

Merits of the Month of Rajab (Excerpted from Mafatih al-Jinan)

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Article

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Afzal Sumar

There are four sacred months for the Muslim community. One of them is the month of Rajab, This booklet highlights the benefits of fasting, praying and respecting this special month.

It is narrated from the Prophet (saw) who said: ‘the month of Rajab is the greatest month of Allah. No month can come close to matching its sanctity and grace. Fighting the disbelievers in it is prohibited.¹ Indeed, Rajab is the month of Allah, while Sha‘aban is my month and (the month of) Rama‘an is the month of my community. Surely, the one who fasts (even) one day in (the month of) Rajab deserves the greatest pleasure of Allah. The wrath of Allah moves away from him, and a door from the doors of hell is closed for him.’

The seventh Imam Musa b. Ja‘far (as) (d. 183 AH / 799 AD) said: ‘whoever fasts one day in the month of Rajab has the fire (of hell) keep away from him the distance of one year, while whoever fasts three days (in this month) has paradise become incumbent for him.’

Shaykh ‘Abbass al-Qummi (d. 1359 AH / 1940 AD) then suggests that if one does wish to fast three days in this month, he should choose to fast on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday since it is narrated that: ‘whoever fasts these three days in any of the Sacred months will have Allah reward him with the reward applicable to the worship of nine hundred years.’

The seventh Imam also said: ‘Rajab is (the name of) a river in paradise. Its color is whiter than milk; its taste is sweeter than honey. Whoever fasts one day in (the month of) Rajab will have Allah quench his thirst from that river.’

The sixth Imam al-Sadiq (as) (d. 148 AH / 765 AD) transmits the following report from the Prophet of Allah (saw), who said: ‘(The month of) Rajab is the month of seeking repentance for my community, so increase the seeking of repentance in it for He (Allah) is Forgiving and Merciful. This month is called “*al-Rajab al-Asabb*” (i.e. the [month of] Rajab in which there is an abundant and excessive outpouring and flow). This is because the mercy of Allah flows on my community (in this month) with abundant exuberance. Therefore dedicate yourselves with increasing intensity to the recitation of the formula:

استغفر الله و اسئله التوبة

Astaghfirullah wa as'aluhu al-tawba

(Translation: I seek Allah's forgiveness and I beseech His repentance).

A general perusal of the recitations and rituals recommended in the devotional text *Mafatihul Jinan* for this month indicates that the Imams of the Ahlulbayt have encouraged their followers to recite the following formulas / recitations exceedingly in the month of Rajab. These are:

1) استغفر الله واتوب اليه – *astaghfirullah wa atubu ilayhi* (Translation: I seek Allah's forgiveness and I turn repentantly towards Him).

2) لا اله الا الله – *la ilaha illallahu* (Translation: There is no god but Allah).

3) Sura al-Ikhlās.

Of course, there are specifications as to the number of repetitions required of these recitations, and for each specification there are slight changes in the wordings of the recommended formulas, however, the core teaching that one can deduce from all these different specifications and wordings is that an excess in the recitation of these recitations is highly encouraged.

Ibn Babwayhi (al-Shaykh al-Saduq) (d. 381 AH / 991 AD) narrates from Salim by means of a reliable chain who said: 'I visited al-Sadiq (as) in the month of Rajab. This was at a time when only a few days remained in this month. When he saw me, he asked: "Did you fast any of the days of this month?" I replied: "by Allah, no I did not, son of the Messenger of Allah." So he said to me: "Then you have forfeited a reward the worth and scope of which is unknown to any save Allah. Indeed this is a month which Allah has favoured, exalted its sanctity, and has enjoined the reward of grace for those who fast in it." So I said: "son of the Messenger of Allah, what if I fasted during these remaining days, will I be able to partake of some of the rewards applicable to those who have fasted in it?"

He said: "Salim, whoever fasts one day from the last days of this month will be safe from the severity of the agony of death, and he shall be safe from the terrors of the first days of the grave (i.e. the beginning of purgatory) as well as the punishment of the grave. Whoever fasts two days from the last days of this month will obtain the permission of crossing the 'bridge' (with ease) due to it. Whoever fasts three days from the last days of this month will be safe and protected from the circumstances and severities of the day of the Great Fright (i.e., the day of judgement), and he will be granted immunity from hell fire."

As for those who cannot fast, it is transmitted that they should glorify Allah every day a hundred times with the following glorification (*al-tasbiḥ*) so that they may partake of the rewards applicable to fasting:

سبحان الاله الجليل سبحان من لا ينبغي التسبيح الا له سبحان الأعز الاكرم سبحان من لبس العز و هو له اهل

Subhanal-ilahi al-jalil, Subhana man la yanbaghi al-tasbiḥu illa lahu, Subhanal a'azzi al-akram,

Subhana man labisa al-ʿizza wa huwa lahu ahlun

(Translation): Glory be to the Exalted Sublime Deity. Glory be to the One, none other than whom is worthy of glorification. Glory be to the Most Mighty and Most Generous. Glory be to Him who has donned the attire of Dignity and He is most worthy of it.

The Famous Supplication of the Month of Rajab

Seyyid Ibn Tawus (d. 664 AH / 1265 AD) relates from Muhammad b. Dhakwan, who was well known by the title of *'al-Sajjad'*, (i.e. one who prostrates exceedingly). He was famously known by this title because he used to prostrate and weep a lot during prostration, till he lost his eyesight!

He relates: 'I said to al-Sadiq (as): "May I be sacrificed for you, this is the month of Rajab, so teach me a supplication for this month by which Allah may grant me benefit." The Imam said "Write: 'In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful', and recite (the following supplication) every day of the month of Rajab, morning and evening, as well as immediately after your daily ritual prayers, in the day time and night time:

يَا مَنْ أَرْجُوهُ لِكُلِّ خَيْرٍ ،

'O One from whom I hope all goodness,

وَأَمِّنُ سَخَطَهُ عِنْدَ كُلِّ شَرٍّ ،

And from whose displeasure I seek safety and security at the moment of (committing) every evil.

يَا مَنْ يُعْطِي الْكَثِيرَ بِالْقَلِيلِ ،

O One who grants abundantly in return for little.

يَا مَنْ يُعْطِي مَنْ سَأَلَهُ ،

O One who grants whoever beseeches Him.

يَا مَنْ يُعْطِي مَنْ لَمْ يَسْأَلْهُ وَ مَنْ لَمْ يَعْرِفْهُ تُحَنُّنًا مِنْهُ وَ رَحْمَةً ،

O One Who grants (even) the one who does not beseech Him and does not know Him, (yet He grants)

in compassion and mercy!

، أُعْطِنِي بِمَسْأَلَتِي إِيَّاكَ جَمِيعَ خَيْرِ الدُّنْيَا

، وَ جَمِيعَ خَيْرِ الْآخِرَةِ

So grant me the totality of the good of this world and that of the hereafter by my seeking You specifically.

، وَ اصْرِفْ عَنِّي بِمَسْأَلَتِي إِيَّاكَ جَمِيعَ شَرِّ الدُّنْيَا وَ شَرِّ الْآخِرَةِ

Turn away from me the totality of the evil of this world and that of the hereafter by my seeking You specifically.

، فَإِنَّهُ غَيْرُ مَنْقُوصٍ مَّا أُعْطِيَتْ

For certainly, there is no defect in what You grant,

وَ زِدْنِي مِنْ فَضْلِكَ يَا كَرِيمٌ

And increase me Your Grace O Generous One.

The narrator said: ‘Then (when the Imam reached this point) he extended his left hand and took hold of his beard and then supplicated with the following supplication while taking recourse to the forefinger of his right hand, and said:

، يَا ذَا الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

‘O the Possessor of Majesty and Honour,

، يَا ذَا النِّعْمَاءِ وَالْجُودِ

O the Possessor of Kindness and Munificence,

، يَا ذَا الْمَنِّ وَالطُّوْلِ

O the possessor of Favours and Power,

حَرِّمْ شَيْبَتِي عَلَى النَّارِ

Bar my grey hair from the fire of hell’.”

¹. Rajab is one of the four months of sanctity during which the Arabs would not fight. The other three months are Muḥarram, Safar and Dhū al-Ḥijja. This pre-Islamic custom was accommodated within Islam with some modifications.

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