

NIGHT OF
FREEDOM FROM
FIRE

ليلة البراءة

LAYLATUL-
BARA'AH

In the name of Allah ﷻ, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

All praise belongs to Allah ﷻ alone. Blessings and peace upon the Last Prophet ﷺ, upon his family, his Companions, his wives, and all his followers.

Through Allah ﷻ, the Sublime and Exalted, is all guidance to do good (tawfiq) and from Him is all assistance. I beseech Him, the Generous, Beneficent and Guide, that [O Allah ﷻ!] let us recognise the truth as truth and allow us to follow it, let us recognise falsehood as falsehood and allow us to abstain from it, guide our steps, bestow us with sincerity, taqwa and acceptance before You with Your grace and generosity. امين.

The wisdom of Allah ﷻ works in mysterious ways; on one hand much anxiety and cry are expressed universally regarding the COVID19 pandemic resulting in a global lock down and social isolation, hence mankind is turning to their Creator for protection and solace.

Amidst this state of uncertainty, concern and fear, we should take cognisance of the fact that it is because Almighty Allah ﷻ has accepted our dua of Rajab that we are blessed with the great month of Sha'baan, a month of blessing in prelude to the month of Ramadhan. We should be grateful unto our Creator for having blessed us with barakah and auspiciousness for this month

اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَنَا فِي رَجَبٍ وَشَعْبَانَ وَبَلِّغْنَا رَمَضَانَ

O Allah grant us barakah in Rajab and Sha'baan and allow us to reach Ramadhan

What might outwardly seem as a calamity; if we conduct ourselves within the constraints set by the state and the medical experts, in order to avert the possibility of being infected by COVID19. It is only natural that when every human being experience fear and anxiety of the pandemic that we resort and turn to Allah ﷻ for protection. Subsequently, we make dua that each and every one of us attain such close proximity to our Creator and enjoy such sweetness during this month that we look forward to the impending Ramadhan, which we would never have attained during our normal circumstances.

Unfortunately, this pandemic has reverberated waves of fear and the accompanied lock down finds people taking solace on the internet and socialising, not realizing this leads to backbiting, slandering and posting unverified information to such an extent that Quranic interpretations and Hadeeth are distorted to suit one's own position thus misleading people. To this kind of action and behaviour our Nabi ﷺ has given us a stern warning.

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ الْجَعْدِ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنَا شُعْبَةُ، قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي مَنْصُورٌ، قَالَ سَمِعْتُ رَبِيعَ بْنَ حِرَاشٍ، يَقُولُ
سَمِعْتُ عَلِيًّا، يَقُولُ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ " لَا تَكْذِبُوا عَلَيَّ، فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ كَذَبَ عَلَيَّ فَلْيَلِجِ النَّارَ "

Sahih al-Bukhari Book3 Hadith48

Narrated `Ali ؓ: The Prophet ﷺ said, "Do not tell a lie against me for whoever tells a lie against me (intentionally) then he will surely enter the Hell-fire."

Notwithstanding, the reality of internet addiction which primarily leads one to become so absorbed that one becomes oblivious of fulfilling the rights due unto one's kith and kin, one's spiritual rites, thus severing our relationship with our Creator.

LAYLATUL-BARA'AH – (THE NIGHT OF FREEDOM FROM FIRE)

Another significant feature of the month of Sha'ban is that it consists of a night which is termed in Shariah as "Laylatul-bara'ah" (The night of freedom from Fire). This is the night occurring between 14th and 15th day of Sha'ban. There are certain traditions of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, to prove that it is a meritorious night in which the people of the earth are attended by special Divine mercy. Some of these traditions are quoted as follows:

1. It is reported from Hazrat Mu'adh bin Jabal ؓ that Rasulullah ﷺ said, "On the fifteenth night of Sha'baan Allah ﷻ bestows his special attention on His entire creation. He then pardons His entire creation except an idolater and one who harbours enmity." - *Tabrani has recorded this Hadeeth in Awsat, Ibnu-Hibaan in his Sahih and Baihaqi - Targhib-wat-Tarhib Page 118 V2, Page 459 V3*
2. It is narrated from Hazrat Abdullah bin Amr ؓ that Rasulullah ﷺ said, "Allah ﷻ looks with special attention towards His creation on the fifteenth night of Sha'baan and forgives all his servants except two categories of people; the person who harbours enmity and a murderer." - *Imam Ahmad reports this Hadeeth with a slightly weak chain of narrators - Targhib-wat-Tarhib Page 461 V3*

3. It is related from Makhool who narrates from Katheer bin Murrah ﷺ that Nabi ﷺ said, “On the fifteenth night of Sha'baan Allah ﷻ forgives all the inhabitants of the earth except an idolater and one who harbours hatred for others.” - *Baihaqi has narrated this Hadeeth and says that it is an acceptable Mursal - Targhib-wat-Tarhib Page 461 V3*

4. It is narrated from Makhool who narrates from Abu Tha'labah ﷺ that Nabi ﷺ said, “On the fifteenth night of Sha'baan, Allah ﷻ devotes special attention towards His bondsmen. He then pardons the believers and grants respite to the disbelievers (i.e., He delays their punishment), and He leaves the spiteful ones as well, until they abandon their spite (malice) (i.e., no decision of their mercy and forgiveness is made until they resolve their differences).” - *Tabrani and Baihaqi have narrated this Hadeeth. Baihaqi said that this narration is also an unacceptable Mursal between Makhool and Abu Tha'labah ﷺ - Targhib-wat-Tarhib Page 461 V3*

5. It is reported from Alaa bin Harith ﷺ that Hazrat Aisha Radi-Allahu anha said, “One-night Rasulullah ﷺ woke up and performed salaah, he prolonged the sajdah to such an extent that I wondered whether he had passed away. Seeing this, I got up and shook his foot. Perceiving movement, I felt at ease. When Rasulullah ﷺ lifted his head from sajdah and completed his salaah he said, “O Humairah! did you think that the Nabi ﷺ had deceived you?” I replied in the negative and said, "I swear in the name of Allah ﷻ, due to the length of your sajdah I thought that you had passed away." Nabi ﷺ said, "Do you know what night this is?" I said, “Allah ﷻ and his Rasul ﷺ know best." He said, “This is the fifteenth night of Sha'baan. Allah ﷻ looks at His servants on this night and forgives those who seek forgiveness, shows mercy upon those who seek mercy and delays the

decision of those who harbour feelings of hatred for others." - *Baihqi has narrated this Hadeeth as well and says that this is also an acceptable Mursal. It is possible that Alaa reported from Makhool also. Targhib-wat-Tarhib Page 462 V3*

It is also in this narration that Hazrat Aisha Radi-Allahu anha heard Nabi ﷺ reading this dua in his Sajdah:

أَعُوذُ بِعَفْوِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ جَلَّ وَجْهُكَ لَا أُحْصِي
ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ

"a'oothu bi'afwika min eqaabik wa a'oothu bi ridhaaka min sakhatik wa a'oothu bika minka jalla waj'huk laa uhsee thanaa'an alayk anta kamaa athnayta alaa nafsik."

TRANS: (Oh Allah) I take refuge in Your Forgiveness from Your punishment, and take refuge in Your pleasure from Your anger and I take refuge in You from You. I cannot praise You as You ought to be praised. You are as You have praised Yourself.

6. It is narrated from Hazrat Aisha Radi-Allahu anha, Rasulullah ﷺ entered my room. He then removed his clothes (and lay down). Having barely rested, he got up, dressed and left my room. I was overwhelmed by the suspicion that perhaps he had gone to one of his other wives. Hence, I followed him and found him at Baqee (the graveyard of Medina) making dua for forgiveness of the believers. I thought, may my parents be sacrificed for you, I am pursuing my suspicion while you are engaged in the matter of your Lord. I returned hurriedly to my room and was thus quite out of breath. Rasulullah ﷺ soon returned and asked, "Why are you breathing so heavily, Aisha?" I related the incident as well as my suspicion to Rasulullah ﷺ he then said to me, "O Aisha, did you fear that Allah ﷻ and His messenger ﷺ would deal unjustly with you?" Jibraeel ﷺ came to me and said, "This is the fifteen night of Sha'baan. Allah ﷻ emancipates during this night a multitude of people equivalent to the amount of hair on the goats of the tribe of

Kalb. However, Allah ﷻ does not look on this night at an idolater, a person who harbours enmity in his heart, one who severs family relations, a person who wears his trousers below his ankles, a person who disobeys his parents and the consumer of liquor.” Rasulallah ﷺ thereafter removed his clothes and asked, “O Aisha, do you permit me to spend the night in salaah?” I replied: "May my parents be sacrificed for thee (indicating agreement). Rasulallah ﷺ thereafter began performing salaah. During the night he made such a lengthy sajdah that I feared that he had passed away. I therefore got up and felt for him (because there was probably no lamp in the room). My hand touched the sole of Rasulallah ﷺ foot, due to which he moved. Having felt this movement, I then felt at ease. During the night I heard him saying (the same dua as mentioned in the previous Hadeeth). In the morning, I mentioned this to Rasulallah ﷺ he advised, "Learn these words and teach them to others. Jibraeel ؑ had taught them to me and commanded me to repeat these words during Sajdah.” - *Baihaqi has narrated this Hadith - Targhib-wat-Tarhib Page 460 V3*

7. Hazrat Uthmaan bin Abil Aas ؓ narrates that Rasulallah ﷺ said, "On the fifteenth night of Sha'baan Allah ﷻ descends to the nearest Heaven. Thereafter a proclaimer proclaims: Is there anyone who seeks forgiveness so that I may forgive him? Is there anyone who desires anything so that I may grant his wishes? Allah ﷻ thus fulfils the requests of all except the adulteress and idolater." - *Baihaqi has reported this Hadeeth - Durre Manthur Page 27 V6*

The virtue of this night that is established from these Ahaadeeth is that from the very beginning of the night Allah ﷻ turns with special mercy and attention towards the creation and forgives those who repent and seek forgiveness. Every Muslim should therefore value this night. Turn towards Allah ﷻ with sincere regret and shame over sins committed and make a promise never to return to sin again and

seek forgiveness from Allah ﷻ. Seek forgiveness for oneself and the rest of the Muslims, living and deceased. Have the firm hope and resolution in the heart that Allah ﷻ will surely show mercy and forgiveness.

UNFORTUNATE PEOPLE

It is understood from the Ahaadeeth that even on this night, some servants of Allah ﷻ are deprived of His forgiveness. They are as follows:

1. idolator
2. those who harbour enmity against others
3. consumers of alcohol or intoxicants
4. those who disobey their parents
5. those who wear their trousers, kurtas, lungis, etc. below their ankles
6. those who commit adultery and murderers
7. those who sever family ties

Every Muslim should consider carefully and if he is involved in any of these sins, he should sincerely repent and seek forgiveness for his sin lest he be deprived of this night. Another important point is the fact that those sins which deal with the rights of our fellow men (Huqooqul Ibaad), will not be forgiven by Allah ﷻ until forgiveness has not been sought from the one who has been harmed and a genuine effort to redress the wrong committed against him has not been made.

VISITING THE GRAVEYARD ON THE NIGHT OF BARA'AH

Rasulullah's ﷺ awakening during the night and visiting the graveyard is recorded in some of the previously mentioned Ahaadeeth. However, visiting of the graveyard is not a special characteristic of this night. Instead, it is proven from another authentic narration that Rasulullah ﷺ would visit the graveyard during the last portion of every night.

Imam Nawawi writes "From this it is learnt that visiting the graveyard, greeting its inmates and making dua of forgiveness and mercy for them is Mustahab (desirable). - *Sahih Muslim Page 313 VI*

In Al-Fataawal-Hindiyya (Alamgeeri) it is written that visiting the graveyard on the fifteenth night of Shaa'baan is mustahabb. *Alamgeeri, Kitabul-Karahiyat, Baab 16- visiting Qabrustan.*

FASTING ON THE FIFTEEN OF SHA'BAAN

Some people are of the misconception fasting on the fifteen of Sha'baan is Sunnat.

Fasting on this day therefore cannot be regarded as Sunnat, it could be regarded as Nafil only.

Rather, the 15th day of Sha'baan is from those bright white days (ayyam al-bidh or the 13th, 14th and 15th of each lunar month) which due to the encouragement of Allah's Messenger ﷺ are recommended for fasting every month.

FASTING DURING THE MONTH OF SHA'BAAN IS SUNNAT

Fasting in the month of Sha'baan, without the stipulation of any day, is proven from Rasulullah ﷺ. In fact, he used to fast excessively during this month.

Ibnu-Abbas رضي الله عنه has also narrated that besides the month of Ramadhan, Rasulullah ﷺ never spent the entire portion of any month in fasting. To fast excessively during the month of Sha'baan would therefore definitely be in conformance to the Sunnat of Rasulullah ﷺ.

However, one should not fast during the second half of Sha'baan if one fears that, one might become weak, thus putting off the fast of

Ramadhan. Hazrat Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrates that Rasulullah ﷺ has said:
"Do not fast during the second half of Sha'baan - *Tirmidhi Page 155*

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES ASSOCIATED WITH LAYLATUL-BARA'AH

The occasion of Laylatul-Bara'ah has become synonymous with some baseless beliefs and practices to mention just a few:

1. Burning bright lights and lanterns
2. Preparing of sweetmeats
3. Soul visiting families
4. Distribution of food
5. Hadeeth on Rajab, Sha'baan and Ramadhan

Rasulullah ﷺ said, Rajab is Allah's month, Sha'baan is my month and Ramadhan is the month of my Ummah. It should be noted that this Hadeeth is a fabrication - *Akhbaare-Mowdhoo P. 329*

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE ON THIS NIGHT

In order to observe the Night of Bara'ah, one should remain awake in this night as much as he can. If someone has better opportunities, he should spend the whole night in worship and prayer. However, if one cannot do so for one reason or another, he can select a considerable portion of the night, preferably of the second half of it for this purpose, and should perform the following acts of worship:

1. SALAAH - Salaah is the most preferable act to be performed in this night. There is no particular number of Rak'at but preferably it should not be less than eight. It is also advisable that each part of the salaah like qiyam, rukoo' and sajdah should be longer than normal. The longest surahs of the Holy Qur'an one remembers by heart should be recited in the salaah of this night.
2. TILAWA. The recitation of the Holy Qur'an is another form of worship, very beneficent in this night. After performing salaah, or at any other time, one should recite as much of the Holy Qur'an as he can.

3. **DHIKR.** One should also perform dhikr (recitation of the name of Allah ﷻ) in this night. Particularly the following dhikr is very useful:
 - a. One should recite salawaat (durood) on Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, as many times as he can. The dhikr can also be recited while walking, lying on bed and during other hours of work or leisure.
4. **DUA.** The best benefit one can draw from the blessings of this night is prayers and supplications. It is hoped that all the prayers in this night will be accepted by our Lord, insha-Allah. Prayer itself is an ‘Ibadah, and Allah ﷻ gives reward on each prayer along with the fulfilment of the supplicator’s need. Even if the purpose prayed for is not achieved, one cannot be deprived of the reward of the prayer which is sometimes more precious than the mundane benefits one strives for. The prayers and supplications also strengthen one’s relation with Allah ﷻ, which is the main purpose of all kinds and forms of worship.
5. There are some people who cannot perform any additional salaah or recitations for any reason, like illness or weakness or being engaged in some other necessary activities. Such people also should not deprive themselves completely of the blessings of this night. They should observe the following acts:
 - a. To perform the Salaah of Maghrib, ‘Isha’ and Fajr with Jama’ah in the mosque, or in their homes in case of their being sick.
 - b. They should keep reciting the dhikr, in whatever condition they are until they sleep.
 - c. They should pray to Allah ﷻ for their forgiveness and for their other objectives. One can do so even when he is in his bed.
 - d. The women during their periods cannot perform salaah, nor can they recite the Qur’an, but they can recite any dhikr, tasbeeh, durood sharif and can pray to Allah ﷻ for whatever purpose they like in whatever language they wish. They can also recite the Arabic prayers mentioned in the Qur’an or in the hadith with the intention of supplication (and not with the intention of recitation).

WHAT SHOULD NOT BE DONE ON THIS NIGHT

1. As mentioned earlier, the Night of Bara'ah is a night in which special blessings are directed towards the Muslims. Therefore, this night should be spent in total submission to Allah ﷻ, and one should refrain from all those activities, which may displease Allah ﷻ. Although it is always incumbent upon every Muslim to abstain from sins, yet this abstinence becomes all the more necessary in such nights, because committing sins in this night will amount to responding to divine blessings with disobedience and felony. Such an arrogant attitude can invite nothing but the wrath of Allah ﷻ. Therefore, one should strictly abstain from all the sins, particularly from those quoted earlier in this article, because these sins make one devoid of the blessings of this night.
2. Some people spend this night in holding religious meetings and delivering long speeches. Such activities are also not advisable, because these acts can easily be performed in other nights. This night requires one to devote himself for the pure acts of worship only.
3. The acts of worship like Salaah, recitation of the Qur'an and dhikr should be performed in this night individually, not collectively. The Nafl Salaah should not be performed in Jama'ah, nor should the Muslims arrange gatherings in the mosques in order to celebrate the night in a collective manner.

On the contrary, this night is meant for worshipping Allah ﷻ in solitude. It is the time to enjoy the direct contact with the Lord of the Universe, and to devote one's attention to Him and Him alone. These are the precious hours of the night in which nobody should intervene between one and his Lord, and one should turn to Allah ﷻ with total concentration, not disturbed or intermitted by anyone else.

That is why Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, observed the acts of worship in this night in total seclusion, not accompanied by anyone, not even by his favourite life companion Sayyidah 'Aishah, Radi-Allahu anha, and that is why all forms of the optional worship

(Nafl Ibadah), are advised by him to be done in individual, not in collective manner.

Compiled by: Moulana Nazir Karolia

Email: mlnazirkarolia@gmail.com

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