day of ‘Arafah), on which Allaah perfected His Religion. Fasting on this day will expiate for the sins of two years. These days also include *Yawm An-Nahr* (the Day of Sacrifice), the greatest day of the entire year and the greatest day of *Hajj*, which combines different acts of worship in a way unlike any other day.

These ten days include the days of sacrifice and of *Hajj*.

What must the Muslim avoid during these ten days if he wants to offer a sacrifice?

The *Sunnah* indicates that the one who wants to offer a sacrifice must stop cutting his hair and nails and removing anything from his skin for any reason, from the beginning of the ten days until after he has offered his sacrifice, because the Prophet *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* said: **"When you see the new moon of Dhu’l-Hijjah, if any one of you wants to offer a sacrifice, then he must stop cutting his hair and nails until he has offered his sacrifice."** According to

another report he, *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam*, said: **"He should not remove (literally, touch) anything from his hair or skin."** (*Muslim*). Here the instructions of the Prophet *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* makes one thing obligatory and his prohibition makes another *haraam*, according to the soundest opinion, because these commands and prohibitions are unconditional and inexcusable. However, if a person does any of these things deliberately, he must seek Allaah's forgiveness but is not required to offer (an extra) sacrifice in expiation; his sacrifice will be acceptable. Whoever needs to remove some hair, nails, etc. because it is harming him, such as having a broken nail or a wound in a site where there is hair, should do so and there is nothing wrong with that.

The state of *ihraam* is so important that it is permitted to cut one's hair if not doing so will cause harm. There is nothing wrong with men or women washing their hair during the first ten days of *Dhu'l-Hijjah*, because the Prophet *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* only forbade cutting the hair, not washing it. The wisdom behind the prohibition of those who want to offer a sacrificial animal from cutting their hair, nails etc. is that by refraining from these, they resemble those in *ihraam* in some aspects of the rituals performed, and so that they may draw closer to Allaah by offering the sacrifice. So they leave their hair and nails alone up until the time when they have offered their sacrificial animal, in the hope that Allaah will save them completely from the Fire. And Allaah knows best. If a person has cut their hair or nails during the first ten days of *Dhu'l-Hijjah* because they were not planning to offer a sacrifice and then decide later, during these ten days, to offer a sacrifice, then they must refrain from cutting their hair and nails from the moment that they have made this decision. Some women delegate their brothers or sons to make the sacrifice on their behalf, then cut their hair during these ten days. This is not correct, because the ruling applies to the one who is offering the sacrifice, regardless of whether or not he (or she) delegates another person to carry out the actual slaughter. The prohibition does not apply to the person delegated, only to the person who is making the sacrifice, as is indicated in the *Hadeeth* given above. This prohibition does not apply to the one sacrificing on behalf of another, whatever their reason may be to do so. This prohibition

appears to apply only to the one who is offering the sacrifice, not to their wives and children, unless any of them is offering a sacrifice in his or her own right, because the Prophet *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* used to sacrifice "on behalf of the family of Muhammad," but there are no reports that say he forbade them to cut their hair or nails at that time.

If a person was planning to offer a sacrifice, then also decided to go and perform *Hajj*, they should not cut their hair or nails if they want to enter *ihraam*, because the *Sunnah* is only to cut the hair and nails when necessary. But if they were performing *Tamattu'* (whereby they would perform *Umrah*, come out of *ihraam* and then re-enter *ihraam* for *Hajj*), then they should trim their hair at the end of the *Umrah* because this is part of the ritual. The things that are described above as being prohibited for the person who is planning to offer a sacrifice (and not perform *Hajj*) are reported in the *hadeeth* quoted above; the person is not forbidden to wear perfume, have marital relations, wear sewn garments, etc.

If we are to consider the types of worship to be performed during these ten days, we will discover that that these days are a great blessing from Allaah to His slaves, which will only be fully appreciated by the actively righteous. It is every Muslim's duty to appreciate these blessings and make the most of the opportunity, by devoting these ten days to paying more attention to striving hard in worship. It is from the blessings to His slaves that Allaah has given us numerous ways in which to do righteous deeds and worship Him, so that the Muslim may be constantly active and consistent in the worship of his Lord.

Among the good deeds, which the Muslim should strive to do during the first ten days of Dhu'l-Hijjah, are:

1. **Fasting.**

It is *Sunnah* to fast on the ninth day of *Dhu'l-Hijjah*, because the Prophet *sallallaahu ‘alaihi wa sallam* urged us to do good deeds during this period, and fasting is one of the best of deeds. Allaah has chosen to reward fasting directly, as is stated in the *hadeeth qudsi*: "**Allaah says: 'All the deeds of the son of Adam are for him, except for**

fasting, which is for Me and I am the One Who will reward him for it." (Bukhaari).

The Prophet *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam* used to fast on the ninth of *Dhu'l-Hijjah*. *Hunaydah ibn Khaalid*, may Allaah be pleased with him, reported from his wife that some of the wives of the Prophet *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam* said: ***"The Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam used to fast on the ninth of Dhu'l-Hijjah, on the day of 'Aashooraa', on (the mid) three days of every month, and on the first two Mondays and Thursdays of every month."*** (*An-Nisaa'i*, *Abu Dawood*; classified by *Al-Albaani* as *Saheeh*).

2. ***Takbeer.***

It is *Sunnah* to say *Takbeer* ("Allaahu akbar"), *Tahmeed* ("Al-hamdu Lillaah"), *Tahleel* ("La ilaaha ill-Allaah") and *Tasbeeh* ("Subhaan Allaah") during the first ten days of *Dhu'l-Hijjah* and to say it loudly in the mosque, the home, the street and every other place where it is permitted to remember Allaah and mention His name loudly, as an act of worship and as a proclamation of the greatness of Allaah, may He be exalted.

Men should recite these phrases out loud and women should recite them quietly.

Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): ***"That they might witness (i.e. attend) benefits for themselves and mention the name of Allaah on known (i.e. specific) days over what He has provided for them of (sacrificial) animals....."*** (*Al-Hajj*: 28)

The majority of scholars agree that the "specific days" are the first ten days of *Dhu'l-Hijjah*, due to the statement of *Ibn 'Abbaas*, may Allaah be pleased with him and his father: ***"The 'appointed days' are the first ten days (of Dhu'l-Hijjah)."***

The *Takbeer* may include the words *"Allaahu akbar, Allaahu akbar, la ilaaha ill-Allaah; wa Allaahu akbar wa Lillaahi'l-hamd* (Allaah is Most

Great, Allaah is Most Great, there is no deity except Allaah; Allaah is Most Great and to Allaah is due all praise)," as well as other phrases.

Takbeer at this time is an aspect of the *Sunnah* that has been forgotten by the masses, especially during the early part of these ten days, so much so that one hardly ever hears *Takbeer*, except from a few people. This *Takbeer* should be pronounced loudly, in order to revive the *Sunnah* and as a reminder to the negligent. There is sound evidence that *Ibn 'Umar* and *Abu Hurayrah*, may Allaah be pleased with them, used to go out to the marketplaces during the first ten days of *Dhu'l-Hijjah*, reciting *Takbeer*, and the people would recite *Takbeer* when they heard them. The idea behind reminding the people to recite *Takbeer* is that each one should recite it individually, not in unison, as there is no basis in *Sharee'ah* for doing this.

Reviving aspects of the *Sunnah* that have been virtually forgotten is a deed that will bring an immense reward, as is indicated by the words of the Prophet *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*: **"Whoever revives an aspect of my Sunnah that is forgotten after my death, will have a reward equivalent to that of all the people who follow him, without it detracting in the least from their (individual) rewards."** (At-Tirmidhi).

3. Performing *Hajj* and *'Umrah*.

One of the best deeds that one can do during these ten days is to perform *Hajj* to the Sacred House of Allaah. The one whom Allaah enables to go on *Hajj* to His House and to perform all the rituals correctly is included in the words of the Prophet *sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam*: **"An accepted Hajj brings no less a reward than Paradise."**

4. Doing more good deeds in general

Good deeds are beloved by Allaah and will bring a great reward from Him. Whoever is not able to go to *Hajj* should occupy himself at this blessed time by increasing his worship of Allaah by praying (*salaat*), reading Qur'aan, remembering Allaah, making supplication (*du'aa*),

giving in charity, honouring parents, upholding the ties of kinship, enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil - and other good deeds and acts of worship.

5. **Sacrifice.**

One of the good deeds that will bring a person closer to Allaah during these ten days is offering a sacrificial animal. By choosing a high-quality animal and fattening it, they will be spending money for the sake of Allaah.

6. **Sincere repentance.**

One of the most important things to do during these ten days is to repent sincerely to Allaah and to give up all kinds of disobedience and sin. Repentance means coming back to Allaah and abandoning all the deeds, open and secret, that He dislikes, out of regret for what has passed, giving it up immediately and being determined never to return to it and thereafter to adhere firmly to the truth by doing what Allaah loves.

If a Muslim commits a sin, he must hasten to repent at once, without delay, firstly because he does not know when he will die and secondly because one evil deed leads to another.

Repentance at special times is very important because in most cases people's thoughts turn towards worship at these times and they are keen to do good, which leads to them recognising their sins and feeling regret for the past. Repentance is obligatory at all times, but when the Muslim combines sincere repentance with good deeds during the most virtuous days, this is a sign of success, Allaah willing. Allaah says that which translates to: ***"But as for him who had repented, believed, and done righteousness, it is expected (i.e. promised by Allaah) that he will be among the successful."*** (Al-Qasas: 67).

The Muslims must make sure that they do not miss any of these important occasions, as time is passing rapidly. Let them prepare themselves by doing good deeds which will bring them rewards when

they are most in need of it, for no matter how much reward they earn, they will find it inadequate. The time of departure is at hand, the journey is frightening, distractions are widespread, and the road is long, but Allaah is ever watchful, and to Him will we return and render account. The Qur'aan states that which translates to: ***"So whoever does an atoms weight of good will see it. And whoever does an atoms weight of evil shall see it."*** (Az-Zalzalah: 7-8).

There is much to be gained, so make the most of the opportunity afforded by these invaluable and irreplaceable ten days. Hasten to do good works, before death strikes; before one regrets one's negligence and failure to act; before one is asked to return to a place where no prayers will be answered; before death intervenes between the hopeful one and the things he hopes for and before you are trapped with your deeds in the grave.

O you whose hard heart is as dark as the night! Is it not time that your heart was filled with light and became soft? Expose yourself to the gentle breeze of your Lord's mercy during these ten days, for Allaah will cause this breeze to touch whomever He wills, and whoever is touched by it will be exultant on the Day of Judgement.

May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad and his family and all his companions.