

Fasting day of `Arafaa expiates sins of two years;

fasting `Ashuraa' expiates one year

Shaykh Aboo `Abd-al-Mu`iz `Alee Farkous al-Qoobee

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: The Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) said in a hadeeth that,

“Fasting `Arafaa expiates the sins of two years, and fasting `Ashuraa’ expiates the sins of one year.”¹

Ibn Hajar said: “Because fasting `Arafaa belongs to the Sharee’ah of Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*), whereas fasting `Ashuraa belongs to the Law of Moosa (Moses) (*Peace be upon him*), and the Law of Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) is better than that of Moses”

So I wondered: “But why is the reward of a person who fasts `Arafaa the double of the person who fasts `Ashuraa, and not ten multiples or more or less. I looked up for an answer about this but did not find. And once I was reading the hadeeth:

“The Jews acted from dawn (prayer) to midday, so Allaah gave them a Qiraat (Qiraat: means here a share, a reward and a part.), the Christians acted from noon till `Asr (afternoon), so Allaah gave them one Qiraat, and the nation of Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) acted from `Asr to sunset, so Allaah (*Mighty and Majestic is He*) gave them two Qiraats”²,

I said to myself: the hadeeth means that the reward of one act of this nation is the double of that of the Jews and Christians. In addition, as the fasting of `Ashuraa expiates the sins of one year at the origin, it is appropriate that fasting `Arafaa which is from our Law expiates the double of fasting `Ashuraa, which is two years. And Allaah knows best.

If this statement is correct, direct us, and if it is wrong correct us, and may Allaah protect you.

Your obedient student, Aboo Sulaymaan Kamaal Sa’ad Sa`uud.

¹ Reported by Muslim, chapter of “Fasting” (hadeeth 2804), Aboo Daawood, chapter of “Fasting” (hadeeth 2425) and Ahmad (hadeeth 23290) on the authority of Qataada al-Ansaaree. See “Irwaa’ al-Ghaleel” (4/108).

² Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of “Prayer times” (hadeeth 557) and Ahmad (hadeeth 6277) on the authority of `Abd Allaah Ibn `Umar (*May Allaah be pleased with them both*).

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Shaykh Aboo `Abd-al-Mu`iz `Alee Farkous al-Qoobee (*May Allaah preserve him*): All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

As regards what you mentioned concerning the comment of Ibn Hajar and the reconciliation with the hadeeth (you mentioned), it is not valid in my opinion, only if it is established that `Ashuraa does not belong to our Sharee'ah at the origin or afterwards.

What we mean by saying that fasting `Ashuraa belongs to our Sharee'ah is that it is not by way of imitation of people of the Scriptures (Jews and Christians), as it is established that the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) used to fast `Ashuraa before asking the Jews about it. Moreover, people of Quraysh used to fast it, as it is established in the hadeeth of 'Aaishah (*May Allaah be pleased with her*) who said:

“Quraysh used to observe fast on the day of `Ashuraa in Al-Jaahiliyyah (the Pre-Islaamic period of ignorance). The Messenger of Allaah (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) used to observe fast on it too. When he emigrated to Madeenah, he observed fast on it too and ordered (Muslims) to fast on it. When the fasting of the month of Ramadhaan was prescribed, the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) said, **“He who wants to fast (on that day) may fast, and he who does not want to fast may not fast”**³,

and in the narration of Al-Bukhaaree:

“...On that day the Ka`bah used to be wrapped with a cover”⁴

If it is established that there is no imitation of the Jews, so the saying of the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*):

“We have more claim over Moosa (Moses) than you”⁵,

after asking the Jews about fasting `Ashuraa is only by way of confirmation of the legitimacy of fasting it and in order to show to the Jews that we also do what they do in order to abide by what Moosa (*Peace be upon him*) does. Thus, we have more claim over Moosa than the Jews. Moreover, the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) used to fast it as being of our Sharee'ah after approving of fasting it and contradicting the Jews by fasting one day before it.

³ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of "Fasting" (hadeeth 2002), Muslim, chapter of "fasting" and Al-Bayhaqee (hadeeth 8681) on the authority of 'Aaishah (*May Allaah be pleased with her*).

⁴ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of "Hajj" (hadeeth 1592) on the authority of 'Aaishah (*May Allaah be pleased with her*).

⁵ Reported by Al-Bukhaaree, chapter of "Fasting" (hadeeth 2004), Muslim, chapter of "fasting" (hadeeth 2712), Aboo Daawood, chapter of "Fasting" (hadeeth 2444), Ibn Maajah, chapter of "Fasting" (hadeeth 1734) and Al-Humaydee in his "Musnad" (hadeeth 543) on the authority of Ibn `Abbaas (*May Allaah be pleased with them both*).

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If this is made clear for you, then saying that fasting `Arafaa is better than fasting `Ashuraa because the first belongs to the Law of Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) whereas the second is not, as it is mentioned by Ibn Hajar and what you declared in your answer by approving such statement, is not correct, as we have previously stated that `Ashuraa belongs to the Law of Muhammad (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) at the origin. In such case, we should see if there is another explanation which is more successful. However, if we do not know the reason, we should accept it as though, with the belief that there exists a reason and a wisdom that Allaah (*The Most High*) knows, because among His Attributes: Knowledge and Wisdom.

This is what we can give you as directions, asking Allaah (*The Most High*) to bestow us success, pertinence, help and guidance.

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah (*Mighty and Majestic is He*). Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*), his Family, his Companions and Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

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