

ASHURAH, MUHARRAM & KARBALA

THE DAY OF ASHURAH

Why is this day known as Ashurah ?

The conventional meaning of Ashura in the Shariah refers to the 10th of Muharram-ul-Haraam. In his distinguished book, "Ghuniyatut Taalibeen", Sayyiduna Ghaus-ul-Azam, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani (radi Allahu anhu) writes that the Ulema have a difference of opinion, as to why this day is known as Ashura. Since the reason has been explained in various ways, the consensus of the majority of the Ulema is that it is known as Ashurah because it is the 10th day of Muharram, while certain Ulema say that from the sacred days that Almighty Allah blessed the Ummat-e-Muhammadi with, this day is the 10th most important day, and it is for this reason that it is known as Ashurah. (Ghuniyatut Taalibeen, Pg. 428)

Significant Events concerning Ashurah

With the exception of the Martyrdom of Sayyiduna Imam-e-Hussain (radi Allahu anhu) there are also various other incidents which occurred on Yaum-e-Ashurah. It is also for those reasons that this day has received such excellence. In his internationally renowned Kitaab, "Nuzhatul Majaalis", Sayyiduna Sheikh Abdur Rahman Safoori (radi Allahu anhu) explains the following important events which took place on Yaum-e-Ashurah:

1. It was on this day that the Skies earth and the Lauw-e-Qalam came into existence.
2. It was on this day that Sayyiduna Adam (alaihis salaam) and Sayyiduna Hawa were created.
3. Sayyiduna Adam's (alaihis salaam) Tauba was accepted.
4. Sayyiduna Nooh's (alaihis salaam) Ark came on land.
5. Sayyiduna Ibrahim (alaihis salaam) received the status of Khaleelullah.
6. Sayyiduna Yaqub (alaihis salaam) met Sayyiduna Yusuf (alaihis salaam) after 40 years.
7. Sayyiduna Idrees (alaihis salaam) was raised into the skies.
8. Sayyiduna Ayub (alaihis salaam) regained his health.
9. Sayyiduna Yunus (alaihis salaam) was released from the stomach of the fish.

10. Sayyiduna Dawud's (alaihis salaam) Tauba was accepted.
11. Sayyiduna Sulaiman (alaihis salaam) received his Kingdom.
12. Sayyiduna Esa (alaihis salaam) was raised into the skies.
13. Sayyiduna Muhammad Mustapha (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) made Nikah to Sayyiduna Bibi Khadija (radi Allahu anha).
14. It is on this day that Qiyamat will occur.

The Salaah of Yaum-e-Ashurah

The Holy Prophet Muhammad Mustapha (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has stated, "That person who performs four rakaats of Salaah on the day of Ashurah in this way, that he reads the entire Sura Ikhlaas (Qulhuwal laa) 11 times after Sura Fatiha in every rakaat, then Almighty Allah will forgive fifty years of his sins, and he will be blessed with a Mimbar (pulpit) of Noor." (Nuzhatul Majalis, Vol.1, Pg. 181)

The Fasting of Yaum-e-Ashurah

To keep fast on the day of Ashurah is worthy of great reward. The Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) used to even fast on this day and He used to also command others to fast on this day. It is recorded in "Sahihain" from Sayyiduna Abu Moosa Ash'ari (radi Allahu anhu) that the Jews used to respect the day of Ashura and they also rejoiced on this day. The Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) commanded, "You too should fast in this day". In one Hadith of "Muslim", it is recorded that the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said, "On the day of Ashurah, the People of Khaibar keep fast, rejoice and dress their wives in good clothes and jewellery. O Muslims! You too should fast on this day."

Sayyiduna Qatadah (radi Allahu anhu) reports that the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) has stated, "On the day of Ashurah I hope that through this (Ashurah) Almighty Allah will make it a means of Kafaara for past sins." (Mishkat Shareef, Pg. 179)

In the year 10 A.H., when the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) was keeping the fast of Ashurah, the Sahaba-e-Kiraam (ridwaan nulaahi ta'ala ajma'in) requested, "This is that day which is honoured by the Jews and Christians." The Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said, "If I am

here next year, then I shall also fast on the 9th (of Muharram)." (Mishkat Shareef, Pg. 179) If is for this reason that we should not only fast on the tenth, but also on the ninth of Muharram-ul-Haraam.

Important A'maal (practices) on Yaum-e-Ashurah

1. It is recorded in "Tafseer Roohul Bayaan" that the person who stays awake on the night of Ashurah gains the Sawaab of the Mala'ikah.
2. The Masha'ikh have stated that by making Ghusl on this day, the sicknesses for the entire year are washed away.
3. Shaami in "Kitaabus Saum" states that using surma on this day will not cause they eye to pain for the entire year.

Why is Kichra cooked during Aashurah?

It is in Shaami, "That person who cooks good food on the day of Ashurah, will Insha- Allah, gain Barkat from Almighty Allah in his home for the entire year." Commenting on this in "Tafseer Na'eemi", Sayyiduna Allama Mufti Ahmad Yaar Khan (rahmatullah alaih) writes: "In our country Haleem (kichra) is cooked because it contain all types of grains and meat, through which we have hope that their will be barkat in the grain for the entire year. In certain narrations, it has been stated that the day on which the Ark of Sayyiduna Nooh (alaihis salaam) came onto land, the inhabitants of the Ark disembarked and gathered all types of grain and cooked it into Haleem (Kichra)."

MUHARRAM

Muharram also brings with it the brilliant lesson from the History of Islam, in the Hijrat of Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) from Mecca to Madinatul Munawwarah. According to history, when Rasool-e-Paak (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) arrived in Madina, Abdullah bin Salaam, the famous Jewish scholar was busy breaking dates in his garden. When news of Rasoolullah's (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) arrival reached him, he immediately set out to observe Rasoolullah's (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) activities. Before long he found himself in the midst of the Muslims of Madina where Nabi-e-Paak (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) was addressing the Muslims thus, "O people! Get into the habit of greeting one another at all times, and feed one another, and treat your relatives and friends with love and kindness. And when everyone is asleep at night, remember to pray to Almighty Allah at that time. If you keep up in practice with these things then you shall enter Jannah in peace."

This Prophetic advice bears glad tidings for Muslims throughout the ages. Alas! Had the Muslims of today only given heed to, and practised upon this advice, it would have produced the solutions to nearly all their problems. Hidden embodied in this advice is the secrets of the success of this world and the Hereafter.

This advice had produced a deeply profound effect on Abdullah bin Salaam, so much so that he went to the house of Sayyiduna Abu Ayoob Ansari (radi Allahu anhu) and addressed the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) in the following manner, "I accept your claim of Prophethood and I sincerely believe that your religion (Islam) is a true religion." Having made this announcement, he accepted Islam.

It was also during the month of Muharram that history had recorded the events of Karbala regarding Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu). The martyrdom of Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) had breathed new life into the spirit of Islam regarding the values of Imaan.

Sunni Muslims the world over, in their remembrance of the Ahle-Bait and Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhum ajma'in), engage themselves in feeding the poor in their memory as a mark of respect. On this occasion, it is imperative to reflect as to what aspect of the great Imam's life we Muslims are emulating to improve ourselves spiritually. Should we lack the enthusiasm to put into practice the teachings of the Sunnah which Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) followed so truthfully that he paid the ultimate price for it, we should sit back and question our sincerity in the love for Almighty Allah, His Rasool (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam), the Ahle-Bait, and the beloved Sahaba like Sayyiduna Abu Bakr, Sayyiduna Umar, Sayyiduna Uthman and Sayyiduna Ali (ridwanullahi ta'ala ajma'in).

It is the love of the Ahle-Bait and the Sahaba-e-Kiraam (ridwanullahi ta'ala ajma'in) that should produce the driving force in emulating closely in our lives the Sunnah of Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). This alone in these times would not only provide the guiding light spiritually, but also be a source of great Barakah and reward in this world and the Hereafter.

THE BATTLE OF KARBALA

Introduction: Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) was born on the 4 A.H. in Madinatul Munawwarah. His mother, Sayyiduna Bibi Fathima (radi Allahu anha) was the favourite daughter of the Holy

Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) and his father, Sayyiduna Ali Murtuza (radi Allahu anhu) was one of the most talented and outstanding personalities of early Islam. Brought up by this ideal couple under the fostering care of the Prophet of Islam (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam), Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) soon distinguished himself as a promising scholar, warrior and Saint. The ideal training which he received from his parents and maternal grandfather made him one of the noblest sons of Islam. Even in his early teens, he was noted for his piety, nobility, chivalry and scholarship.

The two brothers, Imam Hassan and Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhuma) commanded great respect of all classes of Muslims for their sterling traits. They were shown great consideration even by the successive Khulafaa of Islam. It was during the Caliphate of their father, Sayyiduna Ali (radi Allahu anhu), that trouble arose which led to the division of the Muslim Caliphate into two - one led by Sayyiduna Ali and the other by Sayyiduna Ameer Mu'awiyah (radi Allahu anhuma). After the martyrdom of Sayyiduna Ali, Sayyiduna Imam Hasan, who succeeded his father, abdicated in favour of Sayyiduna Ameer Mu'awiyah (radi Allahu anhuma) in the larger interest of Islam. He was soon poisoned to death.

Government under Yazid: Sayyiduna Ameer Mu'awiyah (radi Allahu anhu) nominated his son, Yazid, as his successor. Yazid ascended the throne of Damascus in April 683 A.C. He was a tyrant who revelled in vicious pleasures of life. Yazid did not follow the examples of the four rightly guided Khulafaa. Yazid was an alcoholic, indulged in fornication, used to ignore the Fard Salaah and made interest common. He also married women with whom Nikah (Marriage) was not permitted according to the Holy Quran. He also carried dogs on his lap and did not care about Tahaarah (Cleanliness). Yazid spent of his time hunting and did not care much about the administrative responsibilities of the Islamic State. He hated and took delight in persecuting Muslim divines.

Yazid tried to obtain the allegiance of four notable Muslims, including Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu), through force and intrigue. But Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu), who had inherited the virtuous and chivalrous disposition of his father, was not a man to be won over by force or favour. He remained adamant and refused to acknowledge such a vicious and dissolute person as the Caliph, who was supposed to be the spiritual as well as the political head of the Islamic world.

Support from Kufa: Immediately after the accession, Yazid ordered Waleed ibn Utaba, the Governor of Madinatul Munawwarah, to force Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) for the oath of fealty to him. Meanwhile, Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) received messages from the citizens of Kufa imploring him to free them from the tyrannical Ummayyad Rule. He received hundreds of such letters from the residents of Kufa offering him their allegiance. The kind-hearted and virtuous Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) considered it his duty to respond to the call of the oppressed. He sent his cousin, Sayyiduna Muslim bin Aqeel (radi Allahu anhu) as his emissary to Kufa. Thousands of Kufis rushed to swear fealty to Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) on the

hands of Sayyiduna Muslim bin Aqeel (radi Allahu anhu). The report sent by the Muslims of Kufa were highly heartening. He invited Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) to come to Kufa.

March to Kufa: But the Kufis were soon won over through force and favour and turned their backs on Sayyiduna Muslim bin Aqeel (radi Allahu anhu), the emissary of Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu). He was made Shaheed by the Kufis. In the meantime, Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu), along with his family members, relations and companions left for Kufa. When he approached the borders of Iraq, he was surprised at the absence of the promised Kufi soldiers. A few stages from his destination, he learned of the tragic end of his emissary.

March to Karbala: He was then confronted by a strong detachment of the Umayyad army under the command of Hur, who, under the orders of Ubaidullah ibn Ziyad, forced Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) and his party to march towards Karbala, a place about 25 miles north-east of Kufa.

The small band of 72 souls, which included respectable ladies, men and children, encamped on the western bank of the Euphrates at Karbala surrounded by a powerful Umayyah army of 4 000 soldiers commanded by Amr bin Saad. A showdown seemed imminent as Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) was determined to shed the last drop of his blood for the sake of truth and righteousness.

Now started a period of trials and tribulations for the descendants of the Holy Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). For days the vicious army of Ibn Saad surrounded their tents cutting off their water supply with a view to reducing them to hunger and thirst, thus forcing them to surrender. For four days commencing from the 7th to the 10th of Muharram, not a drop of water entered the mouth of Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) and his companions. Faced with the dire catastrophe which would have made the stoutest heart shudder and the strongest feet to shudder, Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) and his companions did not wince at all.

Eve of 10th Muharram: That night, Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) gathered his small band of 72 followers and requested them to leave his camp and seek refuge in a safe place. But, his dedicated followers refused to desert him. He then ordered that the tents be tied together and a trench be dug and filled with wood and set on fire when the battle begins. The Muslims spent the night in prayer.

Battle of Karbala: It was the morning of the 10th of Muharram 61 A.H. Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu's) followers put on sweet scent, their best clothes and took leave and blessings from the womenfolk. The women were told that they were in the sole care of Almighty Allah and that they

should patiently bear all the hardships and trials in store for them. They were not to mourn. The Muslims had gone without water or food for 3 days. They did not have a drop to drink. Nor did they partake in a morsel of food.

Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu), sitting on his horse, addressed the army of Shimir appealing for their sense of justice and recognize the pious family that he was from. He said: "O People! Listen to me. Do not be rash. Let me admonish you. Let me say a few words in my justification and let me explain the reason of my arrival here. If my excuse is reasonable and if you can accept it, do justice in my case. You would be lucky if you desist from taking arms against me. After hearing me, and you refuse to agree with me, I will be ready for you. Whatever the outcome I repose confidence in Allah who supports righteous men."

Ibn Saad's army was ready for war. Hur realised this. He was undecided about which side to be. Finally he said: "By Allah, I have selected Jannah irrespective of the consequences. I do not care whether I am killed and my body is shred into pieces or I am burnt alive." Saying this, he joined the side of Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu). Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) forgave Hur. He was eventually made Shaheed.

The battle began. The 17 year old, Sayyiduna Ali Akbar (radi Allahu anhu), whose looks resembled that of Sayyiduna Rasulullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam), rushed towards the enemy. He fought bravely, beheading hundreds until he was made Shaheed by Marra bin Manqaz who plunged a spear through his back. Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) buried his son.

Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) then heard the 6 months old Sayyiduna Ali Asghar (radi Allahu anhu) crying for water. He took the child in his hands and appealed to the enemy to allow the child to drink some water. Instead, Hurmila bin Kaahil, took aim and shot an arrow that pierced the infants throat. Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) held up his son towards the sky and said: "O Allah, this is the only one Ali Asghar. If there were a hundred like him, I would sacrifice them all, one by one, in Your Path. If this is Your Will, then Husain is satisfied." He then buried Sayyiduna Ali Asghar (radi Allahu anhu) next to his elder brother, Sayyiduna Ali Akbar (radi Allahu anhu).

The small band of Muslims fought bravely and one by one were made Shaheed. Sayyiduna Jafer bin Aqeel, Sayyiduna Abdur Rahman bin Aqeel, Sayyiduna Abdullah bin Hasan, Sayyiduna Imam Hasanul Mussana, Sayyiduna Qasim bin Hasan, Sayyiduna Amr bin Hasan, Sayyiduna Abu Baqr bin Hasan, and others (radi Allahu anhumul ajma'in) were made Shaheed.

Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) fought bravely and killed 410 enemy soldiers. As he was about to drink water, an arrow struck his mouth. Then, arrows rained down upon him. An arrow was shot in his forehead, the place where Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) was kissed by Sayyiduna Rasulullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam). Another arrow pierced his neck. He was wounded from head to foot and lay on the ground. It was time for Asar Salaah, so he said to his attackers: "Just give me a few minutes to finish my Asar Salaah as I have not yet missed a single Salaah in my life, and I do not want to appear before Almighty Allah without finishing my Salaah. After that you may do as you please."

While in Sajdah, Sinan bin Anas struck off Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu's) blessed head. He was only 56 years old. His body had sustained 33 spear wounds, 24 sword wounds and countless arrows. His blessed head was then carried to Yazid in Damascus accompanied by the women and children.

After Karbala: The news of the Shahaadah of Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) shocked the Muslim world. Madinatul Munawwarah revolted against Yazid, but the inhabitants and remaining Sahaba were massacred. For 3 days, the Umayyad soldiers brought destruction to Madinatul Munawwarah and even attacked the Holy Kaaba.

Lessons of Karbala: The Shahaadah of Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) at Karbala provided a moral victory of virtue over vice. It was a triumph of good over evil. It continues to serve as a beacon light for all strugglers of truth and righteousness. Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) fought to establish the laws of Almighty Allah on earth and not to submit to the corrupt government of Yazid which brought about un-Islamic practises. Karbala teaches us to endure hardships and remain calm in the face of the most difficult trials. A poet once said: "The martyrdom of (Imam) Husain actually means the death of Yazid, as every such karbala leads to the revival of Islam."

WHAT RASOOLULLAH (SALLAL LAAHU ALAIHI WASALLAM) SAID ABOUT SAYYIDUNA IMAM HUSAIN (RADI ALLAHU ANHU) IN THE HADITH SHAREEF

1. According to Tirmizi Shareef, Sayyiduna Jabir (radi Allahu anhu) reported: I saw Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) in his Farewell Pilgrimage on the Day of Arafat while he was riding on the camel, Qaswa, to deliver the sermon. I heard him say, "O People! I have left among you something which if you adhere to, you will never be misguided - the Book of Allah and my progeny (the People of my House)".

2. It is also reported in Tirmizi Shareef: Sayyiduna Zain bin Arqam (radi Allahu anhu) reported that Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said to Sayyiduna Ali, Bibi Fathima, Sayyiduna Hasan and Sayyiduna Husain (radi Allahu anhuma), "I am at war with those who fight with them, at peace with those who remain in peace with them".

3. In another Hadith from Tirmizi Shareef: Sayyiduna Ya'la bin Murrah (radi Allahu anhu) reported that Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said: "Husain is from me and I am from Husain. Allah loves him who loves Husain. Husain is a descendant out of my descendants".

4. It is stated in Sunan Imam Ahmad: Sayyiduna Abu Zarr (radi Allahu anhu) reported while holding the door of the Kaaba, "I heard Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) say, 'The parable of the People of my House among you is the parable of the Ark of Noah. Those who got on it were safe, and whoso remained behind were destroyed".

5. It is stated in Sunan Baihaqi: Sayyiduna Ummul Fazl (radi Allahu anha), daughter of Harith, reported: I went to Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) and said, "O Rasoolullah! I have seen a horrible dream tonight". He asked, "And what is it?" She said, "I saw a piece of your flesh had been cut off and placed in my lap". Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) said, "You had seen good. If Allah Wills, Fathima will give birth to a son who you will nurse". Then, Sayyiduna Fathima (radi Allahu anha) gave birth to Sayyiduna Husain and he was under my nurse just as Rasoolullah (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) had said. One day, I went to the Prophet (sallal laahu alaihi wasallam) and placed the child on his lap. Thereafter, his look was fixed towards me and both his eyes were shedding tears. I said, "O Prophet of Allah! By my father and mother! What is the matter with you?" He said, "Jibrael came and informed me that my followers will soon kill this grandson of mine". I asked, "Him?" He said, "Yes, He brought some earth to me out of his red earth". (i.e. from the sands of Karbala)

TEN MIRACULOUS EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE AT THE TIME OF THE MARTYRDOM OF SAYYIDUNA IMAM HUSAIN (RADI ALLAHU ANHU)

According to the Kitaab, "Thareek-ul-Khulafa", ten miraculous events were recorded about the time of the Shahaadah of Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu). These events were also included on pages 46 and 47 of the Kitaab, "Karamaat-e-Sahaba", by Molvi Ashraf Ali of Thana Bhavan.

It is stated in "Thareek-ul-Khulafa" by Imam Jalaluddin Suyuti (radi Allahu anhu) that, "When Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) was martyred, for seven days the following conditions prevailed on earth:-

1. When the sun rose each day, there was a constant shroud of redness covering the earth as if the sun's rays came out in the form of a lifeless blanket.
2. There was a continuous scene of stars colliding with each other in the skies.
3. His martyrdom took place on the 10th of Muharram 60 A.H. and on this day there was a total eclipse of the sun.
4. From about six months prior to his martyrdom, a strange redness enveloped the horizon of the skies, which gradually disappeared, and such a phenomenon was never witnessed again.
5. On the day of his martyrdom, beneath every stone in Baitul Muqaddas, there appeared fresh blood.
6. Grass and straw that was used in the oppressor's army (i.e. Yazid's army) had all suddenly turned to burnt out ashes.
7. The oppressor's army had slaughtered a female camel to feed the soldiers. From the meat of this slaughtered animal, sparks of fire began to fly all the time.
8. When the meat of the slaughtered camel was cooked, it turned out to be bitter and poisonous.
9. One person who spoke ill about Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) was punished by Almighty Allah in such a way that he was hit by two falling stars from the sky which diminished his power of sight progressively.
10. Regarding the conditions of these days (of martyrdom), Sayyiduna Abu Na'eem (radi Allahu anhu) states in his Kitaab, "Dala'il", that Sayyiduna Umme Salma (radi Allahu anha) narrated that when Sayyiduna Imam Husain (radi Allahu anhu) was martyred, the Jinns were heard to wail and weep openly in expression of their grief."