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Monthly Acts of Worship

Devotional acts repeated each month are limited because the daily, weekly, yearly course of devotional acts and those dedicated to the various anniversaries and occasions are distributed among the months of the year. Nonetheless, some devotional acts are reported as recommended every month at regular intervals.

Prayer on the First Day of the Month

There is a special prayer, with special acts offered on the first day of each month. Some religious scholars¹ used to offer this prayer on a regular basis and pay special attention to it. According to the report of Shaykh al-Tusi—in his book of *Misbah al-Mutahajjid* and through a chain of authority, which has been determined to be authentic by some scholars, such as al-Wahid al-Bahbahani—Imam al-Jawad (‘a) has said:

*At the beginning of each month and on the first day, a two-unit prayer may be offered. In the first unit, Surah al-Fatihah is recited once and Surah al-Tawhid repeated thirty times. In the second, Surah al-Fatihah is recited once and Surah al-Qadr repeated thirty times. After completing it, alms should be given. One who does so will gain safety throughout that month.*²

Sayyid Ibn Tawus has reported, without mentioning the chain of authority, another two-unit prayer. In each unit of this prayer *Surah al-Fatihah* and *Surah al-An’am* (No. 6) are recited once, to be offered on the eve of the first day of each month.

Three-Day Fasting Each Month

As maintained by numerous traditions, one of the highly recommended acts performed by the Holy Prophet (S) persistently up to the end of his blessed lifetime was to fast on three days each month.

In his book of *man-la-yahdhuruhu’l-faqih*, Shaykh al-Saduq has reported through a valid chain of

authority that Imam al-Sadiq ('a) said:

*The Holy Prophet (S) observed fasting for such a long time that people thought that he would not break his fast. He then broke his fast for such a long time that they thought that he would never fast anymore. He then followed the practice of Prophet David ('a) in fasting; that is, he fasted once every two days. Until he departed life, he used to regularly fast for three days every month. About this method of fasting, he said, "Fasting on these three days is equal (in reward) to fasting for one's whole lifetime and it removes satanic insinuation."... He used to fast on the first Thursday of every month, the first Wednesday after ten days of the same month, and on the last Thursday.*³

According to another validly reported tradition, Imam al-Sadiq ('a), commenting on this issue, has said:

*My father used to say, "None is more hated by Almighty Allah than one who, when informed about what the Holy Prophet (S) did, says, 'Almighty Allah will not torture me if I do not show painstakingness in praying and fasting,' thinking that because he himself failed to do certain supererogatory acts the Holy Prophet (S) omitted doing them as well."*⁴

In his book of *al-Muqni'ah*, Shaykh al-Mufid reported the Holy Prophet (S) to have said:

"When the deeds of my people were shown before me, I found defects and flaws in the majority of them. I therefore added to each obligatory prayer a supererogatory one whose units are twice as many the units of the obligatory so that the obligatory prayer of one who offers the supererogatory will be accepted. Verily, Almighty Allah is too Merciful to refuse, even the third of a deed, which one of His servants does for His sake.

Thus, Almighty Allah has imposed upon you the offering of seventeen units of prayer every day and night, but the Holy Prophet (S) added thirty-four units. Likewise, Almighty Allah imposed fasting during the month of Ramadhan every year, but the Holy Prophet (S) made it sixty days in a year so as to perfect the duty of fasting. He therefore made it a tradition to fast three days every month; the first and last Thursdays of the month, and the Wednesday in the middle of the month.⁵

According to other traditions, this is the most important fasting especially for those who are unable to fast in Ramadhan, being too weary to fast on those days. Permission has been given to delay the fasting of these days to winter or any other appropriate days. Moreover, other traditions have allowed making up the fasting of these days at other times or replacing them with alms that may be given as half a bushel of food for each day.

Other traditions recommend fasting on the so-called white days of each month: the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth.

^{1.} – The supreme religious authority, Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim, used to offer this prayer regularly.

^{2.} – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah* 5:286.

^{3.} – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, *Wasa'il al-Shi'ah* 7:303, H. 1.

4. – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 7:305, H. 5.

From this tradition and others like it we can infer the accuracy of the course of equilibrium and moderation in acts of worship and the inaccuracy of the course of extremism and overdoing.

5. – As is maintained by some other traditions, the sixty-day fasting is completed by the recommended fasting during the month of Sha`ban.

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