

## The Month of *Sha<sup>^</sup>-baan* and the Supplication on its 15<sup>th</sup> Night.

Praise be to `Allaah, the Owner of the universe. May `Allaah raise the rank of Prophet *Muhammad*, ﷺ the greatest of the Messengers. `Allaah, the Glorified and Exalted, is the One Who created the skies and the Earth and Who Exists without being bound to place or time.

*Sha<sup>^</sup>-baan* is the eighth month of the lunar year in the Islamic calendar and immediately precedes *Ramadaan*. For Muslims all around the world, the month of *Sha<sup>^</sup>-baan* is a special time in which they try to do more good deeds and observe more optional fasts than usual. The Prophet ﷺ would fast a lot during this blessed month. On the 15<sup>th</sup> night of *Sha<sup>^</sup>-baan*, it is the habit of the Muslims to observe extra prayers, recite the *Qur`aan*, praise `Allaah and make much supplication (*du`aa*).

*Ibn Maajah* narrated in his *sunan* that the Prophet ﷺ said:

إِذَا كَانَتْ لَيْلَةُ التَّصْفِيفِ مِنْ شَعْبَانَ فَقُومُوا لَيْلَهَا وَصُومُوا نَهَارَهَا

This means: 'Spend the night preceding the 15<sup>th</sup> day of *Sha<sup>^</sup>-baan* in acts of obedience and fast the following day'.

Even though there is a difference of opinion among the top scholars of *hadeeth* about the degree of reliability of this *hadeeth*, acting in accordance with its orders on the 15<sup>th</sup> night of *Sha<sup>^</sup>-baan* is a good practice. This is because the *hadeeth* encourages us to recite the *Qur`aan*, make supplication (i.e. ask `Allaah for certain beneficial things) and praise `Allaah, all of which are recommended matters in *Islam*.

If a person has obligatory prayers to make up then it is better to perform these than the non-obligatory, *sunnah* and *nafl* prayers.

Making supplication is a recommended matter. However one needs to be knowledgeable about what one asks for in a supplication, because some supplications are not allowed. For example, if someone dies as a *kaafir* it is not permissible to supplicate to `Allaah to forgive this person. This is because `Allaah explicitly revealed in the *Qur`aan* that the *kaafir* will remain forever in Hellfire [*Soorah`Ahzaab* (S33), `ayahs 64-65].

Similarly, it is also not permissible to ask `Allaah to prevent every single Muslim from going to Hellfire. This is because in the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ, such as what was narrated in *Saheeh`Al-Bukhaariyy*, it is mentioned that some Muslims will be punished in Hellfire for a limited period of time for the sins that they committed.

Thereafter, it is not permissible to ask `Allaah to change His will because such a supplication is *kufir*. This is because change is a sign of being created and it is not permissible to associate the Creator with the attributes of the creation. It is among the essentials of belief that the Will of `Allaah is eternal and does not change. Hence, it must be understood that when one supplicates to `Allaah for certain things to change, one is not asking `Allaah to change His Will. Rather, when one supplicates one would be asking `Allaah to change something in the creation from difficult to easy, from good to better, or the like.

A fundamental belief of all the Prophets *sallallaahu ^alayhim wa sallam* and their followers is that **there is absolutely nothing like `Allaah**. Among the evidence for this is verse 11 of *Soorah `Ash-Shoo-raa* (S42): *lay-sa ka-mith-li-hee shay`*. This means, “There is absolutely nothing like or similar to `Allaah.” All of the creation is bound by time and place. `Allaah is the Creator of time and place and is not bound by them. Hence, **`Allaah is neither in one place nor in every place, and the questions ‘where’ (i.e. which place) and ‘how’ (i.e. manner of being/physical description) do not apply to `Allaah**. Moreover, time does not lapse upon `Allaah thus it is not said about `Allaah, “When was He?”.

This issue can be summarised with the following statement of *‘Imaam Dhun-noon* (who died in 246 AH): “**Whatever you imagine in your mind, `Allaah is not like it**”. Hence, `Allaah is clear of having a size, a shape, a volume, a body, a limit, a side and organs such as hands and feet, or small parts such as a tongue and teeth. *‘Imaam `Aboo Ja^-far At-Ta-haa-wiyy* (who died in 321 AH) said, “**Whoever attributes `Allaah with any humanly attribute [such as being in a place/direction or being composed of parts] has indeed committed *kufr***”. Such a person needs to leave this *kufr* and immediately embrace *‘Islam* by saying the testifications of faith, which in English are as follows:

“I testify that nothing deserves to be worshipped except God and I testify that *Muhammad* is the Prophet of God” (ﷺ).

In a *saheeh* (strongly authenticated) *hadeeth* narrated by *‘Al-Bu-khaa-riyy* our beloved Prophet ﷺ taught us that `Allaah existed and there was no time, no place, no space, no air, no direction, no up, no above, no left, no right, no ahead, no behind, no sky, no Earth, no darkness, no light, no soul, no spirit, no father, no son, no sound, no uttered letter, no language, no body, no colour and no created thing.

However, there is another *saheeh hadeeth* narrated by *‘Al-Bukhaariyy* which some people misinterpret to mean that at the last part of every night `Allaah descends. *‘Al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar `Al-^Asqalaaniyy*, (who died in 852 AH), explained in his book *Fathul-baaree* that it is not permissible to take this *hadeeth* literally and say that it means “*Allaah* descends”. *Ibn Hajar* said, “*yan-zi-lu*” (literally ‘he descends’) in the *hadeeth* refers to an angel who descends by the order of `Allaah. Moreover, some scholars have narrated this *hadeeth* with a *damma* on the *yaa`*, such that it reads: *يُنزِلُ رَبُّنَا* “*yun-zi-lu rab-bu-naa*”, instead of *يُنزِلُ رَبُّنَا* “*yan-zi-lu rab-bu-naa*”. *Yun-zi-lu rab-bu-naa* means “Our Lord makes something descend ...”.

Hence, the word “*malak* (angel)” is omitted because this detail is implied. Such expressions are also found in English, as in the statement, “The king built the castle”. This does not mean that the king himself laid the bricks to build the castle, but rather that the king ordered the building of the castle. The aforementioned is a *saheeh hadeeth* narrated by *‘Al-Bukhaariyy* but some people quote a weak *hadeeth* in which they say that on the 15<sup>th</sup> of *Sha^-baan*, `Allaah descends throughout the night. This *hadeeth* is not relied upon in the issues of belief and if it was authentic it would still not be permissible to interpret it as meaning that `Allaah descends from one place to another.

In conclusion, it is rewardable and recommended to recite the *Qur`aan*, pray and make supplications during the 15<sup>th</sup> night of *Sha^-baan*. However, it is *kufr* to make any supplication which belies `Allaah or the Prophet ﷺ. Likewise it is *kufr* to believe that `Allaah changes or exists in a place or is attributed with movement.

**And `Allaah, the Glorified, knows best.**

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