



مفتى محمد يوسف دُنكا
Mufti Muhammad Yusuf Danka

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله حمد الشاكرين، والصلاة والسلام على المبعوث رحمة للعالمين، وهدايا للناس أجمعين.
صلاةً وسلاماً دائمين إلى يوم الدين، وآله وصحبه ومن تبعهم بإحسان، وسلم تسليماً كثيراً، أما بعد:..

Authentic Virtues of 15th Sha'ban (Lailatul Barat)

عن معاذ بن جبل عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال يطلع الله إلى خلقه في ليلة النصف من شعبان فيغفر لجيع خلقه إلا المشرك أو مشاحن.
- (صحيح ابن حبان، ج7 ص470 - حديث صحيح)

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قال الله تبارك وتعالى : إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ ... (سورة الذَّخَان)

Allah ﷻ says: 'Ha Meem! By the book that makes things clear, we sent it down during a blessed night, for we ever wish to warn against evil. In that night is made distinct every affair of wisdom. By command from us, for we are ever sending Messengers' (s44, v1-5)

In regards to the above Ayat of the Qur'an, A'kramah رحمه الله, some of the Mufasireen and others state that it refers to the night of Lailatul Barat (15th Sha'ban). However, the usual opinion of the Mufariseen is that these verses refer to Laiatul Qadr which falls within the last 10 days of Ramadan on the odd nights, which is directly mentioned by Allah ﷻ in Surah Al-Qadr.

In Ruhul Ma'ani one narration from Ibn Abbas ؓ states: 'Wealth, life and death are written on the night of 15th Sha'ban and passed to the angels on the Night of Power (Lailatul Qadr).' (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, M'ariful Qur'an vol 7, p758)

قال الزرقانى (ج7، ص414): وهذا إن صحَّ يؤيد الجميع المذكور ويعكر على جميع بعضهم أنّ ابتداء ذلك يكون ليلة نصف شعبان وتمامه فى ليلة القدر .

By placing both the above views together, the majority of Mufasireen state: Maybe the 15th Sha'ban is when the wealth, life and death of individuals are written and on the night of Power (Lailatul Qadr) the matter is fulfilled. (Tafsir Uthmani)

وأخرج ابن زنجويه و الديلمى عن أبى هريرة رضى الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: "تقطع الأجال من شعبان إلى شعبان، حتى أنّ الرجل لينكح ويولد له وقد خرج اسمه فى الموتى".

And it is also established through Hadith "Allah ﷻ in this Mubarak night records whatever is destined in the following year for an individual, those who whose life will end before the end of the year, they will be written in the list of the dead."

فأخرج ابن جرير ، وابن المنذر ، وابن أبي حاتم من طريق محمد بن سوقة عن عكرمة (...فيها يُفرقُ كلُّ أمرٍ حكيم) قال: "فى ليلة النصف من شعبان يبرم أمر السنة، وينسخ الأحياء من الأموات، ويكتب الحاج، فلايزاد فيهم ولاينقص منهم أحد".

The 15th Sha'ban (Laitul Barat or Shab-e-Barat) is translated as the 'The Night of Emancipation' (freedom from Hellfire). In this night Allah ﷻ by His special favour forgives the sinners and frees them from the Hellfire.

Due to these narrations there is a continuous respect and reverence found for this night from the time of the Prophet ﷺ to the present day. There are also many Ahadith that relate the actions of the Sahabah and Tabieen ؓ in this night, they would stay awake at night and busy themselves in those deeds found to be from the practice of the Prophet ﷺ and supplicate for their forgiveness and that of the deceased Muslims. It is also proven from the actions of the Salafus-Saliheen that they would prepare for this night a long time beforehand. (Muwahibul Ludania, p248)

The night of the 15th Sha'ban, is a very blessed night, this is proven from the Holy Qur'an and Ahadith. In this night Allah ﷻ turns specially attentive towards His servants and forgives a great deal of them. Allah ﷻ fulfils their supplications for sustenance and a pleasant life in this World and the next. Allah ﷻ fulfils the requests of the callers in this night. Due to the virtues and blessings of this night, we should supplicate for the forgiveness of the Ummah, our beloved ones and ourselves. There are narrations from approximately 17 Companions of the Prophet ﷺ with respect to the blessings of this night.

To be busy in individual Nafil worship and to keep a fast during the day are preferred actions. It is also proven from a Hadith of Aishah ؓ that on one occasion of the occurrence of the night of 15th Sha'ban the RasulAllah ﷺ went to Jannatul Baqi and prayed for the deceased therein.

The Ahadith of the RasulAllah ﷺ:

In respect of this blessed night there are numerous Ahadith in many collections of Hadith, (here are a few we have selected).

عن عائشة 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 ظننت إنك أتيت بعض نساءك فقال أن الله تبارك وتعالى ينزل ليلة النصف من شعبان إلى سماء الدنيا فيغفر لأكثر من عدد شعر غنم كلب - (جامع ترمذى ، باب ماجاء فى ليلة النصف من شعبان ، ص156)

Sayyidah Ummul Mu'mineen Aishah ؓ narrates: 'One night that the RasulAllah ﷺ was staying in my house, i did not find him at home. I left my house in search for him and found him (the Prophet) at Jannatul Baqi (the graveyard of Madinah Munawwarah). The Prophet ﷺ stated: 'Aishah, did you feel that Allah and His Prophet would wrong you?' I (Aishah) then said: 'O! RasulAllah, I thought that you had gone to another of your wives.' He ﷺ said: 'Allah ﷻ turns His special attention towards the 1st Heaven on this night and forgives the number of His servants as much as are the hairs on the sheep of Bani Kalb.' (Jami Tirmidhi, p156)

Kalb was a big tribe the members of which had a very large number of sheep. Therefore, the last sentence of the Hadith indicates the big number of the people who are forgiven in this night by Allah Almighty.

There is a similar narration in Sunan Baihaqi from Aishah ؓ wherein she also relates further: 'The Prophet ﷺ returned home and began to perform Salah. The Prophet ﷺ fell into Sajdah and performed such a long Sajdah that i had feared he had passed away. When I saw this, I moved from my bed and moved his thumb. The thumb moved and I returned to my place. When the Prophet ﷺ had finished Salah he stated: 'Jibrail ؑ came to me and said that tonight is the middle night of Sha'ban (15th) and in this night Allah ﷻ will forgive so many people from the Hellfire, as much as are the hairs on the sheep of Bani Kalb. However, there are certain unfortunate individuals who will not be forgiven, even in this night. Those who join partners with Allah ﷻ, those who have enmity for their brothers, those who break the ties of kith and kin, those men who keep their lower garment below their ankles, those who disobey their parents and those who habitually drink alcohol.' (Sunan Baihaqi/ At-Targeeb, vol2, p232)

From this Hadith, it is proven that together with the performance of Nafl worship, it also shows that the Prophet ﷺ went to the Cemetery.

Mustahab to Keep a Fast the Following Day:

عن على بن أبي طالب قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا كانت ليلة النصف من شعبان فقوموا ليلها وصوموا نهارها فإن الله ينزل فيها لغروب الشمس إلى سماء الدنيا فيقول الا من مستغفر فأغفرله الا من مسترزق فأرزقه الا مبتلى فأعافيه الا كذا الا كذا حتى يطلع الفجر - (أبن ماجه ، باب ماجاء فى ليلة النصف من شعبان ، ص99)

Sayyidina Ali ؓ narrates RasulAllah ﷺ said: 'When the 15th night of Sha'ban comes, on that night busy yourself in worship and keep a fast during the day, for in that night, soon after sunset, the special mercy of Allah descends to the first Heaven and He proclaims, 'Is there any servant of Mine who begs forgiveness from Me that I may forgive him? Is there a servant of Mine who begs sustenance from Me that I may grant him sustenance? Is there a servant of mine in distress who asks for good health and well-being from Me that I may bestow good health and well-being upon him?' In the same manner, Allah ﷻ calls different kinds of needy people to supplicate to Him for their needs at that time so that he may grant their supplications until the daybreak.' (Sunan Ibn Majah, p99/ At-Targeeb, p310)

From the above Hadith the fast of the 15th Sha'ban is mentioned, this Hadith of Sayyidina Ali ؓ is the only narration in respect to performing the Nafl fast. The mention of observing the three Nafl fasts every month on the 13th, 14th and 15th can be found in the books of Sunan Nisai, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, Sahih Ibn Habban etc...there is no objection to these many Saheeh narrations. Thus, the observance of keeping the fast of the 15th of Sha'ban is Mustahab (preferred).

عن عطاء بن يسار قال : "لم يكن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في شهر أكثر صياماً منه في شعبان، وذلك أنه ينسخ فيه آجال من يموت في السنة" - (وأخرج ابن أبي شيبة ، ج3 ص103)

Performance of Specific Worship or Wazaif in this Night?

It is quite correct to say that no specific form of worship has been prescribed for this night. People should perform Ibadat to the best of their capacity and ability; be it in Nafl Salah, Holy Qur'an recitation or Dhikr, Durood and Istigfar. Some people have invented various ways of praying from their own minds. They suggest, without any proof and authority, that so many Rak'ats with such and such verses should be offered. This is all baseless. Nafl Salat that were performed in a congregation in the time of the Prophet ﷺ were Salatul Kusuf (time of eclipse), and Salatul Istiska (for rain), the Sunnat of Salatul Taraweeh, the Jama'at of the two Eids and five Fard Salat in Jama'at other than this is not proven that the Prophet ﷺ would expressly perform Jam'at of any other prayers.

Sheykh ibn Hajar al Makki رحمه الله writes: 'The performance of specific forms of worship, Wazaif and Nafl Salah on the 15th of Sha'ban are a Bid'at which hold no weight in the Shari'ah.' (Tohfatul Mohtaj, vol2, p239)

Imam Nawawi Shafi' رحمه الله writes: 'Certain people stipulate 12 Nafil rakhats should be prayed in this night in a specific manner. There is no basis for this, it nothing but falsehood and Bid'at.' (Sharah Al Muhathab, vol4, p56)

Allamah Ibn Abideen Shami رحمه الله writes: 'The night of the two Eids, the night of 15th Sha'ban, the last 10 days of Ramadhan and the first 10 days of Dhul Hijjah – these are the nights wherein it is recommended to awake at night and perform Nafil worship, it has been given great virtue. However, this does not mean that the masses should congregate in the Masjids and perform Nafil Salah, this is classed as Makruh. (Dure Mukhtar, vol1, p460)

The incorrect views of certain groups on the 15th Night of Sha'ban:

In our age, there are two groups that are divided from the practice and understanding of the time of the RasulAllah ﷺ and Sahabah رضي الله عنهم. One group goes far beyond the narrations found in the Hadith and introduces many innovative sayings and actions to this night, in the form of worship and celebration. In terms, it is regarded as greater than even Laylatul Qadr, considering the performing of Nafil actions as compulsory (Fard).

The 2nd group go to the other extreme of regarding the worship and blessing of this night as worthless and baseless. Whereas, there are many narrations in respect of the greatness and importance of this night, some of which are regarded as Saheeh. According to the principles of Ahadith, even slightly weak narrations can be regarded when there are stronger supporting narrations present in the same context. It will be relevant to mention the narration of Sahih Ibn-e-Habban, which Imam Ibn-e-Habban رحمه الله regarded as worthy of including within his collection of Saheeh.

The Research and Statements of the Muhaditheen in respect of the blessings of the 15th night of Sha'ban:

As has been mentioned above, there are many Ahadith present to clarify the blessing and greatness of the 15th night of Sha'ban. The presence of such a large number of narrations and the practice of the Ummah over the centuries shows the status of this night in the view of the People of Knowledge and the masses. This cannot be ignored, together with the fact that there are narrations from approximately 17 Sahabah Companions of the Prophet ﷺ with respect to the blessings of this night.

From the Muhaditheen of the previous generations; Imam Baihaqi رحمه الله considers the Sanad (chain) of the narrations to be 'Mulsal Jaiyyad' very good. Imam Baihaqi رحمه الله has related the narration of Abu Thalaba, Katheer bin Marrah and Al-A'la bin Harith; who have related from Aishah رضي الله عنها considering them to be very good.

Allamah Ibn Rajab رحمه الله considers these same narrations of the above Hadith to be the best 'Afdhal' أفضل وأتمل. The opinions of Allamah Munthari and Allamah Zurqani رحمه الله are the same as Ibn Rajab رحمه الله.

Allamah Manarwi رحمه الله writes: Faydul Qadeer, vol 2, p317.

وقال المناوي في فيض القدير (ج2، ص317): قال المجد بن تميم: ليلة نصف شعبان روى في فضلها من الأخبار ما يقتضى أنها مفضلة، ومن السلف من خصّها بالصلوة فيها .

Verily, there is no doubt that there are narrations present in respect of this night which are weak. However, there are also narrations in respect of this night which are classed as Saheeh. Shaykhul Hadith Mazahirul Uloom Saharanpur in India, Sheykh Muhammad Yunus Junpuri رحمه الله حفظه writes: 'The reality is that however many Hadith there are in respect of the 15th Sha'ban, if they are taken individually, there is a purpose behind them. From amongst these narrations, those which are weak are not considered to be very weak. If these weak narrations are collected, they have very great strength in supporting each other.' (Al Yawaqitul Ghaliya Fil Ahadithil A'liyah, vol2, p316)

وقال الشيخ العلامة المحقق محمد يونس جونبوري حفظه الله في اليواقيت الغالية في تحقيق وتخريج الأحاديث العالية . (ج2/ص316)

عن معاذ بن جبل عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال يطلع الله إلى خلقه في ليلة النصف من شعبان فيغفر لجميع خلقه إلا المشرك أو مشاحن. – (صحيح ابن حبان، ج7 ص470 - حديث صحيح)

The inclusion of a narration in the collection of Ibn-e-Habban رحمه الله is regarded as proof enough for the Muhaditheen as to the authenticity of a narration: 'Sayyidina Mu'adh ibn Jabal رضي الله عنه reports that RasulAllah ﷺ has said: "Allah Almighty looks upon all those created by Him in the middle Night of Sha'ban and forgives all those created by Him, except the one who associates partners with Him or the one who has malice in his heart (against a Muslim)". (Saheeh Ibn-e-Habban, vol 7, p470)

This narration has been confirmed as being to the class of Saheeh by many great Muhaditheen. This narration has also been regarded as being Saheeh by the Imam of Ghair Muqalideen in this present age, Shaykh Nasirudeen Al Albani.

شيخ ناصرالدين الباني: حديث صحيح روى عن جماعة من الصحابة من طرق مختلفة يند بعضها بعضاً وهم معاذ بن جبل و أبو ثعلبة الخشني و عبدالله بن عمرو و أبو موسى الأشعري و أبو هريرة و أبوبكر الصديق و عوف بن مالك و عائشة – (سلسلة الأحاديث الصحيحة، ج3 ص135)

Sheykh Albani رحمه الله writes: 'This Hadith is authentic (Saheeh). A Jama'at of the Sahabah رضي الله عنهم have narrated this through differing chains, from these, certain narrations support and give strength to the others. Those Companions, the likes of: Abu Bakr Siddique, Mu'adh ibn Jabal, Abu Salaba, Al Khashni, Abdullah bin Amr, Abu Musa Ash'ari, Abu Hurairah, Awf bin Malik and Sayyida Aishah Siddiqa رضي الله عنها have narrated this Hadith. (Silsilatul Ahadithus-Sahihah, vol 3, p135)

شيخ ناصرالدين البانى : وجملته القول أن الحديث بمجموع هذه الطرق صحيح بلا ريب والصحة تثبت باقل منها عدداً مادامت مسالمة من الضعف الشديد كما هو الشأن في هذا الحديث – (سلسلة الأحاديث الصحيحة)

After this, Shaykh Albani writes his opinion in this manner: 'In conclusion, the presence of different chains in Hadith collections makes this Hadith Saheeh without any doubt. And in the manner of authenticity, it can be regarded as Saheeh even below the required criteria stipulated for Hadith. In any case, it reaches to a level greater than required.

This statement of Sheykh Albani is not a new one. The scholars of Ahle Sunnah wal Jam'at and more so from Ulama of Deoband, have been placing this matter in front of the Ummah for many years. To encourage them to take advantage of this blessed opportunity and special Mercy of Allah ﷻ. From the time of the Companions ﷺ the people of Truth have regarded it as a blessing to keep themselves busy in worship and Dhikr in this night according to their means.

Clarification for the incorrect ideology with respect to the 15th Shaban:

There is no restriction or specific amount of worship stipulated from this night, it should be borne in mind that whatever has reached us of the practice of the Prophet ﷺ and Companions ﷺ in respect of this night, we should keep to this and not exaggerate above or below that criteria.

It is proven that in the lifetime of the Prophet ﷺ, he ﷺ visited the Jannatul Baqi graveyard once. If we have the capabilities to perform this Sunnah, we should. However, there should be no specific gathering of people to take a procession to the graveyard or consider it a fundamental worship on this night to visit the graveyard.

After writing on the importance of this blessed night, it should be remembered that this order is for Nafl Ibadat and following the example of the RasulAllah ﷺ and Sahabah ﷺ. It also has to be said with regret that in this day and age our negligence and ignorance has substituted its blessings for punishment, and the reward of Akhirah for that of the Dunya. There are many traditions that wealth is squandered on, the display of fireworks, decorating our Masajid and homes with strange decorations and lights and worldly discussions are held causing great disruption in the Masajids. It is fundamentally important to abstain from all these and other useless actions.

We pray that Allah ﷻ guides us to take advantage of this blessed opportunity, to follow in the footsteps of our predecessors and grant us honour and status through actions which attain His pleasure. آمين Aameen!

والله وحده هو المسؤول والمستعان وهو الهادي إلى سبل الخير والسلام .
مفتى محمد يوسف بن يعقوب دُنْكَا (عفا الله عنه)

Mufti Muhammad Yusuf Danka
Croydon Masjid & Islamic Centre
(13/Shab'an/1432 AH) 15/07/2011)