



The superstitions related to the month of Safar and the clarification of misconceptions in the light of Islamic teachings.

[An analytical study in the light of Qur'an and Sunnah]

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Abstract: The present article is a research-based effort to shed light on those self-fabricated suspicions and baseless superstitions that have not only polluted the general social atmosphere but have also clouded Islamic consciousness. These misconceptions are not limited to Eastern societies alone; even the seemingly educated Western world is not entirely free from such superstitious beliefs. Many religions and nations across the world fall prey to such delusions. However, the point that particularly demands our attention is: why has the Islamic society itself become afflicted with this intellectual illness? In some places, it is believed that if a black cat crosses one's path, it is a sign of bad luck. Some people declare the month of Safar to be a time of calamities, illnesses, and unforeseen misfortunes, advising against weddings or celebrations during this period. Initiating new ventures in Safar is also deemed undesirable. However, all these beliefs are mere superstitions and delusions, having no basis in the Qur'an or the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (a). Therefore, it is essential that we critically examine these baseless superstitions—particularly the rumors spread about the month of Safar—and establish a clear distinction between truth and falsehood in the light of Islam's clear and firm teachings. This awareness will guide us out of the darkness of superstitions and into the light of trust in Allah, certainty, and spiritual understanding. Now, let us examine the reality of these superstitions and the meaningless, baseless notions associated with Safar al-Muzaffar in the light of Islamic teachings.

Keywords: Safar, Islamization, Truth, Guidance, Society.

INTRODUCTION:

The second month of the Islamic calendar is called **Şafar al-Muzaffar**. While Islamic law indeed accords certain months and days a degree of virtue and honor—with specific acts of worship and blessings associated with them—nowhere in

Islamic teachings is there any notion that a particular month or day is inherently inauspicious or a symbol of calamities and misfortunes.

Before delving into a scholarly analysis of the positive or negative perceptions surrounding this month in the light of the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions, it is appropriate to first consider the etymology and historical significance of the month of **Şafar**, as its linguistic and historical roots can help us reach a clearer understanding of the truth.

It is, therefore, imperative that we seriously examine the baseless superstitions and rumors particularly associated with the month of Şafar, and, in the light of Islam's clear and firm teachings, establish a clear distinction between truth and falsehood. This awareness will lead us out of the darkness of irrational beliefs and into the light of trust in Allah, certainty, and spiritual insight. Now, let us examine the reality of the superstitions prevalent among people and the meaningless, unfounded notions connected to **Şafar al-Muzaffar** in the light of Islamic teachings.

THE ETYMOLOGY OF THE MONTH OF ŞAFAR AND THE VIEWS OF LEXICOGRAPHERS:

The Word "Şafar"—Its Linguistic Roots and the Opinions of Lexicographers:

The word "*Şafar*" (صفر) is of Arabic origin and is composed of three letters: Şād (ص), Fā (ف), and Rā (ر). Arabic, being a vast and rich language, often attributes multiple meanings and nuances to a single word. Lexicographers have mentioned various interpretations of the word *Şafar*, one of which is "to be empty". Based on this, several explanations have been given for why this month came to be called *Şafar*. Here are a few of them:

1. Vacant Homes During Travel and War:

It was a common practice among the Arabs that, with the onset of the month of Şafar, they would set out from their homes for travel and warfare. As a result, their homes would be left empty. This is reflected in the phrase "*Şafara al-makān*" (صَفَرَ الْمَكَانَ), meaning "the place became empty."⁽¹⁾

2. Explanation by Ibn Manẓūr al-Afrīqī:

Ibn Manẓūr explains in *Lisān al-‘Arab*:

سموا الشهر صفرا لأنهم كانوا يغزون فيه القبائل فيتركون من لقوا صفرا من المتاع.

"They named the month Şafar because they used to raid other tribes during it, leaving those they encountered empty-handed of possessions."⁽²⁾

Travel to the Town of Şafriyya:

(1) Abu Al-fida Ismail b. Umar, *Tafseer al-Quran*, (Dar al-fikr, Beirut, 1401.AH), Vol.2, p. 355

(2) Muhammad b. Mukarram, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, (Dār Şādir, Beirut, Lebanon). Vol. 4, p. 463

During this month, the Arabs would travel to a place called *Şafriyya* to collect food and provisions, which would leave their homes empty.⁽³⁾ Some linguists believe that during this month, the people of Makkah would leave the city in search of livelihood and to fulfill basic human needs, leaving Makkah nearly deserted.

3. Pre-Islamic Arabs used to revere four sacred months and avoided all forms of bloodshed, looting, and warfare during these periods. One of these sacred months was Muḥarram al-Ḥarām. As soon as Muḥarram came to an end, they would set out from their homes to engage in battles with rival tribes. Due to this practice, the following month was named **Şafar**, signifying the time when people departed for war.

4. Imām Ibn Manẓūr al-Afrīqī writes regarding the month of Şafar:

وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: إِنَّمَا سُمِّيَ صَفَرًا لِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَمْتَارُونَ الطَّعَامَ فِيهِ مِنَ الْمَوَاضِعِ، وَقَالَ بَعْضُهُمْ: سُمِّيَ بِذَلِكَ لِإِصْفَارِ مَكَّةَ.

“Some have said that the month was named Şafar because during it the Arabs would gather food supplies from different places. Others stated that it was called Şafar because Makkah would become empty during this month.”⁽⁴⁾

5. Imām Ibn Kathīr writes about Şafar:

وَصَفَرٌ: سُمِّيَ بِذَلِكَ لِحُلُولِ بَيْتِهِمْ مِنْهُمْ حِينَ يَخْرُجُونَ لِلْقِتَالِ وَالْأَسْفَارِ يُقَالُ **صَفَرَ** الْمَكَانَ إِذَا خَلَا.

“The month was named Şafar because when the Arabs would depart for wars and various journeys, their homes would become vacant. It is said: ‘Şafara al-makān’—when a place becomes empty.”⁽⁵⁾

Those Who Reject Superstition and Will Enter Paradise Without Reckoning:

Placing trust in Allah Almighty is a hallmark of a true believer and a sign of strong faith. A believer’s heart always relies on their Lord, regardless of circumstances, knowing well that all decisions lie in Allah’s hands and that every occurrence carries divine wisdom. Trust in Allah does not mean abandoning effort; rather, it means making one’s utmost effort and then leaving the outcome to Allah, with firm conviction that He is the best of planners. The Holy Qur’an states:

﴿وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

(3) Badr Al-din Mahmood b. Ahmad, Umdat al-Qārī, (Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, Beirut). Vol. 9, p. 200

(4) Muhammad b. Mukarram, Lisān al-‘Arab, (Dār Şādir, Beirut, Lebanon). Vol. 4, p. 462

(5) Abu Al-fida Ismail b. Umar, Tafseer al-Quran, (Dar al-fikr, Beirut, 1401.AH), Vol.2, p. 355

“And in Allah let the believers put their trust”⁽⁶⁾

Such trust grants the believer inner peace, keeps them steadfast in trials, and leads them on the path of success in both this world and the Hereafter.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said regarding those who place their trust in Allah:

"I was informed about my Ummah that this is your nation, and among them are seventy thousand people who will enter Paradise without any reckoning or punishment." *The Prophet ﷺ further said:* "I asked, what is it about them that they will enter Paradise without reckoning or punishment?" *Jibreel (Gabriel) replied:*

كَانُوا لَا يَكْتُمُونَ وَلَا يَسْتَرْفُونَ وَلَا يَتَطَيَّرُونَ وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ.

"They neither cauterize themselves, nor seek (unlawful) spiritual healing, nor consider anything as a bad omen, and they place their trust in their Lord."⁽⁷⁾

This Hadith highlights the qualities of those who will enter Paradise without any accountability. Among their notable traits is that they do not believe in omens, and they possess complete and unwavering trust (tawakkul) in their Lord.

Belief in bad omens is minor shirk (shirk-e-asghar):

Belief in bad omens is considered minor shirk (shirk-e-asghar) in Islam because it reflects a lack of trust in Allah's divine will and power. When a person associates misfortune with certain events, objects, or creatures—such as considering a black cat, a particular number, or a day as unlucky—they attribute influence to something other than Allah. This contradicts the core Islamic belief that all good and harm come solely from Allah. The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ strongly condemned such superstitions and clarified that relying on omens is a form of shirk, as it places dependence on created things instead of the Creator. True faith requires the believer to reject these baseless fears and place complete trust in Allah alone.

Believing something to be a source of misfortune (bad omen) is strictly prohibited in Islamic law. It is narrated by Sayyiduna Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

الْطَّيْرَةُ شِرْكٌ، الْطَّيْرَةُ شِرْكٌ.

“Considering something to be a bad omen is shirk. Considering something to be a bad omen is shirk.”⁽⁸⁾

In the commentary of this ḥadīth, the renowned scholar Maulana ‘Abdur-Rahmān Mubārakpūrī, the commentator of Jāmi‘ at-Tirmidhī, writes:

(6) Al-Qur'an 14:11.

(7) Muhammad b. Ismail Al-bukhari, Al-sahih, (Dar ibn kathir, Yamamah, 1987), vol. 5, p. 2375, Hadith no. 6107)

(8) Ahmad b. Hanbal, Al-musnad, vol.1, p.389, Hadith No: 3687, Abu Dawood, Al-sunan, Vol.4, P. 14, Hadith No: 3910, Ibn Maajah, Al-sunan, Vol: 2, p: 1170, Hadith No: 3538, Abu Ya'la, Al-musnad, Vol. 9, P.140

أي لاعتقادهم أن الطيرة تجلب لهم نفعاً أو تدفع عنهم ضراً فإذا عملوا بموجبها فكأنهم أشركوا بالله في ذلك ويسمى شركاً خفياً.

“The Prophet’s ﷺ statement “Believing in bad omens is shirk” means that people used to hold the belief that taking a bad omen—i.e., considering something to be unlucky—could bring benefit or avert harm. When they acted upon such a belief, it was as if they had committed hidden shirk (shirk al-khafī) with Allah. Some scholars further explain that if a person believes that anything other than Allah has the independent power to benefit or harm, then such a belief constitutes major shirk (shirk al-akbar).”⁽⁹⁾

On the same subject, Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal narrates in his book “Al-Musnad” from ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Amr (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

مَنْ رَدَّتْهُ الطَّيْرَةُ مِنْ حَاجَةٍ فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ قَالُوا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَا كَفَّارَةُ ذَلِكَ قَالَ أَنْ يَقُولَ
أَحَدُهُمُ اللَّهُمَّ لَا خَيْرَ إِلَّا خَيْرُكَ وَلَا طَيْرَ إِلَّا طَيْرُكَ وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ.

"Whoever refrains from doing something out of fear of a bad omen has certainly committed (minor) shirk." The Companions (may Allah be pleased with them) asked, "O Messenger of Allah! What is the expiation for that?" The Prophet ﷺ replied, "He should say: O Allah! All goodness is from You, all omens are from You, and there is no deity except You."⁽¹⁰⁾

Therefore, considering the month of Ṣafar as inauspicious, avoiding weddings during this month due to superstition, deliberately breaking clay utensils, organizing processions on the last Wednesday of Ṣafar, holding large gatherings with the distribution of specific foods and sweets, and performing rituals like *Choori* — all of these practices are invalid and fall under acts of shirk (polytheism) according to the aforementioned ahadith, and must be strictly avoided.

In the Holy Qur’an, Allah Almighty says:

﴿مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ﴾

No calamity occurs in the earth or in your lives but it is in a Book (*al-Lawḥ al-Maʿfūḥ*), the station of Allah’s pre-eternal knowledge,) before We make it happen. Surely, this (all-encompassing and perfect knowledge) is very easy for Allah.⁽¹¹⁾

Similarly, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said regarding tawakkul (trust in Allah):

(9) Abdul Rehman Mubarakpuri, Tuhfah al-Ahwadhi, (Dar al-kutob al-ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon), Vol.5, p.197

(10) Ahmad b. Hanbal, al-musnad, vol.2, p.220, Hadith No: 7045

(11) Al-Quran, 57/22

وَأَعْلَمُ أَنَّ الْأُمَّةَ اجْتَمَعَتْ عَلَى أَنْ يَنْفَعُوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَنْفَعُوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ
لَكَ وَإِنْ اجْتَمَعُوا عَلَى أَنْ يَضُرُّوكَ بِشَيْءٍ لَمْ يَضُرُّوكَ إِلَّا بِشَيْءٍ قَدْ كَتَبَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ.

“And remember that if all the people gather to benefit you, they will not be able to benefit you except that which Allah had foreordained (for you); and if all of them gather to do harm to you, they will not be able to afflict you with anything other than that which Allah had pre-destined against you. The pens had been lifted and the ink had dried up”.⁽¹²⁾

Refutation of Considering the Month of Ṣafar as Inauspicious:

Certain customs and innovations (bid‘āt) have become widespread among people regarding the month of Ṣafar al-Muzaffar, which have no basis in reality. These are practices that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ himself refuted. It is narrated by Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

لَا عَدْوَى وَلَا طِيْرَةٌ وَلَا هَامَةٌ وَلَا صَفَرٌ.

“(There is) no 'Adwa (no contagious disease is conveyed without Allah's permission). nor is there any bad omen (from birds), nor is there any Hamah, nor is there any bad omen in the month of Safar”⁽¹³⁾

Imām Ibn al-Qayyim, while commenting on this ḥadīth (“*Lā Ṣafar*”), states:

“Both interpretations—negation and prohibition—can be correct; however, the interpretation of **negation** carries more rhetorical strength. This is because negation refutes both the concept of *ṭiyarah* (belief in bad omens) and its supposed effects, whereas prohibition only implies a command to avoid it. This ḥadīth aims to invalidate all such beliefs and practices that the people of jāhiliyyah (pre-Islamic ignorance) used to follow.”

Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī says:

“This ḥadīth prohibits considering the month of Ṣafar as inauspicious. Believing Ṣafar to be unlucky is one form of *ṭiyarah* (bad omen). Likewise, the polytheists’ belief that Wednesdays during this month were particularly unlucky is also entirely baseless.”

Imām Abū Dāwūd Muḥammad ibn Rāshid adds:

“The people of jāhiliyyah—that is, the polytheists—used to believe that the month of Ṣafar was unlucky. Thus, the ḥadīth ‘*Lā Ṣafar*’ was revealed to refute their belief and their claim.”

Ṣafar al-Muzaffar and the Misconceptions of the Age of Ignorance:

(12) Abu Isa Muhammad b. Isa Tirmidhi, al-sunan, (Dar Ihya al-turath alrabi, Beirut, Lebanon), vol.4, p.667, Hadith No: 2516

(13) Bukhari, al-sahih, vol.5, p. 2158, Hadith No. 5380

The people of the Age of Ignorance (Jāhiliyyah) considered the month of **Şafar** to be a symbol of misfortune. In their view, it was an unsuitable time for travel, marriage, forming relationships, or undertaking any important task. Since warfare was prohibited during the month of **Muḥarram**, the tribes would remain in a state of peace. However, as soon as the sun of **Şafar** rose, swords would be unsheathed, bloodshed would begin, and this violent atmosphere gave the month a reputation of bad luck. This ignorance-based mindset associated the month with evil omens merely due to its bloody historical background.

Shaykh ‘Alī al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī, in his book *Al-Mashhūr fī Asmā’ al-Ayyām wa al-Shuhūr*, wrote about the month of Şafar:

“The reason it was named Şafar is that, during this month, Arab homes would often be empty, as people would leave for war and travel. When homes became vacant, the Arabs would say: ‘Şafara al-makān’ — meaning, the place has become empty.”

In conclusion, even in today's educated society, many people continue to fall prey to superstitions about the month of **Şafar**, due to ignorance and a lack of connection with true Islamic teachings. This is a direct continuation of ancient pre-Islamic ignorance, and despite the passage of centuries, such baseless beliefs persist among the general public just as they did in the days of jāhiliyyah.

MODERN PERSPECTIVES ON THE MONTH OF ŞAFAR:

A segment of Muslims in the Indian subcontinent considers the month of **Şafar** to be inauspicious. Superstitious people regard getting married during this month as a source of misfortune. Even today, many take bad omens from this month and consider it devoid of blessings. They refrain from starting any new venture, such as launching a business, or even sending daughters off in marriage during this time. There are many such actions people avoid, believing that anything initiated in this month will bring misfortune and lack blessings.

However, Allah Almighty is the Creator of all months and years, days and nights, and every moment of time. Nowhere has Allah declared any day, month, or hour to be inherently unlucky. In reality, such superstitious ideas have entered the Muslim mindset through non-Muslim cultures and the polytheistic traditions of pre-Islamic societies. For example, among Hindus, before a marriage is arranged, the day and time are determined by consulting a *pandit* (priest). If he selects a specific time, even as odd as 12:30 a.m., the wedding is held at that exact time, and doing it earlier or later is considered inauspicious. Unfortunately, these corrupted ideas have crept into Muslim communities as well.

The belief that the early days of Şafar are unlucky is pure ignorance. The radiant teachings of Islam are completely free from such superstitions. In Islam, there is no concept of any time being inherently inauspicious. To declare a day or month as unlucky is, in effect, to find fault with the divine system of time created by Allah — a system made up of days and nights. The Prophet ﷺ firmly forbade such thinking with clear words.

Abu Huraira reported that God's messenger declared that God said:

يُؤْذِنِي ابْنُ آدَمَ يَسُبُّ الدَّهْرَ وَأَنَا الدَّهْرُ، بِيَدِي الْأُمُرُ، أَقْلِبُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ.

"The son of Adam injures me by abusing time, whereas I am time. Authority is in my hand. I vary night and day."⁽¹⁴⁾

This ḥadīth teaches us that day and night are created by Allah Almighty, and to label any of them as faulty or inauspicious is, in reality, finding fault in the perfect craftsmanship of the Creator and Master.

REALITY LOST IN SUPERSTITION:

Indeed, Islam is a comprehensive, perfect, and divine system of life — pure and free from all false beliefs, ignorant ideas, and self-invented doctrines. The foundation of this faith is laid upon strong evidence, and its teachings and commandments have reached the pinnacle of completeness and perfection. In this enlightened religion, there is no room or pathway for superstitions.

Yet alas! How regretful it is that some ignorant individuals have tried — in vain — to pollute the pure stream of this sacred religion with their false ideologies and misleading superstitions, aiming to plunge innocent people into the darkness of ignorance.

Among such fabricated beliefs, a prominent example is the widespread ignorant customs and baseless notions associated with the month of **Ṣafar**, which, with the arrival of this month each year, take form in strange rituals and superstitious practices.

In reality, **Ṣafar** is simply the second month of the Islamic calendar. Some wise scholars have even referred to it as **Ṣafar al-Muẓaffar** (the victorious Ṣafar), in an effort to clear away the dust of misconceptions and reveal its true essence — so that people may be shown the face of truth and be freed from the chains of false traditions.

Conclusion:

The idea that the Islamic month of **Ṣafar** is unlucky is a baseless superstition with no foundation in the Qur'an or Sunnah. The article highlights that various cultures, including parts of the Muslim world, have attached negative connotations to this month — associating it with misfortune, illness, and calamities. Practices such as avoiding marriages, new ventures, or celebrations during Ṣafar stem from cultural myths rather than authentic Islamic teachings.

Islam, being a complete and divine system of life, does not allow room for such superstitions. The Islamic calendar does honor some months with special virtues, but **no** day or month is inherently cursed or inauspicious. Every moment of time is a creation of Allah, and labeling any part of it as unlucky is a form of disrespect to the Creator's design. The article urges believers to distinguish truth from falsehood in light of the Qur'an and Prophetic guidance, and to reject irrational beliefs that

(14) Bukhari, al-sahih, vol.4, p. 1825, Hadith No. 4549, Muslim, al-sahih, vol.4, p.1762, Abu Dawood, al-sunan, vol.4, p.369

cloud spiritual understanding. It calls for a return to faith, trust in Allah, and clarity through Islamic knowledge — especially in addressing misconceptions around Şafar.
