**Misconceptions about Muharram**

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We should try to eradicate any misconceptions surrounding Muharram to avoid committing Bidah.

*Knowledge*

Muharram 2017 is just around the corner. Being the first month of the Islamic New Year, Muharram holds great importance in Islam and is one of the four sacred months in the Islamic calendar during which fighting is impermissible.

*“The year is of twelve months, out of which four months are sacred: Three are in succession Dhul-Qa’ da, Dhul-Hijja and Muharram, and (the fourth is) Rajab…” (Bukhari 3197)*

Muharram in its literal sense means “forbidden”. However, there are a lot of misconceptions surrounding [the month of Muharram](https://www.islamicfinder.org/iqra/things-you-should-know-about-ashura/) as many people believe that certain acts are not allowed in the month. The only acts not allowed in this month are those of war and cruelty (which shouldn’t be practiced in normal days as well but special precaution must be taken against these acts during this time). Most of these misconceptions arise from lack of information on Islamic history related to this month.

**Lack of information**

A lot of people are in the dark regarding Muharram. Many Muslims believe that Muharram is significant only because of a certain event that took place in this month, after the time of the Prophet (PBUH). However, this is not the case as Muharram holds great significance long before the Prophet’s (PBUH) time.

Ashura holds special significance due to which Muhammad (PBUH) used to fast on this day. Earlier on, it was obligatory to fast on the 10th of Muharram. However later, fasting was made obligatory in Ramadan only. As narrated by Aisha (RA):

*“The people used to fast on ‘Ashura (the tenth day of the month of Muharram) before the fasting of Ramadan was made obligatory. And on that day the Kaa’ba used to be covered with a cover. When Allah made the fasting of the month of Ramadan compulsory, Allah’s Apostle said, “Whoever wishes to fast (on the day of ‘Ashura’) may do so; and whoever wishes to leave it can do so.”(Bukhari 1592)*

But why did he fast on this day? On this day, Prophet Musa (AS) performed the miracle with the help of Allah (SWT) whereby he was able to save his people from the Pharaoh by dividing the sea into two parts creating a pathway for his people to safely cross the sea, while the Pharaoh’s army drowned. Hence, the Jews used to fast on Ashura i.e. the 10th of Muharram. The Prophet (PBUH) himself fasted on this day and also ordered the Muslims to do so as he said that:

*“I am closer to Moses than they." (Bukhari 3397)*

The Companions observed that Jews also consider the day as special, fasting on the day. So Prophet (PBUH) announced that from next year they will fast on the 9th of Muharram so as to distinguish themselves from the Jews. Unfortunately, Prophet (PBUH) did not live to see the next year. Therefore, Muslims consider the 9th and 10th of Muharram, Ashura, as significant days in the Islamic calendar and observe fast on these days.

According to a tradition, when the Prophet (PBUH) was asked about fasting on the day of 'Ashura (10th of Muharram), he said:

*“It expiates the sins of the preceding year.” (Muslim 6: 2603)*

Similar to the regular New Year, one should make resolutions at the start of the Islamic New Year to improve oneself. You can set small goals for yourself to become a better person. These goals can be both spiritual and social. You can strengthen your relationship with Allah (SWT) through regular Dhikr and [Duas](https://www.islamicfinder.org/duas/" \t "_blank). You can help others out through participating in a social cause. It does not need to be a big social project. Allah (SWT) rewards every good deed. It might be small in your eyes but it might inspire someone else to do a good deed, thereby creating a ripple effect of goodness. Thus, a tiny good deed might be of way more magnitude than you deem it to be. Verily Allah (SWT) knows the best! Some of the common misconceptions are listed below.

**Qayamah will occur on the day of Ashura**

People often believe that Qayamah will occur on the day of Ashura.

*The days were shown to me, and among them Friday was shown to me. It looked like a shiny mirror in the middle of which was a black spot. I asked, ‘What is this?’ It was said, ‘The Hour.' (Ibn Abi Shaybah, 5561)*

Even though we are told that the Day of Judgment will occur on a Friday, the month has not been specified and we do not have any evidence in the form of Quranic verses or Ahadith to support this claim.

*“They ask you about the Hour (Day of Resurrection): ‘When will be its appointed time?’ Say: ‘The knowledge thereof is with my Lord (Alone). None can reveal its time but He’” (al-A’raaf 7:187)*

**Muharram is an evil month**

Often people believe Muharram to be an evil or unlucky month due to the incident of Karbala. No doubt, it was an unfortunate event that took place in Islamic history. However, Muharram is known as the month of Allah (SWT).

*“The most excellent fast after Ramadan is in Allah’s month; al-Muharram, and the most excellent prayer after what is prescribed is prayer during the night.” (Muslim 6: 2661)*

It is not an evil month, in fact it is one of the most sacred months of Islam.

**Nikkah can’t be done in this month**

Many Muslims are of the opinion that no festivities are to be carried out in this month. It is a sacred month, however the only forbidden acts are those of violence, warfare and hurting others. Nikkah is a Halal act and can be done in this month or any other, for that reason.

**Certain events in Islamic history occurred on the day of Ashura**

People often have this misconception that certain significant events in Islamic history took place on the day of Ashura. Some people believe that Allah (SWT) created Prophet Aadam (AS) on this day while others are of the view that Prophet Ibrahim (AS) was born on this day. This is not true as there is no Quranic evidence to corroborate this claim.

**Whoever bathes on the day of Ashura will not get ill**

A common misconception is that if you bathe on the day of Ashura you will be immune to any illness in the future. This claim is also without any Quranic proof.

A Muslim should always be on a continuous mission to improve oneself. Thus, if we are at wrong and have any misconceptions, we should try and delve into the matter searching for proof in the form of Quran and Hadith and follow Islam in its true essence so as to [avoid Bidah](https://www.islamicfinder.org/iqra/what-is-bidah-and-how-to-avoid-it/)