



MUHARRAM - 1433

BEGINNING OF A NEW YEAR

This piece is based upon the book, *Lata'if al-Ma'arif fi ma li Mawasim al-'Am min al-Waza'if* written by Hafiz Abd al-Rahman ibn Ahmad ibn Rajab – more famously known as Ibn Rajab al-Hambali.

Abu Hurayra narrates that Messenger of Allah said, “The most superior fasting after the month of Ramadan is in the month of Allah, which you refer to as Muharram.” (Transmitted by Muslim)

The Prophet would fast on the Day of ‘Ashura (10th Muharram) – (Transmitted by Muslim, Hadith No – 1134 and Ibn Maja Hadith No. 1744). In his last year alive he said, “If I am alive next year I will fast on the ninth.” (Transmitted by Ibn Maja, p. 1744)

A hadith states that those Angels who take the book of deeds to Allah and He sees good in the beginning and in the end He then says to the Angels, “I make you witnesses to the fact that I have forgiven My servant for the intervening periods.” (Transmitted by al-Tirmidhi p. 981 and al-Bayhaqi in *al-Shu'ab* p. 7053)

Therefore if ones deeds are good in Muharram and in Dhul-Hijja then there is an opportunity for his sins to be forgiven which he gathers throughout the year. This should give a person the initiative to have a strong start to the year.

Wasted were the Months of the Year in play and heedlessness

And you did not hold sacred the month of Muharram

And nor in Rajab did you fulfil its rights

And nor did you fast completely in the month of fasting

And nor the ten nights of Dhul Hijja that which

Has passed, neither did you worship nor did you perform Hajj

So what now for you to wipe out the sins with tears

And you cry over them with remorse and regret

So face the New Year with repentance

It may be that you erase with it that which preceded



Ibn Abbas was asked about fasting on the Day of 'Ashura, he replied, 'I did not see the Messenger of Allah seeking the merits of days except for this day, (i.e. the day of 'Ashura) and this month, (i.e. Ramadan). (Transmitted by al-Bukhari p. 26 and Muslim p. 1132)

Abu Hurayra narrates that the Messenger of Allah passed by some Jews who were fasting on the day of 'Ashura and asked, 'What is the reason for fasting on this day?' They replied, 'This is the day on which Allah saved Musa and the Children of Israel from drowning. This is the day on which He drowned Pharaoh. This is the day on which the ship (of Nuh) anchored on Mount Judi. So Nuh and Musa (upon them be peace) kept fast on this day in gratitude to Allah.' (Transmitted by al-Ahmad in *al-Musnad* Vol. 2 pp. 359/360)

Abu Qatada narrates that a person asked the Messenger of Allah regarding fasting on the day of 'Ashura, so he replied, 'I have this expectation from Allah that it will atone for the sins of the past year.' (Transmitted by Muslim, p. 1162).

Imam al-Shafi' and Imam Ahmad are of the opinion that fasting should be observed on the 9th and 10th of Muharram and Imam Abu Hanifa disliked, i.e. regarded as makru, to fast on the tenth alone.

In summary, one should utilise this month to 'set their stall out' for the year. It is an opportunity to atone for the sins of the past year. It is also an act of worship which was practiced by other Prophets as well as Prophet Muhammad. We sometimes wish each other a 'Happy New Year', however as we have seen that is not the approach neither the Prophet nor his companions adopted. Rather they took it as an opportunity to draw closer to Allah the Almighty.