

Legislated acts of Worship in Sha'ban

Increase in Fasting

It has been established in the Sunnah that the Prophet (sal Allaahu alayh wa salam) used to increase his fasting in this month.

'Aishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) said,

The Messenger of Allaah (sal Allaahu alayhi wa sallam) used to fast to the extent we would think he will never break his fast, and [at other times] he would not fast to the extent we thought he would never fast.

I never saw the Messenger of Allaah completing a full month of fasting except Ramadhan. I never saw him fasting more in any other month other than Sha'ban. [7]

Note: The meaning of fasting 'all the month' in this narration is fasting most of the month, not actually fasting the whole month in its entirety.

At-Tirmidhee narrates that Ibn al-Mubaarak said: "It is correct in the Arabic language to say regarding a person who has fasted most of the month that he: fasted all the month" [Sunnan at-Tirmidhee]

Innovations in the month of Sha'ban

First: The 'One Thousand' Prayer

This is one of the innovations performed on the night of mid-Sha'ban. It is one hundred Rak'ah prayed in congregation. The Imaam recites Soorah al-Ikhlaas ten times in every Rak'ah. Alternatively, he prays ten Rak'ah and in every Rak'ah he recites Soorah al-Ikhlaas a hundred times after Soorah al-Faatihah. It is a rejected innovation.

Ibn Taymiyyah said,

As for the Marfoo' narration regarding the 'One Thousand' Prayer, it is a lie and fabrication in agreement with the scholars of Knowledge and Hadeeth. [8]

Ibn al-Qayyim said,

It is astonishing that some of the people of who have a sense of knowledge regarding the Sunan are deceived by this trivial action and pray it. [9]

Second: Specifying the night of Mid-Sha'baan for prayer, and the day for fasting.

This is based on the narration: "When it is the night of mid-Sha'ban, then spend its night praying and its day fasting."

This narration has no basis; only the established [authentic] narrations should be implemented and acted upon.

Staying awake during the night is therefore an innovation. As for fasting mid-Sha'ban, if it is with the intention of specifying this day, then it is an innovation. But if it coincides with a person fasting the days of the full moon (i.e. 13th, 14th and 15th), so a person fasts the 15th and the two days before it, then this is a Sunnah which has been proven by authentic Ahadeeth. However, it is important to note that this is a practice for every Islamic month, not specifically Sha'ban.

Third: Praying six Rak'ah in the night of Mid-Sha'ban with the intention that it wards off calamities and gives a long life.

They are prayed along with the recitation of Soorah Yaaseen and Du'aa. This is also an innovation for which there is no evidence from the Sharee'ah. In fact, the scholars gave clearly mentioned it is an innovation.

Imaam an-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy upon him) said,

The prayer known as Salaat ar-Raghaaib is 12 units of Prayer between Maghrib and Ishaa, in the night of the first Friday of Rajab; and also 100 units of prayer on night of mid-Sha'ban - both these prayers are rejected despised innovations. A person should not be deceived by them being mentioned in the book Qoot al-Quloob and also Ihyaa Uloom ad-Deen and neither any narration mentioning them.

This is because everything [which has been narrated regarding it] is false. A person should not be deceived by some of the Imaams who are confused regarding its ruling, even if they wrote a few papers stating that it is recommended, indeed such a person is mistaken. [10]

May peace and blessings be upon His Worshipper and Messenger Muhammad.

Footnotes

[1] This article is a summary of an article authored by Shaykh Ibraheem ar-Ruhaylee. He has written a series of monthly articles, many of them covering each Islamic month. If Allaah permits, we will translate each one of these monthly articles so we know more about the Islamic months. I have included the original Arabic article below for full benefit.

[2] Narrated by Usaamah Ibn Zayd; Collected by an-Nasaaee & Ahmad

[3] Ibn as-Sikkeet said in Islaah al-Mantaq: "'Sha'aba' is used to mean something which differentiates and separates between something and its origin. Death is also called Shu'oob because it separates [the life of a person]."

[4] Ibn Faris said: "Sha'baan was called so due to people going out separately to look for water." [Maqaayees al-Lughah]

An-Nawawi said: "Sha'baan was called so due to them separating and fighting many wars" [Tahreer Alfaadh at-tanbeeh.]

[5] Tha'lab said: "Some of them said that Sha'baan was given this name because it (Sha'ab) ie occurs between Raamadhaan and Rajab." [Lisaan al-Arab]

[6] Ibn as-sayyidihi said: "This is not strong opinion because Sha'ban, if it occurs in a time where the days are longer it will be long, and if it occurs when the days are shorter then it will be shorter.

Ibn al-Mukram said, "This criticism is worthless because in the minds of the people Sha'ban is known as a short month, it finished quickly because of how suddenly Fasting (ie Ramadhan) appears. For this reason it is called 'Ajaan. Allaah knows best" [Taaj al-Uroos]

[7] Narrated Aaisha; Collected by Bukhaaree & Muslim

[8] Ibn Taymiyyah; Iqtidhaa as-Siraat al-Mustiqeem

[9] Ibn al-Qayyim ; Al-Manaar Al-Muneef

[10] An-Nawawi; al-Majmoo; Sharh al-Muhadhabb