

### The Month of Dhul-Hijjah

By the grace of Allah we are approaching the month of Dhul-Hijjah in which Allah has marked out, for both pilgrims and non-pilgrims, some very blessed days. We shall mention here some of the virtues of those days and acts that merit reward that can be performed on them.

### Doing Good Deeds in General

The first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah are the best and most virtuous days of the year. They are the days in which Allah the Almighty most loves the people to perform good deeds. On this subject, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The best days in the world are the ten days" (Al-Bazzar, authenticated by Al-Albani).

In his *Zadul-Ma`ad*, Imam Ibn Al-Qayim (d. AH 751) said

Indeed, these days are the most excellent of all the days with Allah. And it has been confirmed in the *Sahih* of Al-Bukhari from Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) that Allah's Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "There are no days during which good deeds are more beloved to Allah than these (ten) days." He was then asked, "Not even jihad in the path of Allah?" He replied, "Not even jihad in the path of Allah, except for a person who goes out with his self and his wealth, and comes back with nothing." And it is by these ten days that Allah has taken an oath in His Book, by His saying (By the Dawn and by the Ten Nights) (Al-Fajr 89:1-2).

This is why it is recommended to increase remembrance of Allah, as mentioned in the hadith when the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "There are no days that are greater with Allah, and in which good deeds are more beloved to Him, than these ten days. So increase in saying Subhan Allah, al-hamdu lillah, la ilaha ila Allah, and Allahu Akbar" (At-Tabarani, authenticated by Al-Mundhiri).

## **Fasting the Day of `Arafah**

The ninth day of Dhul-Hijjah is the day of `Arafah, since it is on this day that the pilgrims gather at a plain located at the base of Mount `Arafah, praying and supplicating to their Lord. It is highly recommended for those who are not performing the Hajj to fast on this day. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was once asked about fasting on this day, and he replied that it expiates the sins of the previous and the upcoming year. Likewise, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "There is no day on which Allah frees people from the Fire more so than on the day of `Arafah" (Muslim).

Imam At-Tirmidhi said, "The people of knowledge consider it recommended to fast on the day of `Arafah, except for those (pilgrims) at `Arafah."

## **Offering Sacrifice on the Day of `Eid Al-Adha and the Following Three Days**

The tenth day of Dhul-Hijjah marks the ending of the major rites of Hajj and commemorates the bounty and mercy of Allah the Most High when He gave His beloved Prophet Ibrahim (peace be upon him) a ram to sacrifice in place of his firstborn son, Isma`il (peace be upon him). Out of the ten best days of the year, it is this day which is the most excellent.

Imam Ibn Taymiyah (d. AH 728) said

The most excellent day of the week is the day of Friday, by the agreement of the scholars. And the most excellent day of the year is the day of An-Nahr (the tenth of Dhul Hijjah—the day of slaughtering sacrificial animals). And some of the scholars said that it is the day of `Arafah. However, the first opinion is the correct one, since it is related that the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "The most excellent days with Allah is the day of An-Nahr, then the day of Al-Qarr (the day when the Muslims reside in Mina, Dhul-Hijjah 11)" (Abu Dawud, authenticated by Al-Albani).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “The greatest day of the Hajj (Pilgrimage) is the Day of An-Nahr”  
(Abu Dawud, authenticated by Al-Albani).

The day of An-Nahr is also known as `Eid Al-Adha and is one of the two major festivals that Allah has granted to this Ummah. Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said that when the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) went to Madinah, the people of Madinah had since pre-Islamic times two days that they marked out for play and amusement. So the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “I came to you, and you had two days of play and amusement in the times of jahiliyah (pre-Islamic period). But Allah has replaced them with something better for you: The day of al-Adha (the sacrifice) and the day of al-Fitr (ending the Fast)”  
(Ahmad, authenticated by Ibn Hajar).

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) also said, “The day of Al-Fitr, and the day of An-Nahr, and the days of At-Tashriq (the three days after An-Nahr) are our days of `Eid; and they are days of eating and drinking”  
(Ahmad, and authenticated by Al-Albani).

`Eid Al-Adha is a day on which the Muslims slaughter a camel, cow, sheep, or goat in commemoration of the sacrifice of Ibrahim (peace and blessings be upon him). Those who intend to sacrifice an animal—normally the heads of households—must avoid cutting their hair and nails, starting from the first day of Dhul-Hijjah up until after the sacrifice. Allah’s Messenger (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “When the ten days start, and one of you intends to sacrifice, then let him not cut his hair or his nails”  
(Muslim).

### **Glorifying Allah With the Takbir**

From the day of `Arafah (Dhul-Hijjah 9), up until the `Asr Prayer on the thirteenth day, are days in which the *takbir* (saying “Allahu Akbar”—Allah is the Greatest) is highly recommended. Imam Al-Khattabi (d. AH 456) said

The wisdom behind saying the *takbir* in these days is that in the times of *jahiliyah* (pre-Islamic ignorance), they used to slaughter for their false objects of worship. So the

### *takbir*

was prescribed in order to indicate that the act of slaughtering is directed to Allah alone, and made in His name only.

Ibn Abi Shaibah relates that `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) used to make the *takbir* beginning right after the Fajr Prayer on the day of `Arafah, up until after the `Asr Prayer on the last day of At-Tashriq.

As regards the actual wording of the *takbir*, nothing authentic has been related from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). However, certain wordings have been authentically related from a group of Companions. Ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) used to say:

*Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, La ilaha illa Allah, wa Allahu akbar, Allahu akbar, wa lillahil-hamd.*

Allah is the greatest, Allah is the greatest. None has the right to be worshiped except Him. And Allah is greatest, Allah is greatest, and to Him belongs all praise (Ibn Abi Shaibah).