

The Best Days for Good Deeds

With all the excitement generated around the blessed month of Ramadan, from the anticipation in the weeks before it, to the initial motivation as the month begins, through to the additional push in the final 10 nights, it is easy for these days to be overlooked.

One may be forgiven for thinking the best days for good deeds are the days of Ramadan. They however, are not. The Prophet peace and blessings upon him is reported to have said:

" ما من أيام العمل الصالح فيها أحب إلى الله من هذه الأيام " يعني أيام العشر، قالوا: يا رسول الله ولا الجهاد في سبيل الله؟ قال: "ولا الجهاد في سبيل الله، إلا رجل خرج بنفسه، وماله فلم يرجع من ذلك بشيء" - صحيح البخاري

There are no days where good deeds are more beloved to Allah than in these days – meaning the 10 days. They (the companions) said: Not even fighting in the cause of Allah? He said: Not even fighting in the cause of Allah, except a man who leaves with his life and wealth and returns with neither – narrated in Sahih Al Bukhari.

The 10 days referred to in the hadith are the first 10 days of Dhul Hijjah, the final month in the *Hijri*¹ year.

The Significance of these days

what is it that makes these days more valuable? And why do our scholars say that these are the best days in the life of the Muslim?

- 1) **They are in the final month of the year** – This significance could have been given to any other days in the year but it was not. The lesson we take from this is that we are being encouraged to end the year in good standing with Allah, having sought forgiveness for our shortcomings and sins, and with the doing of some good. Similarly, we learn to end every day with remembrance of Allah and recitation from the Holy Quran, and hope that when our lives come to an end we are doing something that is pleasing to Allah. This is why we are taught to make the following dua:

- اللهم ارزقني حسن الخاتمة

Allahumma urzuqni husnal khatimah
O Allah grant me a good end (to my life)

- 2) **The coming together of the principal acts of worship** – This is the only time of year where a person may perform all of the principal acts of worship: fasting, praying, charity, and the pilgrimage to Mecca.

¹ The *Hijri* year is a reference to the *hijrah*, or migration of the Prophet peace and blessings upon him from Mecca to Medinah. The Hijri months are determined by the phases of the moon.

- 3) They fall within one of the sacred months** – Dhul Hijjah is one of the four sacred months, in which we strive further to avoid transgressing the boundaries of Allah. Greater emphasis is placed on refraining from harming others in these months.

How to make the most of these days

Here are some tips:

- Repent to Allah: Turn sincerely to Allah, asking for forgiveness for your shortcomings and sins, the major sins and the minor sins, the sins you are aware of and the sins you are unaware of. Also make the intention that you do not want to do something that is displeasing to Allah.
- Takbir and tahlil: ibn umar and abu Hurairah would regularly say the following during these 10 days:

الله أكبر الله أكبر الله أكبر لا إله إلا الله الله أكبر وبه الحمد

Allahu Akbar Allahu Akbar Allahu Akbar, La ilaha illallah, Allahu Akbar wa lillahil hamd.

Allah is greatest, Allah is greatest Allah is greatest, there are none worthy of worship other than Allah. Allah is greatest, and to Allah belong all Praise.

This is done on all ten days at any time throughout the day and night. Additionally, we recite these words after each compulsory prayer on the day of Eid and during the 3 days after it.

- Sacrifice: It is highly encouraged (sunnah muakkaddah) in the Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali schools and compulsory (wajib) in the Hanafi school to slaughter an animal (goat, sheep, cow, camel) on the day of Eid or on one of the 3 days following Eid (days of Tashriq).
- Fasting: It is encouraged to fast on the first 9 of these days. We do not fast on the 10th as it is the day of Eid. If circumstances make it difficult to fast on all 9 days, try to fast on the 9th if you can. This is the day of Arafah, a day of forgiveness and turning over a new leaf. The scholars say that after fasting the days of Ramadan, this is the next most important day to fast. The Prophet peace and blessings upon him said concerning fasting the day of Arafah (for those who are not performing the hajj):

صِيَامُ يَوْمِ عَرَفَةَ أَحْتَسِبُ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُكَفِّرَ السَّنَةَ الَّتِي قَبْلَهُ وَالسَّنَةَ الَّتِي بَعْدَهُ – صحيح مسلم

I seek from Allah in fasting the day of Arafah forgiveness for the previous year and for the coming year - narrated in Sahih Muslim

The Prophet peace and blessings upon him also said:

"ما من يوم أكثر من أن يعتق الله فيه عبداً من النار من يوم عرفة" – صحيح مسلم

There is no day on which Allah sets more people free from the Hellfire than on the day of Arafah – Narrated in Sahih Muslim

- Charity: try to give in charity on each of these days, even if it is only little.
- Perform your acts of worship (prayer, fasting, reciting Quran, etc) in the best way that you can.



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- Review your actions: How have you spent your days? How have your interactions been with other people? How can they be improved? How can you improve your connection with Allah? Remember, the actions we will be held to account over in the afterlife generally fit into the following 3 categories: acts of worship, transactions, and character. Try to look for ways to improve in all three areas.
- Seek out opportunities to do good, righteous acts. The Arabic word used in the hadith is صالح which comes from the root word صلح which means it is good and fit for the purpose, from this also comes the word صلح which means “to fix” something. Try to see what you can do to fix or improve something in yourself and the world around you.

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