

SIFAH LECTURE SERIES

Muharram: A New Year, a Sacred Season, and the Day That Wipes a Year

A practical lecture — knowledge you can act on

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SIFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

Muharram: A New Year, a Sacred Season, and the Day That Wipes a Year

A new year of the Hijrah opens with a sacred month and a single day that can erase a year of sin — will you seize it, or let it slip by like every year before?

WHY THIS MATTERS

A Page You Will Never Read Twice

My dear brother, my dear sister, let me ask you something honestly before we begin. When did a year of your life last end and you actually *stopped* to notice it? For most of us, the years slip through our fingers like water. We were young, and then suddenly we were not. We made a hundred plans, and half of them we cannot even remember. A whole year passed, three hundred and sixty five sunrises, and we ask ourselves: where did it go? What did I do with it? What did I send ahead of me to the One I am walking toward every single day?

That, my friend, is the question the heedless never ask. They count the years by birthdays and celebrations, by promotions and photographs, but they never once sit down and ask the question that will matter on the Day everything is unveiled: **what have I sent ahead to my Lord, and what will I do with the days I have left?** And here is the mercy of Allah. He did not leave us to drift from year to year with no marker, no pause, no fresh page. He opened the very first month of our year, the month of Muharram, and made it one of the four sacred months of the entire calendar. He set it apart with His own hand, so that we would stop, look back, look forward, and begin again.

Imagine time as a page in a book, and imagine that today Allah has handed you a fresh one, clean and unwritten, and placed at the very top of it a sacred month. Everything before it is finished. The good you did is recorded, the sins you committed are pending upon your repentance, and the wasted hours are gone forever. But this page? This page is still yours to write. That is what the new year of the Hijrah is. Not fireworks, not a party, not a list of goals about your weight and your wallet that you will abandon by the second month. It is a summons from your Lord to migrate, once more, toward Him.

Four Months He Set Apart

Understand what a sacred month even is, because most of us have never truly reflected on it. Allah did not make every month the same. He divided the year, and He honoured four months above the rest, and He told us this in His Book so we would treat them with the reverence they deserve.

إِنَّ عِدَّةَ الشُّهُورِ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ اثْنَا عَشَرَ شَهْرًا فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ
يَوْمَ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ مِنْهَا أَرْبَعَةٌ حُرُمٌ ذَلِكَ
الدينُ القيمُ فَلَا تَظْلِمُوا فِيهِنَّ أَنْفُسَكُمْ

*Indeed, the number of months with Allah is twelve months in the register of Allah from the day He created the heavens and the earth; of these, four are sacred. That is the upright religion, **so do not wrong yourselves during them.***

Surah At-Tawbah (9:36)

Four months: Dhul-Qa'dah, Dhul-Hijjah, Muharram, and Rajab. And notice what Allah commands within them: *do not wrong yourselves during them*. Now think about this. Is sin ever permitted in any month? Of course not. So why does Allah single out these four with a special warning? Because, my dear brother, the scholars explained a beautiful and frightening truth: sin is graver within the sacred months, and good deeds are weightier within them. The honour of the time magnifies whatever you do inside it, for better or for worse.

The great scholar Qatadah, may Allah have mercy on him, taught that wrongdoing in these months is heavier in the sight of Allah, and that righteous deeds within them earn a greater reward, because Allah magnifies whatever He wills of times and of places. Think of it like this. A slap is a wrong anywhere. But a slap in the sacred sanctuary of Makkah is a graver wrong, because the place is honoured. Time works the same way. So the wise believer, when Muharram arrives, behaves like a shrewd merchant who has just

learned that prices have doubled. He rushes to invest in good deeds while their reward is multiplied, and he flees from sin while its danger is doubled. This is not a month to coast through. It is a season of opportunity, and Allah has placed it, mercifully, at the very start of our year, so that we begin in obedience and not in heedlessness.

WHERE OUR YEARS BEGIN

A Calendar Built on Sacrifice

Have you ever wondered why the Muslim calendar begins where it does? It does not begin from the birth of the Prophet ﷺ. It does not begin from his passing. It begins from the Hijrah, his migration from Makkah to Madinah. It was 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, together with the Companions, who chose this event to mark the beginning of the Muslim era. And that choice was not accidental. It carries a message that echoes through every single year of our lives.

Think about what the Hijrah was. It was the moment a persecuted, tortured, oppressed community of believers left behind their homes, their wealth, their businesses, their birthplace, everything they knew, for the sake of Allah alone. They walked away from the familiar and toward the unknown, carrying nothing but their faith. And 'Umar and the Companions said: *this* is where our history begins. Not with a birth, not with a victory, but with a sacrifice. Our very calendar, my dear brother, is built upon leaving something behind for the sake of Allah. Every time you write the Hijri year, you are being reminded that this whole life is a migration, from the dunya toward your Lord.

Let me take you into that migration for a moment, because it holds a lesson we desperately need at the start of a new year. When the persecution of Makkah grew unbearable and the Quraysh gathered to plot the murder of the Prophet ﷺ, he set out with Abu Bakr as-Siddiq, may Allah be pleased with him. The enemy pursued them, hunting them like animals, and the two of them took refuge in a cave, the cave of Thawr. The search party came so close that Abu Bakr, looking up, could see their very feet. He whispered in fear: if any of them just looked down, they would see us. Imagine the terror of that moment. And in that moment, the Prophet ﷺ spoke words Allah loved so much He preserved them forever in His Book.

ثَانِيَاثْنَيْنِ إِذْ هُمَا فِي الْغَارِ إِذْ يَقُولُ لِصَاحِبِهِ لَا تَحْزَنْ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَنَا فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَيْهِ

*The second of two, when they were in the cave, when he said to his companion: **Do not grieve; indeed, Allah is with us.** So Allah sent down His tranquility upon him.*

Surah At-Tawbah (9:40)

Do not grieve. Indeed, Allah is with us. The enemy is at the mouth of the cave, and the Prophet ﷺ is calm, because his heart rested on a certainty greater than the danger. This is the spirit of the Hijrah, and it is the spirit you are meant to carry into your new year: that no closed door, no hardship, no enemy, is greater than Allah, and the one who is with Him is never truly cornered.

But here is the part that turns the Hijrah from ancient history into your personal mission this year. The Prophet ﷺ taught that migration is not only about geography. It is about the heart. He said the true emigrant is defined not by which city he leaves, but by what he leaves behind.

وَالْمُهَاجِرُ مَنْ هَجَرَ مَا نَهَى اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

And the true emigrant is the one who abandons what Allah has forbidden.

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 10 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

So the turning of the Hijri year is not just a date on a page. It is a yearly summons to make your own hijrah. To migrate away from the sin you carried through the last twelve months, toward the obedience of the twelve ahead. My dear brother, my dear sister, every time you leave a sin behind for the sake of Allah, you are walking, in your own heart, the exact road the Prophet ﷺ walked from Makkah to Madinah. Our calendar was built upon that road so that we would never, ever forget it. What sin will you leave behind at the mouth of your cave this year?

A Name Above the Rest

Of all twelve months, Allah and His Messenger ﷺ gave Muharram a distinction so beautiful it should stop us in our tracks. The Prophet ﷺ called it *shahr Allah*, the month of Allah, attaching it directly to the most majestic name in existence, the name of Allah Himself. Now, the scholars pointed out something we know instinctively from our own culture: when the Arabs wanted to honour something, they attached it to a great name. We say the house of Allah, the Bayt Allah, to honour the Ka'bah. And here, Allah's Messenger honoured this month by attaching it to Allah's own name, a distinction he gave to no other month of the year. Reflect on that. Twelve months, and only one is called the month of Allah.

And the honour does not stop there. The Prophet ﷺ named this month the very best month for voluntary fasting after the blessed month of Ramadan itself.

أَفْضَلُ الصَّيَامِ بَعْدَ رَمَضَانَ شَهْرُ اللَّهِ الْمُحَرَّمُ وَأَفْضَلُ
الصَّلَاةِ بَعْدَ الْفَرِيضَةِ صَلَاةُ اللَّيْلِ

The best fasting after Ramadan is in the month of Allah, Muharram; and the best prayer after the obligatory prayer is the prayer of the night.

Source: Sahih Muslim: 1163 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

Consider the gift here, my dear brother. Allah made the fasting of Ramadan an obligation, a pillar of our religion. But after that great season closes, what is the most beloved voluntary fasting to Allah? It is the fasting of *this* month, Muharram. It is as though Allah, having ended the great feast of worship in Ramadan, opens the new year with a fresh invitation: come near to Me again, through the same beloved act. The one who wants to begin his year drenched in the love of Allah has just been handed the map. Fast in this sacred month, and above all, fast on its greatest day, the day of 'Ashura.

When the Sea Split for Musa

Let me take you to the tenth day of Muharram, the day of 'Ashura, because it carries a history that reaches back across the prophets, all the way to Musa, peace be upon him. When the Prophet ﷺ arrived in Madinah, he found the Jews of the city fasting this day. He asked them why. They told him it was the day Allah saved Musa and the Children of Israel from Pharaoh and his armies, drowning the tyrant and delivering the believers. And notice the Prophet's response, because it reveals the unity of all the prophets upon one single creed: the worship of Allah alone.

هَذَا يَوْمٌ صَالِحٌ هَذَا يَوْمٌ نَجَّى اللَّهُ فِيهِ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ مِنْ
عَدُوِّهِمْ فَصَامَهُ مُوسَى فَأَنَا أَحَقُّ بِمُوسَى مِنْكُمْ فَصَامَهُ
وَأَمَرَ بِصِيَامِهِ

*This is a blessed day, the day on which Allah saved the Children of Israel from their enemy, so Musa fasted it. **We have more right to Musa than you.** So he fasted it and commanded that it be fasted.*

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 2004 and Sahih Muslim: 1130 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaquun Alayh (agreed upon)

We have more right to Musa than you, said the Prophet ﷺ. Because the true followers of Musa, and of 'Isa, and of every messenger, are those who followed Muhammad ﷺ, united across the ages on the single creed of worshipping Allah alone. And what a day Allah chose to honour. It was the day Allah split the sea. It was the day He rescued a weak, broken, enslaved people from the mightiest tyrant of the age. It was the day truth was carried across on dry land and falsehood was drowned beneath the waves.

I want you to stand with Musa for a moment. Picture it. The sea is in front of him, vast and impassable. Behind him, the ground is shaking with the thunder of Pharaoh's chariots. His people look left and right, and they see no way out, and they cry out in despair that they are surely overtaken, they are

finished, they are as good as dead. And in that instant, when every visible means of escape had vanished, look at what came out of the mouth of Musa.

قَالَ كَلَّا إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ

*He said: No! **Indeed, with me is my Lord; He will guide me.***

Surah Ash-Shu'ara (26:62)

Indeed, with me is my Lord; He will guide me. The sea ahead, the army behind, and Musa says: my Lord is with me. And Allah split the sea. This, my dear brother, my dear sister, is the lesson of 'Ashura that you carry into your new year. No tyrant is greater than Allah. No hardship is greater than Allah. No closed door, no dead end, no impossible situation is greater than Allah. And the one who trusts in Him, even with the sea in front and the enemy behind, will find that Allah opens for him a road from exactly the place he never expected. When you fast this day, you are not just commemorating something that happened long ago. You are declaring your faith in the very same Lord who saved Musa, the Lord who is with you right now, and who delivers everyone who leans on Him.

And there is a deeper mercy buried in this day, one that I need you to hear if your life feels heavy right now. The day Allah chose to honour above all the days of the year is a day of rescue that came *after long, long oppression*. Musa and his people suffered under Pharaoh for generations. Their sons were slaughtered. Their backs were broken with slave labour. Their cries went up for years upon years, and the sky seemed silent. And then, when the appointed hour finally arrived, Allah undid the tyranny of centuries in a single morning. The sea that should have drowned the believers drowned the tyrant instead. So if you feel your hardship has run too long, if you feel the oppressor is too strong and the rescue is never coming, hold onto 'Ashura. It is the yearly reminder that the rescue of Allah, however delayed it looks to your eyes, arrives at exactly the hour He appointed, and nothing on this earth can hold it back when it comes.

The Deal of a Lifetime

Now let me tell you about the reward Allah attached to this one day, and I want you to really feel the weight of it. The Prophet ﷺ told us what a single day of fasting on 'Ashura can do for the sincere soul.

صِيَامُ يَوْمٍ عَاشُورَاءَ أَحْتَسِبُ عَلَى اللَّهِ أَنْ يُكَفِّرَ السَّنَةَ
الَّتِي قَبْلَهُ

Fasting the day of 'Ashura, I hope from Allah, expiates the year that came before it.

Source: Sahih Muslim: 1162 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

One day of fasting, and Allah wipes away the sins of an entire year. Stop and let that land on your heart. A whole year of slips. A whole year of shortcomings. A whole year of small sins piling up, day after day, glance after glance, word after word, until they feel like a mountain on your back. And Allah, in His boundless generosity, says: give Me one day at the start of the new year, and I will forgive the year behind you. My dear brother, there is no investment on the face of this earth that returns so much for so little. If someone told you that fasting a single day would clear a year's worth of debt from your bank account, you would never let that day pass. And here Allah is offering to clear a year's worth of debt from your *record*. Will you let it slip by?

And the Prophet ﷺ, in the final year of his blessed life, wanted to perfect this fast even further. He expressed his intention to add the ninth day to the tenth, both to follow the way of Musa more completely and to be distinct from those who fasted only the tenth.

لَنْ بَقَيْتُ إِلَى قَابِلٍ لِأَصُومَنَّ التَّاسِعَ

If I remain until next year, I will surely fast the ninth.

Source: Sahih Muslim: 1134 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

He passed away before that next year came, but from this the scholars taught us the beautiful Sunnah: fast two days, the ninth and the tenth of Muharram together, to complete what the Prophet ﷺ intended and to distinguish the believers in their worship. So do not let this pass you by. Mark the day now, before it arrives. Because there is a wisdom here too. The scholars tell us that in the earliest days of Islam, before Ramadan was made obligatory, the fast of 'Ashura was itself an obligation upon the Muslims. When Allah revealed the pillar of Ramadan, the obligation of 'Ashura was lifted, and it remained as a beloved, strongly encouraged voluntary act. See the mercy in that. Allah once made this day a duty, and then, out of pure mercy, kept its door standing open as a voluntary treasure, so that whoever wants the forgiveness of a whole year need only give a single day to his Lord.

LOVE AND GRIEF

Honouring the Family of the Prophet ﷺ

We cannot speak of the tenth of Muharram without pausing, with grief and with love, at a tragedy that unfolded on this very day many years after the Prophet ﷺ. For it was on the tenth of Muharram, in the year sixty one after the Hijrah, that the beloved grandson of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, al-Husayn ibn 'Ali, may Allah be pleased with him, was betrayed and martyred at Karbala, slain together with members of his own household. He was the son of Fatimah, the daughter of the Prophet ﷺ, and of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib. He was among the most beloved people in the world to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. His killing was a crime and a calamity, a wound in the very heart of this Ummah, and no believer can recall it without sorrow, and without sending peace and blessings upon Husayn and his noble family.

Loving the family of the Prophet ﷺ, the Ahl al-Bayt, is not optional. It is an obligation woven into the fabric of our faith. In his farewell address, the Prophet ﷺ reminded the whole Ummah of their rights in words we must never allow ourselves to forget.

وَأَهْلَ بَيْتِي أُذَكِّرُكُمْ اللَّهَ فِي أَهْلِ بَيْتِي

And the people of my household: I remind you of Allah concerning my household.

Source: Sahih Muslim: 2408 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

And the Prophet ﷺ raised Husayn and his brother Hasan to a rank that should silence every tongue that would ever dishonour them, calling them the leaders of the youth of Paradise.

الْحَسَنُ وَالْحُسَيْنُ سَيِّدَا شَبَابِ أَهْلِ الْجَنَّةِ

Al-Hasan and al-Husayn are the two leaders of the youth of the people of Paradise.

Source: Sunan at-Tirmidhi: 3768 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

So we love Husayn. We grieve his martyrdom. We honour his family and we send blessings upon them. But listen carefully, my dear brother, because here is where wisdom is needed. Our love and our grief follow the way the Prophet ﷺ taught us, not the ways that people invented long after him. The virtue of ‘Ashura and its fast was established by the Prophet ﷺ himself, long before Karbala ever happened, reaching all the way back to the salvation of Musa. Allah did not appoint this day for ritual mourning, for wailing, for striking or harming the body, for any of the innovations that grief, however sincere, gave rise to. And on the other side, the Prophet ﷺ never made it a day of celebration and feasting as though it were a festival either. The balanced path, the path of the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions, is to honour the day exactly as he honoured it: by fasting, by drawing near to Allah. And to honour Husayn and the Ahl al-Bayt exactly as he commanded: with love in the heart, blessings on the tongue, and a life lived upon the Sunnah. The truest honour you can give to Husayn is to hold fast to the very religion for which his family lived and died.

And understand the beauty of the way of Ahl al-Sunnah. It is a way of comprehensive love that shuts no one out whom the Prophet ﷺ loved. We love the household of the Prophet ﷺ, ‘Ali and Fatimah and

Hasan and Husayn and all the pure family. And alongside them, in the very same heart, we love the noble Companions, Abu Bakr and 'Umar and 'Uthman and the rest, may Allah be pleased with them all. For the Prophet ﷺ joined them together in his love. His household married into his Companions, and his Companions married into his household. To love the family while cursing the Companions, or to honour the Companions while neglecting the family, is to tear apart with your own hands what Allah and His Messenger ﷺ joined together. The balanced believer holds them all in his heart, sends blessings on them all, and refuses to let the tragedy of Karbala become a wound that divides the very Ummah for which Husayn gave his life.

THE RECKONING OF THE SOUL

Weigh Yourself Before You Are Weighed

So here we stand, at the gate of a new year, in a sacred month, and this moment calls us to a duty that the heedless neglect their entire lives: the reckoning of the soul, muhasabah. Allah commanded every single believer to pause and examine what he has actually prepared for the Day he will finally meet his Lord.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلْتَنْظُرْ نَفْسٌ مَّا قَدَّمَتْ
لِغَدٍ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

*O you who believe, be conscious of Allah, and **let every soul look to what it has sent forth for tomorrow.** And be conscious of Allah; indeed, Allah is fully aware of what you do.*

Surah Al-Hashr (59:18)

Let every soul look to what it has sent forth for tomorrow. This is the true work of the new year, my dear brother. Not the empty resolutions of those who count only the dunya. Not the vows about the gym and the diet that dissolve within three weeks. But the honest, quiet, sometimes uncomfortable accounting of a believer who looks back at the year now gone and asks: what did I send ahead to my Lord this year? What did I send forward of prayer, of charity, of kindness, of tears of repentance? And what did I send forward of sin, of heedlessness, of hours poured away scrolling a screen that will testify against

me? ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, gave this Ummah a principle that should govern every new year we are ever granted:

Take account of yourselves before you are taken to account, and weigh your deeds before they are weighed for you. These are the words of ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, and they are the difference between a man who arrives at the Day of Judgement stunned by his own record, and a man who arrives having already balanced his books, whose reckoning is therefore light.

And why the urgency? Because time is the one resource Allah swore an oath by, and warned us in the sharpest terms not to squander. The entire success or ruin of a human being is measured in how he spends this one thing that never comes back.

وَالْعَصْرِ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

*By time. **Indeed, mankind is in loss**, except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and advise one another to truth, and advise one another to patience.*

Surah Al-‘Asr (103:1-3)

By time, Allah swore, that mankind is in loss. Every one of us, my dear brother, is losing. Every heartbeat drains a little more of our life away, carrying us steadily toward the grave, whether we notice it or not. Except, Allah says, except those who fill that draining time with faith, with righteous deeds, and with calling one another to truth and patience. A new year is a fresh, blank stretch of that precious time, handed to you by Allah. The wise believer does not let it fill itself with the same heedlessness as the year before. He takes hold of it. He reckons his soul. And he resolves, with Allah's help, to make this coming year one step closer to his Lord than the last.

And here is the mercy hidden inside measuring our lives in years: it gives us, again and again, a fresh beginning. If you look back with regret upon a year heavy with sin, you are not chained to it. Allah has handed you a new page, clean and unwritten, and placed at its very head a sacred month and a day that

wipes the past year away. Nobody is forced to carry the old year into the new. So let the one whose past twelve months were a season of heedlessness make these coming twelve months a season of return. And let the one whom Allah blessed with a good year ask Him for an even better one. Because the believer's journey is always forward. From Allah, by Allah, and back to Allah.

LIVING IT OUT

Muharram in the World We Actually Inhabit

Now let me bring this all the way down into the life you and I actually live, because it would be a failure to speak of the sacred month and the new year and never ask what they demand of us on a Tuesday morning. The truth is, we live our daily lives by a calendar that is not our own. And be honest, how many Muslims today could name the twelve months of the Hijri year through which their own Prophet ﷺ actually lived? How many could tell you which of these months are sacred? Part of honouring this month is simply to become *aware* of it. To know which month of Allah you are standing in. To revive in your home, and in the hearts of your children, a consciousness of the sacred seasons that are meant to shape a believer's year. Teach your family what 'Ashura is. Let them grow up knowing the rhythm of their own faith.

And we are surrounded, everywhere, by a culture that knows only one kind of new year: a night of loud celebration, a countdown, and a list of worldly resolutions about wealth and appearance that are mostly forgotten within a fortnight. The believer's new year is something infinitely deeper. It is not a night of heedless festivity but a season of self-reckoning, repentance, and renewed worship. Its resolutions are not about the body alone, but about the soul, the prayer, the character, the standing before Allah. So do not let the blessed day of 'Ashura slip past unnoticed simply because the world around you takes no notice of it. Let the world have its fireworks. You mark your day. You fast it. You seize the forgiveness of a whole year that it carries in its hands.

And in this age, when believers across the world are facing their own seas with the enemy at their backs, oppressed and frightened in so many lands, the twin lessons of 'Ashura and the Hijrah are a lifeline. Allah is with those who trust Him. He splits seas. He conceals His Prophet in caves. He delivers the weak from the strong precisely when every visible door has slammed shut. The believer who carries this certainty into the new year does not fall into despair, not at the state of the Ummah, and not at his own private trials. He holds fast to the One who has never once, in all of history, abandoned a soul that turned to Him.

Stand at the Threshold and Look

So before you close this and return to your day, my dear brother, my dear sister, I want you to stand with me at the threshold of this new year and look honestly at the one that has passed. What did I send ahead to Allah in the twelve months now gone, and what do I quietly wish I had never sent? Have the years been passing while my faith stands frozen in place, or while it grows? Will I let this sacred month and its blessed day of 'Ashura slip by unfasted, throwing away a day that could erase a year of my sins, or will I finally seize it? And as I begin this new page, will I drag the same tired heedlessness of the old year into the new one? Or will I make of this year a true migration toward my Lord, just as the Hijrah upon which my entire calendar is built was a migration toward Him?

These questions are not meant to crush you. They are meant to *wake* you. Because the one who reckons himself in this life, gently and honestly, is the one who will find his reckoning easy and light on the Day the books are finally opened. And remember, whatever you build this year, build it to last. The Prophet ﷺ taught us that the deeds most beloved to Allah are not the biggest bursts, but the most constant, the ones we keep.

أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَدْوَمُهَا وَإِنْ قَلَّ

The most beloved of deeds to Allah are the most constant of them, even if they are few.

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 6464 and Sahih Muslim: 783 · **Authenticity:** Muttafaqun Alayh (agreed upon)

A small act of worship that you carry steadily through the entire new year is worth more before Allah than a grand resolution that collapses by the second month. So walk into this year between the two wings of hope and fear. Hope in a Lord who forgives a whole year through one day of fasting, and who split the sea for Musa when there was no way through. And a watchful fear of a year of your life draining silently away into loss, as Allah swore by time that the heedless are in loss. Every fast you keep this month, every sin you leave behind, every resolution you hold, every honest look at your own soul, is a single step that turns this new year from a year of loss into a year of profit. Do not measure these acts by how small they

look. Measure them by where they are taking you: into a year drawn nearer to the One we are all, every single day, migrating toward. Now let us make it concrete.

☰ Your Action Plan: Seize the Sacred Month

Don't just read — choose what you will act on this week.

1 Mark and fast the day of 'Ashura now

Look up the tenth of Muharram today, set a reminder, and firmly intend to fast it, adding the ninth alongside it if you can. It is one day that expiates a whole year, so treat it as the appointment you will not miss.

THIS WEEK

Make it last: once this first week is done, don't stop — carry it on as a lifelong habit.

2 Sit down and reckon your year honestly

Take fifteen quiet minutes to weigh the year that has passed, what you sent ahead of prayer and good, and what you sent of sin and wasted time. End it with a sincere tawbah for what is gone, and do not carry the old year into the new.

TODAY

Make it last: once you begin today, keep it every day after — until it becomes a permanent habit for life.

3 Add one steady act of worship for the whole year

Choose one small, constant deed to begin this month and keep all year: two rak'ahs of night prayer, a page of Quran daily, or fasting Mondays and Thursdays. Remember the most beloved deeds to Allah are the lasting ones.

DAILY

Make it last: keep it daily until it becomes second nature — a habit for the rest of your life.

4 Renew love for the Prophet's family and guard the month from sin

Send salawat upon the Prophet ﷺ and his household, teach your family what 'Ashura truly is, and be especially careful to avoid sin this month, for wronging your soul is graver within the sacred months.

THIS MONTH

Make it last: once this first month is done, keep it for good as a permanent habit.

🚩 The 10-Day Muharram Challenge

For the ten days leading up to and including 'Ashura, do three things each day: reckon your soul with one honest question before you sleep, hold one small act of worship you can keep for life, and leave behind one sin as your personal hijrah. On the ninth and tenth, fast for the sake of Allah, hoping for the forgiveness of a whole year. Begin these ten days as a start, not a finish, and let the habits you plant carry you, by Allah's mercy, through the entire new year and every year after it.

Make it stick — and make it last

- ✓ **Write it down.** Put your chosen action on a sticky note on your mirror, desk, or fridge — somewhere you cannot miss it.
- ✓ **Print this plan** and tick each action off as you do it.
- ✓ **Set a daily reminder** on your phone or calendar so it never slips your mind.
- ✓ **Keep a one-line journal** each night — did I do it today? how did it go? — and watch your streak grow.

Don't aim for one good day or week — aim to keep it for life. A habit only counts once it outlives the challenge.