164215 - According to Islamic custom, the night belongs to the day that follows it

the question

My father died two days ago, may Allah have mercy on him. I want to know which are the surahs concerning which it is narrated that they will benefit the deceased in his grave and protect him from punishment. He died at 1 o’clock on Saturday morning. Is this regarded as Friday night, i.e., before dawn, because the period before dawn is called “the last third of the night”? Or is Friday night the end of Thursday? This matter also always confuses me with regard to Laylat al-Qadr in Ramadan. Every year I get confused: is Laylat al-Qadr the night after its signs appear in the morning? The hadeeth mentions the signs of Laylat al-Qadr and speaks of its morning – does its morning mean after Laylat al-Qadr has ended and morning comes with these signs so that we know that Laylat al-Qadr has ended, or is it a signal that that night is today, and that its morning is before Laylat al-Qadr?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

There is no report in the Prophet’s Sunnah to suggest that there are specific surahs or verses or adhkaar which, if the living recite them over the dead, they will have any effect such as making the deceased steadfast when he is questioned in al-barzakh, or that they will protect the deceased from the punishment of the grave. That which benefits the deceased most at that time, of actions on the part of the living, is their offering supplication (du‘aa’) for him and praying for forgiveness for him.

There are a number of answers on our website which highlight the weakness of all the reports that have been narrated about the virtue of reciting Surah Yaa-Seen in particular. Some people believe

that this surah has a particular effect in making things easier for the deceased in his grave, and they recite it over the grave after the burial, even though there is no proven report to support that in the Prophet's Sunnah. Please see the following answers: 6460, 82800, 75894 and 72201

Secondly:

According to Arab custom and Islamic teaching, the night belongs to the day that comes after it, not the day that comes before it. There is a great deal of evidence to support that, but the clearest evidence is what the people say on occasions of worship, such as the following:

-1-

Sighting the new moon of Ramadan, which indicates that the blessed month has begun. It may be noted that this night is regarded as part of Ramadan and the people pray Taraweeh on that night.

-2-

Sighting the new moon of Eid al-Fitr, which indicates that Ramadan has ended and the month of Shawwaal has begun. On that night the Muslims stop praying Taraweeh.

When an Islamic text mentions the night of Friday, or the night of Eid, and so on, what is meant is the night according to the Islamic custom mentioned above.

The same applies with regard to Laylat al-Qadr. There is a saheeh hadeeth which clearly indicates that the morning belongs to the night that comes before it. This is the hadeeth of Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (may Allah be pleased with him) according to which the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to observe i'tikaaf during the middle ten days of Ramadan. He observed i'tikaaf one year then, on the night of the twenty-first – which was the night on the morning of which he would come out of his i'tikaaf – he said: 'Whoever was observing i'tikaaf with me, let him observe i'tikaaf for the last ten days, for I was shown this night (Laylat al-Qadr), then I was caused to forget it. I saw myself prostrating in water and mud on the following morning (lit. on its morning). So seek it in the last ten days, and seek it on every odd-numbered night." It rained that night, and the mosque was covered with palm branches and the mosque leaked, and my own

eyes saw the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) with marks of water and mud on his forehead on the morning of the twenty-first.

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (2027) and Muslim (1167)

Think about the words “the night on the morning of which he would come out” and “on the morning of the twenty first”– this indicates that the morning belongs to the night that has just passed.

Imam al-Qurtubi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, in his commentary on the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): “And We appointed for Moosa (Moses) thirty nights and added (to the period) ten (more), and he completed the term, appointed by his Lord, of forty nights” [al-A ‘raaf 7:142]:

The verse also indicates that the date starts with the night, not the day, because Allah, may He be exalted, says “thirty nights”. That is because the night is the beginning of the month. This is also how the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them) spoke of days. It was narrated from them that they used to say: We fasted five with the Messenger of Allah. But the non-Arabs did it differently and based their counting on days, because their calendar was solar.

End quote from al-Jaami‘ li Ahkaam al-Qur’an (7/267)

Thirdly:

Thus it is clear that if a person dies at 1 a.m. on Saturday, then according to Islamic custom he died on “the night of Saturday” and not on “Friday night.” So he is not included in the marfoo‘ hadeeth of ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn ‘Aas, “There is no Muslim who dies on the day of Friday or the night of Friday but Allah will protect him from the trial of the grave.”

Narrated by at-Tirmidhi (1074); classed as hasan by al-Albaani in Saheeh at-Tirmidhi

However it should be noted that there is a difference of opinion among the scholars of hadeeth as to whether this hadeeth is saheeh or da‘eef. The majority are of the view that it is da‘eef.

For more information on its isnaad, please see the following link:

http://www.alukah.net/publications_Competitions/1008/38

And Allah knows best.