

The importance of the opening days of Dhu'l Hajj

When Allāh takes an oath (*qasam*) with a place, object or person, then the purpose is to show the sanctity and religious significance of it. In the Holy Qur'ān, Allāh Almighty says:

وَالْفَجْرِ وَلَيَالٍ عَشْرٍ

By the dawn! And the ten nights. (89: 1-2)

According to Ibn Abbās and many other Companions (may Allāh be pleased with them all), the 'ten nights' here refer to the opening days of Dhu'l Hajj (*Tafsīr al-Qurtubī*, XX: 27). This therefore indicates that these days hold utmost importance in our religion.

The blessed *ahādīth* of the best of all creations, Sayyidunā Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) reflect this very fact. Ibn Abbās (may Allāh be pleased with him) reports that the Messenger of Allāh (peace and blessings of Allāh be upon him) said:

ما من أيام العمل الصالح فيها أحب الي الله عز وجل من هذه الأيام - يعني أيام عشر ذي الحجة - قالوا يا رسول الله و لا الجهاد في سبيل الله؟ قال و لا الجهاد في سبيل الله الا رجل خرج بنفسه و ماله ثم لم يرجع من ذلك بشيء

‘There are no deeds better in the sight of Allāh than good deeds done in the first ten days of Dhu'l Hajj.’ It was asked: ‘Not even Jihād for the sake of Allāh?’ He replied: ‘Not even Jihād for the sake of Allāh, unless a man goes out with his life and wealth with him and does not come back with anything’ (*Sunan al-Tirmidhī*).

Abū Hurayra (may Allāh be pleased with him) reports:

ما من ايام احب الي الله ان يُتَعَبَّدَ له فيها من عشر ذي الحج يعدل صيام كل يوم منها بصيام سنة و قيام كل ليلة منها بقيام ليلة القدر

‘There are no days more beloved to Allāh for you to worship Him therein than the first ten days of Dhu'l Hajj. Fasting any day during it is equivalent to fasting one year and to offer late-night prayers during one of its night is like standing in prayer on the Night of Power’ (*Sunan al-Tirmidhī*).

As the Qur'ān inform us, Layla al-Qadr is ‘better than a thousand months’ (97:3). One night of worship in the first ten nights of the Dhu'l Hajj holds the same rank. The reward of fasting for an entire year can be attained by fasting in these blessed days. Please note fasting on Eid (the tenth, eleventh and twelfth) is strictly forbidden in Sharī'ah.

The most elated of all saints, Shaykh Abd al-Qādir Jilānī (d. 561 AH/1166 CE) writes in *Sufficient Provision for Seekers of the Path of Truth*:

‘It has been said that Allāh will bestow ten charismatic gifts (*karāmat*) upon anyone who treats these ten days with all due honour and respect, namely;

- Blessed grace (*baraka*) in his earthly life
- Increase in his property and wealth
- Safekeeping for his dependents
- The forgiveness of his sins
- The multiplication of his good deeds
- The easing of his agonies (*sakarāt*) at the time of death
- The illumination of his grave
- The favourable weighing of the Scales (*Mīzān*) on the Day of Resurrection
- Salvation from the descending layers (*darakāt*) of Hell
- Promotion to the ascending levels (*darajāt*) of Paradise.’

May Allāh enable us all to take full spiritual benefit of these blessed days, Ameen.

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