

The 15th night of Sha'baan

الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلوة والسلام على أفضل رسله وخاتم أنبيائه محمد الصادق الأمين المبعوث إلى الأحمر والأسود أجمعين وعلى آله وصحبه حملة لواء الدين وعلى من تبعهم بأحسان من الأئمة والهداة والدعاة والأتقياء والصالحين وعلى كل من سلك سبيلهم إلى يوم الدين أما بعد

As the blessed month of Sha'baan has entered, with it comes the annual debate regarding the 15th night of Sha'baan, also known as 'Laylat-ul-Barah, or Shabe Barat'.

The controversy is categorized in three categories.

1. Those who deny the virtue of the night completely
2. Those who give it precedence near to The Night of Power.
3. Those who believe in its virtue but do not consider it in similarity to The Night of Power.

It must be understood that all that is considered *deen* must originate from the core sources of Qur'an, *Sunnah*, and the 'Amal of the Sahaba (companions) of the Prophet ﷺ, if it is not found in the above sources then it does not constitute to *deen*, rather it is referred as *bid'ah* (innovation) in *deen*.

The 15th night of Sha'baan has been mentioned in a narration by Imam Tirmidhi from Sayyidatina Ayesha the wife of the Prophet ﷺ who says:

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت فقدت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ليلة فخرجت فإذا هو بالبقيع فقال
أكنت تخافين أن يحيف الله عليك ورسوله
قلت يا رسول الله إني ظننت أنك أتيت بعض نساءك فقال إن الله عز وجل ينزل ليلة النصف من شعبان إلى
السماء الدنيا

فيغفر لأكثر من عدد شعر غنم كلب (رواه الإمام الترمذي في جامعه حديث عائشة لا نعرفه إلا من هذا الوجه من حديث الحجاج وسمعت محمدا يقول يضعف هذا الحديث)

"I woke up one night and did not find Rasulullah ﷺ I went outside and found him in baqi (cemetery in Madinah). He said to me "Did you fear that Allah and his Prophet ﷺ would oppress you?" I replied O Messenger of Allah I thought you had gone to one your other wives." He then said to me "Allah descends to the lowest heaven on the 15th night of Sha'baan and forgives more people than the number of hair on the goats of the tribe of Banu Kalb".¹

Imam Tirmidhi has mentioned that the chain of narration is weak. He also mentions another similar Hadith by Abu-Bakr Siddique companion of the Prophet ﷺ, but does not elaborate on it.

Narration of Abu-Bakr Siddique is reliable

The narration of Abu-Bakr Siddique has been mentioned by Bazzar and Bayhaqui with the chain of narration as accepted. The hadith is as follows:

عن أبي بكر الصديق رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول ﷺ إذا كانت ليلة النصف من شعبان ينزل الله تبارك وتعالى الى سماء الدنيا فيغفر لعباده الا ما كان من مشرك أو مشاحن لأخيه (رواه الهيثمي في مجمعهم والبخاري والبيهقي) قال الأمام المنذري روى البخاري والبيهقي من حديث أبي بكر الصديق بإسناد لا بأس به.

Abu-Bakr Siddique رضي الله عنه narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ said:

On the fifteenth night of Sha'baan Allah descends to the lowest heaven. He thereafter forgives everyone, besides an idolater and one who harbours enmity towards others.

Similar hadith have been narrated Abdullah bin 'Amr, Mu'adh bin Jabl, Abu Musa Al-Ash'ary, Abu Hurairah, Auf bin Malik, Kathir bin Murrah and Abu Thalaba Al-Khashani رضي الله عنهم أجمعين

The following two hadith have been categorized as Saheeh:

Abu Thalaba Al-Khasani narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ said:

عن أبي ثعلبة الخشني رضي الله عنه إن الله تعالى يغفر ليلة النصف من شعبان للمسلمين ويملي للكافرين ويدع أهل الحقد بحقدهم (حتى يدعوه) رواه علي المتقي في كنز العمال

“On the fifteenth night of Sha'baan Allah descends to the lowest heaven. He thereafter forgives everyone, gives leave to the disbeliever's, besides an idolater and one who harbours enmity in their malevolence until they do not abandon it.”

حديث معاذ بن جبل رضي الله عنه وهو عند ابن حبان في صحيحه يقول ﷺ ((يطلع الله إلى جميع خلقه ليلة النصف من شعبان فيغفر لجميع خلقه إلا لمشرك أو مشاحن))

The narration Mu'adh bin Jabl narrated by Ibn Hibban in his Saheeh.

On the fifteenth night of Sha'baan Allah descends to the lowest heaven. He thereafter forgives everyone, besides an idolater and one who harbours enmity towards others.

There is another slightly differed narration by Prophet ﷺ who says:

يا عائشة! أكنت تخافين أن يحيف الله عليك ورسوله؟ بل أتاني جبرئيل فقال: هذه الليلة ليلة النصف من شعبان والله فيها عتقاء فيها من النار بعدد شعور غنم كلب لا ينظر الله فيها إلى مشرك ولا إلى مشاحن ولا إلى قاطع رحم ولا إلى مسبل ولا إلى عاق لوالديه ولا إلى مدمن خمر (كذا في الترغيب وكنز العمال)

O Ayesha! “Did you fear that Allah and his Prophet ﷺ would oppress you?” Jibraiel came to inform me and said “This night tonight is the 15th of Sha’baan, tonight Allah frees from hellfire people equivalent to hairs of the goats of Banu Kalb. Allah does not show his mercy to the idolater, one who harbours enmity, nor to the one who breaks blood ties, nor the one who hangs his lower garment below the ankles, nor to the disobedient of his parents and the obstinate on wine (alcoholic drinks).” (Al-Baihaqee)

The narration of Uthman bin Abil Aas from the Prophet ﷺ is as follows:

عن عثمان بن أبي العاص رضي الله عنه عن النبي قال إذا كان ليلة النصف من شعبان نادى مناد: هل من مستغفر فأغفر له هل سائل فأعطيه فلا يسئل أحد شيئاً إلا أعطي إلا زانية بفرجها أو مشرك (رواه البيهقي في شعب الإيمان كذا في الكنز)

“On the fifteenth night of Sha’baan, Allah descends to the nearest heaven. Thereafter a announcer proclaims; is there anyone who seeks forgiveness so that I may forgive him? Is there anyone who desires anything that I may grant him his desire? Allah fulfills the request of all except the adulteress and a mushrik (polytheist).

The above narrations are reliable according to Muhadditheen to the acceptability on the excellence of the fifteenth night of Sha’baan , even **Imam Ibn Taymiyyah** and **Sheikh Albani** who are notorious for refuting such things have accepted the virtue of the night of the 15th of Sha’baan.

Hafiz Abd-ul-Rahman Mubarakpuri the commentator on the Sahih of Tirmidhi Tuhfat-ul-Ahwadhi, has said regarding writes:

“there exist numerous traditions regarding the excellence of the 15th night of Sha’baan, which supports its significance such as the hadith of Sayyidatina Ayesha the wife of the Prophet ﷺ Abdullah bin ‘Amr, Mu’adh bin Jabl, Abu Musa Al-Ash’ary, Abu Hurairah, Auf bin Malik, Kathir bin Murrah and Abu Thalaba Al-Khashani رضي الله عنهم أجمعين . The overall number of Ahadith regarding this night serves as proof against those people who refute the excellence of this night.”

Fast of the 15th of Sha'ban is bida'h (an innovation)

The narration of Sayyidina Ali bin Abu Talib regarding the fast of the fifteenth day of Sha'baan has been refuted and rejected by the Muhadditheen and Fuqahaa. The chain of narration mentions Abu Bakr bin Abi Sabrah who is known to fabricate hadith. Imam Ahmed bin Habal, Imam Bukhari, Imam Yahya bin Muin, Imam Nasai, Ibn Hibban all have considered him as a fabricator and a liar.

روي عن علي رضي الله عنه عن النبي ﷺ قال: "إذا كانت ليلة النصف من شعبان فقوموا ليلها وصوموا يومها فإن الله تبارك وتعالى نزل فيها لغروب الشمس إلى السماء الدنيا فيقول ألا من مستغر فأغفر له ألا من مستزق فأرزقه ألا من مبتلى فأعافيه ألا كذا ألا كذا؟ حتى يطلع الفجر (رواه ابن ماجه، كذا في الترغيب وكنز العمال)

Sayyidina Ali bin Abu Talib narrates from the Prophet ﷺ as follows:

“When the fifteenth night of Sha'baan comes, then spend this night in qiyam Salaat and the day in fasting, for Allah descends on the first heaven and this descending is commences at sunset. Allah announces: is there anyone who seeks forgiveness so that he may be forgiven? Is there anyone who seeks sustenance so that he may be provided with sustenance? Is there anyone who has been stricken with misfortune so that I may relieve him? Many other similar proclamations are made. This continues till dawn.”

The fast regarding the day of the fifteenth of Sha'baan is only mentioned in the narration of Sayyidina Ali bin Abu Talib and the scholars have refuted it because of Abu Bakr bin Abi Sabrah, whom they all agree is a fabricator of hadith.

Conclusion

The night of fifteenth of Sha'baan is virtuous, staying awake and worshipping Allah, seeking his forgiveness, seeking his sustenance and praying for the deceased is according to the Sunnah of The Prophet ﷺ. There is no prescribed way or number of prayers to be performed except the dua which Sayyidatina Ayesha the wife of the Prophet ﷺ heard him say in his sujud:

اعوذ بعفوك من عقابك وأعوذ برضاك من سخطك وأعوذ بك منك إليك لا أحصي ثناء عليك أنت كما أثنيت على نفسك (كذا في الترغيب)

O Allah! I seek your refuge from your chastisement to your clemency, I seek your refuge from your anger to your pleasure, and I seek your refuge from your (anger). I cannot praise you as you are to be praised. You are as glorified as you have praised yourself.

The fast of the 15th day of Sha'baan is not preferred unless an individual has been fasting throughout the month of Sha'baan.

There is no specific type of prayers or worship e.g. one hundred raka't of salaah, in each raka't to recite Al-Ikhlaas 11 times is an innovation and not from the sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ as has been mentioned by Muhaddith Allamah Muhammad Tahir Patani in his Tadhkirat ul Mawdhua't, he further states;

“This salaah of the 15th night of Sha'baan has originated from Al-Quds Jerusalem 448 years after the hijrah of the Prophet ﷺ and the lighting of candles and lights on this night have originated from the Baramika who prior to Islam worshipped fire.”

One should take maximum benefit of the night and do *ibadah* worship of Allah according to the sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and be observant of that which is contradictory to sunnah.

Those who are zealots and devotees of Imam Ibn Taymiyyah and Sheikh Albani refute that *hadith daif* has no value in sharia'h and deny that scholars have allowed *hadith daif* in righteous deeds when the weakness is not severe are actually in contradiction to the view of the *Muhadditheen* and scholars. Above it has been mentioned that both Imam Ibn Taymiyyah and Sheikh Albani have accepted the significance of the night.

Prepared by Imam Mohammed Zakaria

Islamic School of Miami
