

Questions on Virtue of Shab-e-Baraat

- Which of the narrated virtues can we confidently narrate as true virtues of this night?
- Which are the commonly narrated virtues are in fact definite fabrications?
- The famous Hadith of Aishah radiyallahu anha raises certain queries. Rasulallah sallallahu alayhi wa sallam was commanded (D: E' #F2D %DJC . Why then was this matter, if so virtuous and important, only conveyed to us in a manner which seems "accidental"? Had Ummul Mumineen not woken, had she not had certain thoughts, had she not searched for Rasulallah sallallahu alayhi wa sallam, had he not then told her, would we have known? Why did Rasulallah sallallahu alayhi wa sallam not convey this knowledge of his own accord as with the rest of Dien?

I place my query at the feet of Mufti Sahib, having experienced in the past the benefits of your prompt replies with clear proofs.

THE ANSWER

In The Name of Allah Most Gracious Most Merciful

- 1) In Al-Fataawal-Hindiyya (Alamgeeri) it is written that visiting the graveyard on the fifteenth night of Sha'baan is mustahabb. Alamgeeri, Kitabal-Karahiyat, Baab 16- visiting Qabrستان.
- 2) Regarding the night of Baraat (15th night of Sha'baan) it can be safely said that numerous Ahadeeth exist attesting to the virtues of this night. Although some Ahadeeth have been declared as Weak or 69JA, collectively these Ahadeeth are supportive of each other, thus providing some basis for the Fadhaail of Lailatul Baraat. (Ahkaamul Qur'aan by Hazrat Moulana Mufti Shafi Sahib rahimahullah, 194/4) There is also a Hadeeth of Baihaqi in At-Targheeb Wat-Tarheeb (vol 2, page 119) on the virtue of this night
- 3) Furthermore, some Ahadeeth on the virtues of Shabi Baraat have been cleared of weakness or 69A, thus adding further credence to the greatness of this night. (Al Fathur Rabbani, Sharh of Musnad-e-Ahmad vol 10, page 207)
- 4) The author of Mirqaat, Mullah Ali Qari rahimahullah also maintains the view mentioned in "a" above. (See Imdadul Fataawa vol 4)

We comment particularly on two main issues connected to the 15th Sha'baan, viz. fasting and visiting the cemetery.

There is a Hadeeth of Sayyiduna Ali t about fasting on the 15th Sha'baan which appears in Ibni Maajah (pg 99), Roohul Maani (111/25), Ahkamul Qur'aan (192/4), Baihaqi's Shu'abul Iman (Kanzul Ummaal 314/12) and Qurtubi (126/16) and this hadith has been branded as Weak. (Fathur Rabbani, 208/10)

Exactly the same position prevails regarding the issue of Ziyarate Quboor on this night. However, an additional factor here is the Fiqhi Riwayaat in Alamgeeri in support of the A6JD* (virtue) of visiting the cemetery on this night. Two points of significance ought to be remembered here:

- a) Alamgeeri was compiled by a panel of about 500 top ranking Ulama. The masaa-il contained therein are, therefore, well authenticated
- b) The Fatwa and Amal of such a group of Ulama, conforming to a "Weak" Hadeeth is indicative of it (the Weak Hadeeth) being sound enough for practice. (I'laa-us-Sunan)

It can thus be said that fasting and visiting the cemetery will be Jaaz (permissible) but with the following conditions:

1. It must not be regarded as Sunnat (Durre Mukhtar).
2. It should not be emphasized as a Sunnat.
3. The doer should perform these acts merely out of Ihtiyaat (caution), in case the contents are genuinely established from other sources or the Hadeeth is in reality strong and sound. (Imdadul Fataawa).

FURTHER EVIDENCE TO CORROBORATE THIS VIRTUE

- 1) Ibni Jareer quotes Ikrama, the famous student of Abdullah bin Abbas t as saying that on the fifteenth night of Sha'baan matters of taqdeer are handed down to the Malaaikeh, (See Tafseer-e-Tabari, Surah Dukhaan)
- 2) Imam Baihaqi quotes from Ibni Shihaab Zuhri (RA) that matters of Taqdeer are ordained from one Sha'baan to another. Ikrama's statement as well as supportive statements from other Imams will identify the fifteenth night of Sha'baan for this to happen.
- 3) Ibni Abid-Dunya, a reputable and renowned Muhaddith quotes Ataa ibni Yasaar RA as saying that the names of those who must die in the coming year are handed down to the Angels on the fifteenth of Sha'baan. (Tafseer Durr-e-Manthoor)
- 4) Imam Khateeb Baghdadi quotes a chain of transmission that contains the narrators of Imaam Maalik (RA), reaching up to Hazrat Ayesha (RA) that Rasoolullah (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) said: "Almighty Allah unravels good on four nights in the year: The nights of the two Eids, the fifteenth night of Sha'baan, during which deaths, rizq and names of hujjaaj are recorded, and on the night of Arafah. (Tafseer Durr-e-Manthoor)
- 5) In Musnad-e-Bazaar there is a hadith on the virtue of this night. Imam Haithami says that all the narrators are reliable, except Abdul-Malik bin Abdul-Malik, for Abu Haatim Raazi mentions him in his book but did not criticize or sensor him. This means that the hadith is authentic.

6) A hadith on the virtue of Shab-e-Baraat appears in Ibni Majah – hadith number 1390 – and this hadith has been classified as HASAN by none other than Shaikh Nasirud-Deen Albaany, the widely acclaimed Muhaddith of the Salafis.

On the basis of the above references we can safely declare that the virtue of Shab-e-Baraat is established from authentic ahadeeth, thus leaving no room for its denial. Unfortunately, modern-day Scholars who refuted the virtue of this night did not take the trouble of researching further details pertaining to this great night. Had they done that, I am sure their views would have changed.

The fact that over the centuries of Islamic history, Ulema and Auliya routinely observed the holiness of this night is in itself proof of ta’aamul on this practice. Ta’aamul means the continued and uninterrupted practice of Ulema on a particular hadith or Shar’ee teaching. Ta’aamul constitutes an important principle in Fiqh. A vast array of Jurist, Scholars, and Sainly personalities would never have practiced on a hadith if its origin was weak and unsound.

A typical and undeniable example of this is found in the book of Imam Tirmizhi (RA). On page 46, vol. 1, he mentioned the hadith of Amir bin Rabee’ah pertaining to a person who used his discretion to determine qiblah and then offered salaah, only to discover afterwards that he had faced the wrong direction. The hadith says his salaah is valid and need not be repeated. Imam Tirmizhi then goes on to comment on the hadith, saying its isnaad is not strong and one of the narrators is dha’eef. The hadith, therefore, becomes weak. However, immediately thereafter he states: And the majority of Scholars have taken this view, that one who offered salaah in darkness while not knowing qiblah, and then discovers he had made an error, his salaah is valid. How is it possible for the majority of Scholars to practice on a weak hadith? The answer was given by Allama Ebrahim Al-Halabi in his fiqhi work Kabeeri. He says: “Though these ahadeeth are weak, but they are strengthened through Ijmaa or consensus of the Jurists.” (Kabeeri of Imam Halabi, page 221)

The above is further corroborated by the renowned and dynamic Aalim of Deoband, Hazrat Allama Anwar Shah Kashmiri (RA). His valuable comments on the principle of ta’aamul are of immense worth. He states in his commentary of Bukhari Shareef, Faidhul-Baari (v.2, p. 236):

“Most of the Scholars of hadith consider the sanad or chain of transmission of certain narrations but ignore the important issue of ta’aamul or practical implementation over centuries without interruption. Sometimes a hadith is branded as dha’eef but there is wide-spread ta’aamul or practice on the hadith (thus lending strength to the weak hadith). Therefore, along with the wording and sanad of the hadith, one must also consider the principle of ta’aamul. (End of quote)

This ta’aamul is akin to Ijmaa’; because once a Shar’ee matter has been unanimously adopted for practice, it is just as good as a consensus on that matter. It is my humble view that a vast majority of Ulema have been practicing on the virtue of laylatul-baraat over the centuries, and have advocated this virtue extensively; this is tantamount to a consensus on this matter. Such a consensus will strengthen any weakness in the chain of transmission.

And Allah knows best

° We can safely quote the following virtues of Shab-e-Baraat as established from the above references:

- a) Matters of Taqdeer are decreed on this night
- b) Allah grants blanket forgiveness to all Muslims, excluding the few mentioned in the above references.
- c) The Nuzool of Allah.
- d) Visiting the cemetery on this night.

° There are certainly a number of fabricated virtues narrated about this sacred night, like a special salaah in jamaat, reading specific duas, etc. These are taken from narrations that are totally baseless. We should strictly avoid such practices and not circulate these unfounded virtues.

° Why did the virtue of this night come about ‘accidentally’? Well, we have provided strong evidence of ahadeeth that specifically mention, in a direct way, some of the virtues of this night. The question of the incidental establishment of this virtue, therefore, does not arise. Still, we can cite countless laws, injunctions, and virtues that came about in similar manner. In appearance the episode seems accidental or co-incidental, but in reality it is Allah’s way of instating or initiating a particular injunction. For instance, hundreds of verses of the Quran were all revealed after certain incidents had occurred. Important rulings that almost altered the lives of generations to come were introduced to the Ummat through such coincidental means. Let me produce a few examples of major Islamic injunctions that were ordained through an ‘indirect’ manner.

- 1) The Azhaan: If Allah Ta’ala wanted he could have given the wordings of the athaan directly to Rasoolullah r but instead Allah Ta’ala institutionalized the athaan in a very roundabout way, by allowing certain Sahaaba to see dreams about the athaan. Athaan is among the major features of Islam
- 2) The virtue of Aayatul-Kursi: It came about through an incident involving Hazrat Abu Huraira and a jinn who kept on stealing from the zakaat and sadaqah.
- 3) The great night of Laylatul-Qadr was given to this Ummat only after the Sahaaba had expressed their concern and

envy over how much of worship people of the past had achieved, and the short span of life they have on earth to match such great efforts. This is according to one narration.

- 4) An important mas'ala such as ghusl becoming faradh after penetration between husband and wife, even if there was no ejaculation of semen, was acquired from Hazrat Ayesha (radhiyallahu anhaa).
- 5) The virtue of Surah Faatiha was given to a single Sahaabi, after Rasoolullah held him by his hand and walked out of the Musjid.
- 6) The Islamic punishment of stoning to death for zina was brought about after a Sahaabi had confessed to adultery.

These are a few of many examples to prove that a large portion of Islamic belief and practice came about through incidents that appeared to be incidental. But that does not detract from the merit and virtue of these deeds.