

Burial of Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah)

Question:

According to the view of the Ahl al-Sunnah, Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah) passed away six months after the demise of Rasūlullāh (saw). Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (ra) passed away two and a half years after the demise of Rasūlullāh (saw). Sayyidunā ‘Umar (ra) 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 (saw)? On the other hand, the sole surviving daughter of Rasūlullāh (saw), Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah), the mother of Sayyidunā Ḥasan and Sayyidunā Ḥusayn (rama), was not buried next to the grave of her father? Did Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah) make a bequest that her grave be separate from the grave of her father? Or, did Sayyidunā ‘Alī (ra) clash with the government of the time? Conversely, did the Muslims not allow the beloved daughter of Rasūlullāh (saw) to be buried near the grave of Rasūlullāh (saw)?

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’ (rah) took place in accordance to her wishes and bequest. Sayyidunā ‘Alī, Sayyidunā ‘Abbās, and other Ṣaḥābah (ram) fulfilled all these things in accordance to her bequest. Study the narrations from Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah) as reported in *Ṭabaqāt Ibn Sa‘d* vol. 8, under her biography:

1. Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah) was the first woman for whom a veiled bier was made. It was made by Sayyidah Asmā’ bint ‘Umays (rah), the wife of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (ra). (narrated by Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās (ra))
2. The Ṣalāt al-Janāzah of Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah) was led by Sayyidunā ‘Abbās ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib (ra). Sayyidunā ‘Abbās (ra), Sayyidunā ‘Alī (ra), and Sayyidunā Faḍl ibn ‘Abbās (ra) lowered her into the grave. (narrated by Sayyidunā ‘Amr (ra))
3. Sayyidunā ‘Alī (ra), Sayyidunā ‘Abbās (ra), and Sayyidunā Faḍl (ra) went into the grave of Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah). (narrated by Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah (rah))
4. The Ṣalāt al-Janāzah of Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah) was performed by Sayyidunā ‘Alī (ra). (narrated by Sayyidunā ‘Urwah (ra))
5. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (ra) led the Ṣalāt al-Janāzah of Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah). (narrated by Sha‘bī)
6. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (ra) led the Ṣalāt al-Janāzah of Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah) and he recited four Takbīrs. (narrated by Ibrāhīm Nakha‘ī)
7. Sayyidunā ‘Alī (ra) buried Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah) at night. (narrated by Zuhri)

‘Urwah, Muḥammad ibn ‘Alī, ‘Ā’ishah (rah), and Yaḥyā ibn Sa‘īd all narrate from Sayyidunā Ibn ‘Abbās (ra) that Sayyidunā ‘Alī (ra) 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 (rah) made a special bequest that her bier be lifted at night and she be being buried in Jannat al-Baqī. Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (ra) subsequently performed the Ṣalāt al-Janāzah with four Takbīrs, as some narrations suggest.

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 (saw) for 95 days or it has been narrated for 4 months. Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Alī (ra) and Asmā bint ‘Umayy (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 (rah) made a bequest with regards to her ghusl and burial, and Sayyidunā ‘Alī (ra) 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 (ra) 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 (ra) 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 (rah), then there is a contradiction. How could burial in Masjid al-Nabawī and the Rawḍah be done secretly? The door of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (ra) 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.

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 (rah) during her final illness. [Translator]

3. The hidden burial at night was not so that Sayyidunā Abū Bakr, Sayyidunā ‘Umar (rama), and the other Ṣaḥābah (ram) 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*:

ودفنت بالبقيع وهي أول من ستر سريرها

She was buried in Jannat al-Baqī. She was the first woman whose bier was covered.²

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 (rah) appointed Sayyidah Asmā’ bint ‘Umays (rah) to perform the ghusl for her and appointed Sayyidunā ‘Alī (ra) to assist her. Asmā’ was the honourable wife of the Khalīfah Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (ra), and after his demise she married Sayyidunā ‘Alī al-Murtaḍā (ra).

The love and cordial relations between the household of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (ra) and the Ahl al-Bayt can be gauged from this event. Sayyidah Asmā’ (rah) not only cared for Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah) 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 (ra).

It is evident from the above mentioned facts that the baseless accusations of the Shī‘ah—that Sayyidunā Abū Bakr (ra) was not informed of the demise and Ṣalāt al-Janāzah of Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah)—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 (saw). According to us, the funeral was not a hidden matter, as a murderer does with his victim, but a significant amount of Ṣaḥābah (ram) 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 (ra), performed it, while another takes the name of Sayyidunā ‘Abbās, the uncle of Rasūlullāh (saw). While another narration takes the name of Sayyidunā Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq (ra). 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 (saw) 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

² *Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 6 p. 333.

narration states that she was buried between the pulpit and the grave of Rasūlullāh (saw).³

There is no need to object against the second narration, it is apparent from the first narration that Sayyidunā ‘Alī (ra) did all this upon her bequest. If she had made a bequest to be buried in the room of Sayyidah ‘Ā’ishah (rah), then he would have done so. In this extract, Sayyidunā ‘Alī (ra) 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 (ra), Sayyidah Asmā’ (rah).

The Divergent Shī’ī Views With Regards to the Burial of Sayyidah Fāṭimah

Contrary to the Ahl al-Sunnah, the Shī’ī narrations with regards to the burial spot of Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah) 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 (saw), and his son—Sayyidunā Ibrāhīm (ram). This narration is the most authentic and the strongest position held according to the Ahl al-Sunnah. The senior Shī’ī 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 (ram) are close to each other in almost a circle. The humble author has observed many well-known Shī’ī scholars reciting ṣalawāt and salām here.

The second narration indicates that Sayyidah Fāṭimah (rah) 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 (saw) and the mimbar, in the *Rawḍat al-Jannah*. These two places are now part of Masjid al-Nabawī.

Now study the Shī’ī narration:

ثم قال علي يا أسماء اغسليها وحنطها وكفنها 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 was buried in her

³ *Chawdā Sītār-e*, p. 252.

house; and when the Banū Umayyah extended the Masjid, this part became part of the Masjid.⁴

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 (saw) and the mimbar, which is a portion of Jannah.⁵

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 (rah) 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 Miyānwālawī.

⁴ *Kashf al-Ghummaḥ*, p. 149.

⁵ *I‘lām al-Warā’*, p. 159, from *Kashf al-Asrār*, p. 26.