

Burial of Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا

Question:

According to the view of the Ahl al-Sunnah, Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا passed away six months after the demise of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ passed away two and a half years after the demise of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Sayyidunā ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ passed away on the 26 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 24 A.H. Thus, what was the reason for these two luminaries being buried in the Rawḍah, although they passed away long after the demise of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ? On the other hand, the sole surviving daughter of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا, the mother of Sayyidunā Ḥasan and Sayyidunā Ḥusayn رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا, was not buried next to the grave of her father? Did Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا make a bequest that her grave be separate from the grave of her father? Or, did Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ clash with the government of the time? Conversely, did the Muslims not allow the beloved daughter of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ to be buried near the grave of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ?

Answer:

The Shī‘ah are masters at deception like their forefathers. The saying goes:

A lazy claimant is quick at being witness.

The shrouding and burial of Sayyidah Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا took place in accordance to her wishes and bequest. Sayyidunā ‘Alī, Sayyidunā ‘Abbās, and other Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ fulfilled all these things in accordance to her bequest. Study the narrations from Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا as reported in *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa’d* vol. 8, under her biography:

1. Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا was the first woman for whom a veiled bier was made. It was made by Sayyidah Asmā’ bint ‘Umays رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا, the wife of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. (narrated by Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)
2. The Ṣalāt al-Janāzah of Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا was led by Sayyidunā ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. Sayyidunā ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, and Sayyidunā Faḍl ibn ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ lowered her into the grave. (narrated by Sayyidunā ‘Amr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)
3. Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Sayyidunā ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, and Sayyidunā Faḍl رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ went into the grave of Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. (narrated by Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا)
4. The Ṣalāt al-Janāzah of Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا was performed by Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. (narrated by Sayyidunā ‘Urwah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا)
5. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ led the Ṣalāt al-Janāzah of Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا. (narrated by Sha‘bī)

6. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ led the Ṣalāt al-Janāzah of Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا and he recited four Takbīrs. (narrated by Ibrāhīm Nakhaṭī)
7. Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ buried Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا at night. (narrated by Zuhrī)

‘Urwah, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī, ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, and Yaḥyā ibn Sa’īd all narrate from Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ that Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ buried her at night. It is apparent from these narrations that however it occurred, it occurred without any argument or difference of opinion; and the responsibility of shrouding and burial was undertaken by the Banū Hāshim. The overpowering factor here is that Sayyidah Fāṭimah al-Zahrā رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا made a special bequest that her bier be lifted at night and she be being buried in Jannat al-Baqī. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ subsequently performed the Ṣalāt al-Janāzah with four Takbīrs.

It is recorded in *I’lām al-Warā bi A’lām al-Hudā* (p. 158), considered a reliable reference by the Shī’ah:

روى أنها توفيت لثالث من جمادى الآخرة إحدى عشرة من الهجرة وبقيت بعد النبي خمسة وتسعين يوماً وروى أربعة أشهر وتولى أمير المؤمنين غسلها أساء بنت عميس وأنها قالت أوصت فاطمة ان لا يغسلها اذا ماتت الا انا وعلي فغسلتها انا وعلي وصلى عليها أمير المؤمنين والحسن والحسين وعمار ومقداد وعقيل والزبير وأبو ذر وسلمان وبريدة ونفر من بني هاشم في جوف الليل ودفنها على أمير المؤمنين سرا بوصيته منها بذلك

It is narrated that she passed away on 3 Jumād al-Ukhrā 11 A.H. She remained alive after Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ for 95 days or it has been narrated for 4 months. Amīr al-Mu’minīn ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and Asmā bint ‘Umays (the wife of Abū Bakr) performed her ghusl. Asmā’ said, “Fāṭimah made a bequest that only ‘Alī and I should perform the ghusl. So ‘Alī and I performed the ghusl for her.” The following individuals were definitely present for her burial; ‘Alī, Ḥasan, Ḥusayn, ‘Ammār, Miqdād, ‘Aqīl, Zubayr, Abū Dhar, Salmān, Buraydah, and a few people of the Banū Hāshim. The burial took place at night and Amīr al-Mu’minīn buried her quietly, in accordance to her bequest.¹

We learn a number of points from the above extract:

1. Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا made a bequest with regards to her ghusl and burial, and Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ carried this out and buried her at night. If she made a bequest to be buried at night in the Rawḍah al-Nabawī, then it would have definitely been mentioned in the narrations, and Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ would not have gone against her bequest and buried her in Jannat al-Baqī. If the Shī’ī objector had proof for this, then they should clarify it with references to the historical works of both parties.
2. Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ buried her at night secretly in accordance to her bequest. If she made a bequest to be buried in the room of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا, then there is a

¹ The same is stated in *Biḥar al-Anwār*, vol. 43, pg. 200. Ibn Rustam al-Ṭabarī records in his *Dalā’il al-Imāmah* (pg. 42) that the women of the Muhājirīn and Anṣār would visit Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا during her final illness. [Translator]

contradiction. How could burial in Masjid al-Nabawī and the Rawḍah be done secretly? The door of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ opened into the Masjid. The Masjid would be filled with those performing optional ṣalāh and worshippers, and there would be a queue of people wanting to recite ṣalāh and salām.

3. The hidden burial at night was not so that Sayyidunā Abū Bakr, Sayyidunā ‘Umar رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا, and the other Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ be left out from participating in the burial, as is the baseless thought of the Shī‘ah, but the reasoning behind this bequest was concealment and to prevent others from gazing at her bier. It is stated in *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* (vol. 6 p. 333):

ودفنت بالبقيع وهي أول من ستر سريرها

She was buried in Jannat al-Baqī. She was the first woman whose bier was covered.

The effect of the bequest to be buried at night was to show that the leader of the women of Jannah is leaving this world during a dark night and besides the close servants of Allah, there is only darkness in the world.

4. Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا appointed Sayyidah Asmā’ bint ‘Umays رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا to perform the ghusl for her and appointed Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ to assist her. Asmā’ was the honourable wife of the Khalīfah Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, and after his demise she married Sayyidunā ‘Alī al-Murtaḍā رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

The love and cordial relations between the household of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ and the Ahl al-Bayt can be gauged from this event. Sayyidah Asmā’ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا not only cared for Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا throughout her illness, with the permission of her husband, but she acquired the honour of a bequest to perform her ghusl, which has an added lustre. It also stands as the highest proof that the Ahl al-Bayt had the greatest of reliance upon the household of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

It is evident from the above mentioned facts that the baseless accusations of the Shī‘ah—that Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was not informed of the demise and Ṣalāt al-Janāzah of Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا—is blown by the wind. When his wife performed the ghusl and shrouding, it is impossible that her husband, khalīfah of the Muslims, was unaware; this too is the illogical perception of the Shī‘ah and actually dishonours and disgraces the Ahl al-Bayt of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. According to us, the funeral was not a hidden matter, as a murderer does with his victim, but a significant amount of Ṣaḥābah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ participated in her funeral.

As for who led the Ṣalāt al-Janāzah: the narrations differ in this regard. One narration mentions that her husband, Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, performed it, while another takes the name of Sayyidunā ‘Abbās, the uncle of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. While another narration takes the name of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. In any case, whoever it may have been; they were all saints and worthy of leading her Ṣalāt al-Janāzah. What a fortunate Ṣalāt al-Janāzah it was and how fortunate was the one who led the Ṣalāt al-Janāzah? May the mercy and blessings of Allah be upon their Nabī صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and upon them all.

The Shī‘ī scholar, Najm al-Ḥasan al-Karārī writes with regards to her demise:

When night fell, ‘Alī gave the ghusl to Sayyidah Fāṭimah and placed the shroud on her. He performed the ṣalāh and took her to Jannat al-Baqī and buried her. One narration states that she was buried between the pulpit and the grave of Rasūlullāh ﷺ.²

There is no need to object against the second narration, it is apparent from the first narration that Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ did all this upon her bequest. If she had made a bequest to be buried in the room of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا, then he would have done so. In this extract, Sayyidunā ‘Alī رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ giving the ghusl means that he helped in bringing and pouring the water. The one who carried out the ghusl was the wife of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ, Sayyidah Asmā’ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا.

The Divergent Shīī Views With Regards to the Burial of Sayyidah Fāṭimah

Contrary to the Ahl al-Sunnah, the Shīī narrations with regards to the burial spot of Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا are contradictory. One narration states she was buried in Jannat al-Baqī, which is the most virtuous graveyard in the world, where ten thousand Ṣaḥābah are buried, as well as the Ummahāt al-Mu’minīn, the daughters of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, and his son—Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ. This narration is the most authentic and the strongest position held according to the Ahl al-Sunnah. The senior Shīī scholars say the same, as the narration of al-Karārī discussed above clarifies. Her grave and the graves of Sayyidunā Ḥasan, Sayyidunā ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, al-Bāqir, and Ja‘far رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ are close to each other in almost a circle. The humble author has observed many well-known Shīī scholars reciting ṣalawāt and salām here.

The second narration indicates that Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا was buried in her home, which is in the Masjid, just past the door.

The third narration mentions that she was buried between the blessed grave of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the mimbar, in the *Rawḍat al-Jannah*. These two places are now part of Masjid al-Nabawī.

Now study the Shīī narration:

ثم قال علي يا أسماء اغسليها وحنطها وكفنيها قال فغسلوها وكفنوها وحنطوها وصلوا عليها ليلا ودفنها بالبقع وماتت بعد العصر قال ابن بابويه جاء هذا الخبر هكذا والصحيح عندي أنها دفنت في بيتها فلما زاد وبنو أمية في المسجد صارت في المسجد

Then ‘Alī said to Asmā’, “O Asmā’, perform the ghusl, apply perfume upon her, and enshroud her.” So they performed the ghusl, enshrouded her, and applied perfume upon her. They then performed the Ṣalāt al-Janāzah at night and buried her in Jannat al-Baqī. She passed away after ‘Aṣr Ṣalāh. Ibn Bābawayh says, “This narration has been reported in this way; however, what is correct according to me is that she

² Chawḍā Sitār-e p. 252

was buried in her house; and when the Banū Umayyah extended the Masjid, this part became part of the Masjid.³

وأما موضع قبرها فاختلف فيه قال بعض أصحابنا أنها دفنت بالبقيع وقال بعضهم انها دفنت في بيتها... وقال بعضهم انها دفنت فيما بين القبر والمنبر

As for the location of her grave; some say that she is buried in Jannat al-Baqī, while others opine that she is buried in her house; while others are of the view that she is buried between the blessed grave of Rasūlullāh ﷺ and the mimbar, which is a portion of Jannah.⁴

The first view is far-fetched and the second is closest to what is correct.

In the light of this narration, if she is definitely buried in her home, or in the section of Masjid al-Nabawī, known as Rawḍat al-Jannah, then what more need be said? In this case, her place of burial will not be hidden at all. This was the headquarters of the Muslim khilāfah, hundreds of Muslims were present all the time, performing ṣalāh, optional devotions, and reciting salām—day and night. The *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffah* would reside here. When it is obvious that these places are perpetually crowded, then how could the burial take place in secret? After studying these narrations and taking into consideration the place of burial, the ‘story’ of the secret funeral, as well as the alleged displeasure of Sayyidah Fāṭimah رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا with the khalīfah and the Muslims (such that she did not want them present at her funeral) and all other Shī‘ī ‘assumptions’ are proven to be nothing more than fabrications, fairy-tales, and works of fiction.

Adapted from *Tuḥfah Imāmiyyah* by Mawlānā Mohr Muḥammad Miyānwālāwī.

³ *Kashf al-Ghummah* p. 149

⁴ *Ilām al-Warā’* p. 159, from *Kashf al-Asrār* p. 26