

THE NIGHT OF BARĀT AND QUR'ĀN

Has the night of Barāt been mentioned in the Qur'ān? The most correct opinion is that the night of Barāt has not been mentioned in the Qur'ān. Hafiz Ibn Katheer writes that those like Ikramah who have explained the blessed night in the Qur'ān as the night of Barāt are very distant from the correct interpretation. [Ma'ārifus Sunan Vol. 5 Pg. 420].

IS SUSTENANCE, LIFE AND DEATH DECIDED ON THIS NIGHT?

Qāzi Abubakr bin Arabi writes that there is no reliable Hadith regarding the fifteenth of Shabān from which it may be understood that sustenance, life and death are decided on that night. He has gone so far as to say that there is no reliable narration concerning this night being the blessed one. [Ma'āriful Qur'ān Vol. 7 Pg. 757]. Since the significance of the night of Barāt has been mentioned in a number of narrations, and the narrations are not in conflict with any verse in the Qur'ān or any authentic narration, we do accept its significance. However, the opinion that sustenance, death, etc. are determined on this night is in conflict with the Qur'ān and is therefore unacceptable.

It has been established from the Qur'ān that these decisions are passed to the Angels on Laylatul Qadr and not on the night of Barāt.

It is on this account that the scholars of research have always rejected this opinion. The opinion of the lectures would not be considered in this discussion, instead the opinion of the scholars of Tafseer and Hadith will be relied upon. There is a Hadith of Ayesha (R.A.) mentioned in Mishkāt Pg. 115. This Hadith discusses that the decisions are passed on this night regarding those who will be born, those who will die, the actions of men are placed in front of Allah and sustenance is revealed. The condition of this Hadith is unknown and the scholars of Tafseer and Hadith do not consider it reliable.

SOME STRANGE AND INNOVATION PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS NIGHT

1. Burning lights and candles: Nothing has or can be found in any Hadith. The Muslims of India, being in close contact with the Hindus, probably began imitating them in their practices, thus resulting in the introduction of this and various other bid'ats.
2. Preparing of sweetmeats: Some consider this being compulsory. Without it there can be no Shab Barāt. This is absolutely baseless.
3. Souls visit families: Some people firmly believe that the souls of the deceased visit their families homes and see whether any food has been prepared in their honour or not. Some people feel that if a person dies before this night than until his 'Fātiha' is not made on this night, he is not counted amongst the dead. These are baseless ideologies that clearly contradict the Ahādith.
4. Distribution of food: Some feel that it is compulsory to distribute food on this night with the intention of Isāl-Sawāb. There is no association between this practise and the significance of the night. No special acts of charity etc. have been prescribed for this night. [Fatāwa Imdādiyyah Vol. 4 Pg. 27].

On these nights, in many Masājid:

1. Congregational Yāseen Khatams are held;
2. Congregational Zikr sessions;
3. Congregational recitation of Salāt wa Salām are held;
4. One person recites the 40 Durood etc. whilst others listen;
5. Individual Qur'ān recitations take place.

All the above are NOT proven in the Shar'iah of Islām.

Let us comply to the correct teachings of the Shar'iah and not what we merely here from various lectures.



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NIGHT OF BARĀT

Allah Ta'āla has presented His bondsmen with some special occasions with the golden opportunity of earning the mercy and forgiveness of Allah. Explicit examples of these occasions are the month of Ramadhān and Laylatul Qadr. So is the fifteenth of Shabān. Several Ahādith extol the merits of this occasion. Amongst them is the fact that countless people are forgiven by Allah Ta'āla during this blessed night. It is due to this reason that it is called 'The Night of Barāt'.

However, it should be borne in mind that a vast majority of narration's describing the benefits and virtues of this night are in fact quite weak.

The foundations of the Shar'iah are the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the lives of the Sahābah (R.A.). None of the narration's regarding the excellences of this night are free from criticism and comment by the scholars of Hadith.

Shaikh Yusuf Binouri (R) says: "I have not come across any Sahih, Marfoo or Musnad Hadith regarding the excellence of this night." [Ma'ārifus Sunnan, Vol. 5 Pg. 419].

The Muhaddith, Ibn Dihya, has also agreed that neither has anything authentic been narrated regarding the fifteenth night of Shabān nor has any specific Salāh been narrated for this night via reliable narrators. [Faydhul-Qadeer-Sharhul Jāmius Sagheer Vol. 2 Pg. 317].

SOME VIRTUES OF THIS NIGHT

One on the other hand can not completely reject the virtues of this night. Whilst even Allama Ibn Taymiyyah, a scholar notorious for refuting such things, also accepts the virtue of the night of Barāt, he says: "So many Ahādith and reports exists regarding the excellence of the fifteenth night of Shabān that one is compelled to accept that this night possesses some virtue."

Shaikh Abdur Rahman Mubarakpuri writes in the commentary of Tirmizi: "The sheer number

of Ahādith regarding this night serve as a proof against those who refute the excellence of this night." [Tuhfatul-Ahwazi Vol. 2 Pg. 53].

The special virtues of the night of Barāt are:

1. Contrary to other nights wherein Allah descends to the lowest Heaven to bestow His special blessings during the last third of the night, on the night of Barāt the special rain of mercy and forgiveness from Allah Ta'āla begins to shower down right up till dawn.

2. The sins of countless people are pardoned. [Hāfiz Zayud-deen Iraqi, Faydhul Qadeer, Vol. 2 Pg. 317].

It should be remembered that while the narrations regarding the night of Barāt are weak, the narrations regarding Allah Ta'āla's descending to the nearest Heaven during the last third of every night are totally correct.

VISITING THE GRAVESIDE ON THE NIGHT OF BARĀT

Rasulullah's (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) awakening during any night and visiting the graveyards is recorded in some Ahādith. However, visiting of the graveyard is not a special characteristic of this night in particular. It is proven from another authentic narration that Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) used to visit the graveyard during the last portion of every night. There is no specific reference in the Ahādith to the night of Barāt or any other night.

NO SPECIFIC PRESCRIBED SALĀH RESERVED FOR THE NIGHT OF BARĀT

Allama Anwar Shah Kashmiri (R) has written regarding the matter that the significance of the night of Barāt is proven. There is however, no proof for those weak and unacceptable narrations mentioned in certain books. [Al'arfus-Shazi Pg. 156].

Allama Yusuf Binouri (R) writes in Ma'ārifus Sunan that Abu Talib Makki recorded these narrations in his book Qut-ul-Quloob. Imām Ghazali, following Abu Talib Makki, did the same and Shaikh Abdul Qadir Jilani has followed them in his book Ghunyat-ut-Talibeen. They mention a narration of Ali (R.A.) that discusses a Salāt of a hundred Rak'āts. However, Ibn Jawzi (R) and others declared this narration to be a fabrication (Mawdhū). [Ma'ārifus Sunan Vol. 5 Pg. 419].

Allama Dhahabi, Ibnu-Arraq, Suyuti, Mulla Ali Qari and other scholars of Hadith have vehemently refuted such Salāh's.

FASTING ON THE FIFTEENTH OF SHABĀN IS NOT ESTABLISHED FROM HADITH

Some people believe in the misconception that fasting on the fifteenth of Shabān is Sunnat. They have been deceived by the Hadith of Ali (R.A.) that appears in Ibn Mājah which has been fabricated. The Hadith states Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam) said; "When the 15th of Shabān comes, then spend this night in Qiyām (Salāh) and the day in fasting. For verily, Allah descends during this night to the nearest heavens." [Ibn Mājah Pg. 99].

This Hadith is however very weak. Some scholars have decided it as Mawdhū (fabricated). One of the narrators of this Hadith in Abnu-Jabrah, who has been accused of fabricating Ahādith. [Taqrib of Ibn Hajar Pg. 396]. Imām Bukhāri and others have also proved him to be weak. [Mizanul I'tidal Vol. 5 Pg. 503]. Thus this Hadith cannot be relied upon. Hence the fasting of this day should not be regarded to prove this fast as been Sunnat. Another interesting fact is that fasting on this day is only discussed in this weak Hadith. If it were a Sunnat act, a stronger Hadith would have been available to prove it.

Fasting in the month of Shabān, without the stipulation of any day, is proven from Rasulullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam).