



بَحْوثُ فِقْهِيَّة

Fiqh Handbooks

قِيَامُ اللَّيْلِ

The Night Prayers Qiyām & Tarāwīḥ

3rd Edition

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مُصْطَفَى الْجِبَالِيِّ

Muhammad *ibn* Muṣṭafā al-Jibāly

Includes works by

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Muḥammad Nāṣir ud-Dīn al-Albānī

Fiqh Handbooks — 2

قيام الليل

The Night Prayers:
Qiyām & Tarāwih

﴿تَتَجَاوَىٰ جُنُوبَهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ
خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ ﴿١٦﴾﴾

«They (the believers) forsake their sleep (to worship Allāh). They invoke their Lord with fear and hope; and they spend out (charity) from what We bestow on them.»

[As-Sajdah 32:16]

Fiqh Handbooks — 2
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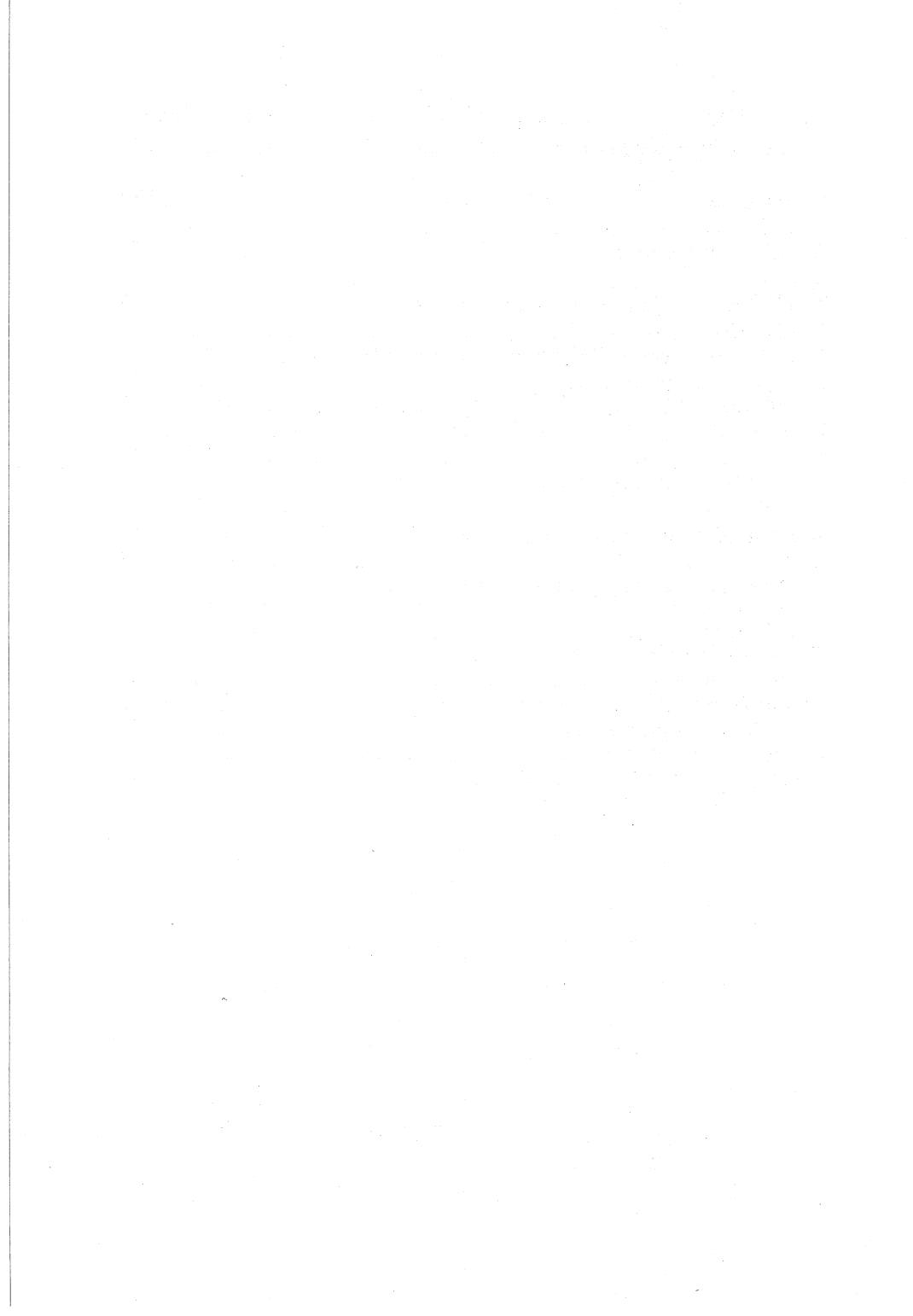
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PREAMBLE

Opening Sermon

«إِنَّ الْحَمْدَ لِلَّهِ، نَحْمَدُهُ وَنَسْتَعِينُهُ وَنَسْتَغْفِرُهُ، وَنَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنْ شُرُورِ أَنْفُسِنَا
وَمِنْ سَيِّئَاتِ أَعْمَالِنَا. مَنْ يَهْدِهِ اللَّهُ فَلَا مُضِلَّ لَهُ، وَمَنْ يَضِلَّ فَلَا هَادِيَ
لَهُ.»

Al-hamdu lillāh. Indeed, all praise is due to Allāh. We praise Him and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allāh from the evil within ourselves and from our wrongdoings. He whom Allāh guides, no one can misguide; and he whom He misguides, no one can guide.

«وَأَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ.»

I bear witness that there is no (true) god except Allāh — alone without a partner, and I bear witness that Muḥammad (ﷺ) is His 'abd (servant) and messenger.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ تَقَاتِهِ وَلَا تَمُوتُنَّ إِلَّا وَأَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ
﴿١٣٢﴾

«O you who believe, fear Allāh His due fear, and do not die except as Muslims.»¹

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ
مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ

1. *Āl 'Imrān* 3:102.

﴿رَقِيبًا ﴿١﴾﴾

«O mankind, fear your Lord who created you from a single person, and created from it its mate, and dispersed from them many men and women. And fear Allāh, through whom you adjure one another, and (the ties of) the wombs. Indeed, Allāh is ever-Watchful over you.»¹

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧﴾ يُصْلِحْ لَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ
وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٧١﴾﴾

«O you who believe, fear Allāh and speak upright speech. He will then rectify your deeds and forgive your sins, and he who obeys Allāh and His Messenger has certainly achieved a great victory.»^{2,3}

«أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، وَخَيْرَ الْهَدْيِ هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ، وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحْدَثَاتُهَا، وَكُلَّ مُحْدَثَةٍ بِدْعَةٌ، وَكُلَّ بِدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَكُلَّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ.»

Indeed, the best speech is Allāh's (جَلَّالَ) Book and the best guidance is Muḥammad's (ﷺ) guidance. The worst affairs (of religion) are those innovated (by people), for every such innovation is an act of misguidance leading to the Fire.⁴

1. *An-Nisā'* 4:1.

2. *Al-Aḥzāb* 33:70-71.

3. The above paragraphs constitute "*Khuṭbat-ul-Ḥājah* (the Sermon of Need)". The Prophet (ﷺ) often started his speeches with this, as was recorded by Muslim (868), Abū Dāwūd, and others, from Ibn Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās, and other companions (رضي الله عنهم).

4. The Prophet (ﷺ) also said this paragraph when starting a speech, as was recorded by Muslim (867), an-Nasā'ī, and others, from Jābir Bin 'Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه).

Our Mission: Purification and Cultivation

Islāmic beliefs and practices must stem from Allāh's (ﷻ) Book and His Messenger's (ﷺ) Sunnah, and should be guided by the knowledge and understanding of the *Ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم). Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأَطِيعُوا أُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ﴾

«O you who believe, obey Allāh and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you.»¹

This is the path of guidance that Allāh (ﷻ) prescribed for those who seek true success and happiness.

Since many Muslims have departed, to varying degrees, from this magnificent path, any work intending to revive Islām among the Muslims must involve two fundamental elements: purification and cultivation.

These two elements, detailed below, were central to the Prophet's (ﷺ) mission, as Allāh (ﷻ) indicates:

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي بَعَثَ فِي الْأُمِّيِّينَ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ يَتْلُو عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١﴾﴾

«It is He who has sent among the unlettered a Messenger from themselves: reciting to them His *āyāt*, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and Wisdom — while verily they were previously in manifest error.»²

1. Purification

Purification (or *taṣfiyah*) is the process of clearing the path of Islām from obstacles and obscurities, and then guiding people

1. *An-Nisā'* 4:59.

2. *Al-Jum'ah* 62:2.

to it. We must purify our sources of knowledge, beliefs, and practices.

A. PURIFYING OUR SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

The Islamic *Shari'ah*, when first revealed, was pure from alterations, misinterpretations, and falsehoods. However, this soon changed — misguided sects began to misinterpret the Qur'an, fabricate *hadiths*, and spread their misguided opinions. Yet, the Prophet (ﷺ) gave us glad tidings that in each generation there would be virtuous scholars who purify the religion and cleanse it from all impurity:

«يَحْمِلُ هَذَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ كُلِّ خَلْفٍ عُدُوهُ، يَنْفُونَ عَنْهُ تَحْرِيفَ الْعَالِينَ،
وَأَتْحَالَ الْمُبْطِلِينَ، وَتَأْوِيلَ الْجَاهِلِينَ.»

‘This knowledge will be carried by the trustworthy individuals from every generation; they expel from it alterations of extremists, falsehoods of pretenders, and misinterpretations of the ignorant.’¹

Therefore, it is key that we seek knowledge which is clear from all impurities, and that we then understand it as the *salaf* understood it, and that we look to what the aforementioned esteemed scholars have said in regards to the conflicting views that later appeared.

B. PURIFYING OUR BELIEFS

Philosophical arguments, cultural dictates, and alien notions have tainted the beliefs of many Muslims. Therefore, it is imperative to purify the Islāmic faith, basing it solely on the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah, cleansing it from all forms of *shirk* and

1. Recorded by al-Bayhaqī, Ibn ‘Adiyy, and others from Abū Hurayrah, Ibn Mas‘ūd, and other companions (رضي الله عنهم). Verified to be *hasan* by al-Albānī (*Hidāyat-ur-Ruwāh* 239).

innovations, and aligning it with the belief of the *Ṣaḥābah* whom Allāh (ﷻ) praised, saying:

﴿فَإِنْ ءَامَنُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا ءَامَنْتُمْ بِهِ فَقَدْ أَهْتَدُوا﴾

«So if they believe as you (O Muḥammad and your companions) believe, they are truly guided.»¹

C. PURIFYING OUR PRACTICES

Innovated acts of worship (*bid'ahs*), not authorized by Allāh (ﷻ) or His Messenger (ﷺ), have marred the religious practices of many Muslims. Therefore, it is imperative to purify the Islāmic practices, basing them on authentic texts from the Qur'an and Sunnah, matching them with the understanding and practice of the *Ṣaḥābah*, and cleansing them from *bid'ahs*. This is the "path of the believers" that Allāh (ﷻ) describes as:

﴿وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ ۗ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿١١٥﴾﴾

«He who opposes the Messenger — after guidance became clear to him — and follows other than the believers' path: We will give him the consequence he chose and admit him into hell — the most awful destination.»²

2. Cultivation

Cultivation (or *tarbiyah*) is the steady and persistent process of developing one's self upon the correct path of Islām and abiding by its teachings. It is to establish our beliefs and practices upon the purified knowledge, and then continue to grow with this knowledge. Cultivation goes hand-in-hand with purification.

1. *Al-Baqarah* 2:137.

2. *An-Nisa'* 4:115.

A. FOLLOWING THE SALAF

Purification of our beliefs and practices must extend into cultivating ourselves and our communities upon the purified teachings, striving to be true followers of our great *salaf*, the *Ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم). Praising both the *Ṣaḥābah* and their true followers, Allāh (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) says:

﴿وَالسَّابِقُونَ السَّابِقُونَ
 يَأْتُونَ اللَّهَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ
 وَاللَّيِّنِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ
 وَاللَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْ
 الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ
 وَالَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُمْ
 مِنْ قَبْلِ يَوْمِ تَبَايَعِهِمْ
 وَعَدَّ لَهُمْ مَا كَانُوا
 يَنتَظِرُونَ﴾

«The first to embrace Islām among the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār, and also those who follow them in the best way: Allāh is pleased with them and they are with Him. He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, and in which they will abide eternally. This is the supreme success.»¹

The *Ṣaḥābah* were the righteous group that Allāh (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) chose to accompany His Prophet (ﷺ) and receive His Message. They left the false religion of their forefathers, eagerly accompanied the Prophet (ﷺ), learnt directly from him, helped him establish the first and best Islāmic community, and accurately spread his teachings and passed them on.

B. CALLING TO THE PURE RELIGION

A vital part of cultivation is to invite all people, Muslims and non-Muslims, to the pure and unadulterated religion of Islām. This should be done by:

- a. Adorning ourselves with good manners and righteous actions to become exemplary representatives of our noble message. Allāh (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) says:

1. At-Tawbah 9:100.

﴿كُونُوا رَبَّيْنَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾﴾

«Be pious scholars of the Lord because of what you have taught of the Book and because of what you have studied.»¹

- b. Presenting our message with wisdom, benevolence, and kindness. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدِّ لَهُمْ يَأْتِيهِمْ أَحْسَنُ﴾

«Invite to your Lord's path with wisdom and good exhortation, and argue with them in the best way.»²

Undertaking the obligation of inviting to Allāh's path is the duty of all Muslims, individually and collectively, each according to his best ability. Allāh (ﷻ) commands:

﴿وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ﴾

«Help one another in righteousness and piety; and do not help one another in sinning and transgression.»³

This is the only way to attain Allāh's acceptance and achieve happiness and success. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُفٍ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٣﴾﴾

«By time, a human is surely in loss, except for those who believe, do righteous deeds, mutually enjoin the

1. *Āl 'Imrān* 3:79.

2. *An-Naḥl* 16:125.

3. *Al-Mā'idah* 5:2.

truth, and mutually enjoin perseverance.»¹

This, further, is the way to establish among the believers a true and honest compassion that emanates from a strong unifying cause. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَأَعْتَصِمُوا بِحَبْلِ اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا وَلَا تَفَرَّقُوا﴾

«Hold fast, collectively, to Allāh's rope, and do not disunite.»²

We seek Allāh's guidance and help, and we implore Him (ﷻ) to enable us to purify and cultivate ourselves and our communities in the way that is most pleasing to Him — *āmīn*.

1. *Al-'Aṣr* 103:1-3.

2. *Āl 'Imrān* 3:103.

PREFACE

Fiqh Handbooks

Our “*Fiqh Handbooks*” series consists of detailed treatises covering various *fiqh* subjects. We have published two titles in this series:

- ① **Festivals & Celebrations in Islām** الأعياد والاحتفالات في الإسلام
- ② **The Night Prayers: *Qiyām & Tarāwīḥ*** قيام الليل

This Book

In this book, we found our discussions on clear proofs from the Qur’ān, the Sunnah, and authentic narrations from the *ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم). With this, we hope to convey the truth, in sincere fulfillment of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) command:

«بَلِّغُوا عَنِّي وَلَوْ آيَةً، ...»

«Convey (the knowledge) from me — even is it be as little as one āyah, ...»¹

We also hope that this will bring us, *in shā’a ’Llāh*, multiple rewards. Jarīr Bin ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ سَنَّ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ سُنَّةً حَسَنَةً، فَلَهُ أَجْرُهَا، وَأَجْرُ مَنْ عَمِلَ بِهَا بَعْدَهُ، مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ يَنْقُصَ مِنْ أَجُورِهِمْ شَيْءٌ.»

«He who initiates in Islām a good way gets his reward for it, as well as rewards similar to all those who follow

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (3461), Aḥmad, and others, from ‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Amr (رضي الله عنه).

him into it, without reducing any of their rewards.)¹

We seek by this Allāh's (ﷻ) help, facilitation, and acceptance — He is All Hearing and Answering.

SECOND EDITION

The first two editions of this book largely consisted of a translation and merging of two works by the prominent 'ālim Muḥammad Nāṣir ud-Dīn al-Albānī (رحمته), namely, *Ṣalāt ut-Tarāwīḥ* and *Qiyāmu Ramaḍān*.

These two books, however, excluded discussion of many important issues related to *qiyām* (the night prayer). This had to do with the historical circumstances that led to their writing, and the scope of the message they intended to convey to the readers.

In our earlier two editions, we were forced to supplement the translation with additional material to improve coverage of the *qiyām* subject. Our work, however, remained artificial to some degree, and lacking in regard to various issues.

This new edition, therefore, strives to remedy the earlier shortcomings. The entire book has been rewritten and expanded with two goals in mind:

- a. Provide a comprehensive and independent coverage of the subject of *qiyām*, together with other issues that are considered immediately related to it.
- b. Keep the above-mentioned works by al-Albānī (رحمته) as a backbone for the discussion of specific issues, most importantly: the number of *rak'āt* of *qiyām*. To this end, we applied the following strategy:
 - i. *Ḥadīth* analysis of the authenticity of narrations was entirely moved from the main text to footnotes.
 - ii. Statements by al-Albānī that are deemed vital for emphasizing some points are singled out from the

1. Recorded by Muslim (1017), Aḥmad, and others.

surrounding text and put in an indented quotational format.

In this edition, we have also included the Arabic text for all *ḥadīths*, together with most of the Arabic vowel signs (*tashkīl*).

Furthermore, in our *ḥadīth* references, we now provide the *ḥadīth* reference numbers for al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrations (according to ‘Abd ul-Bāqī’s standards). As for other narrations, we provide the locations where they are verified to be authentic (usually from al-Albānī’s (رحمته) books).

We hope that this book can now serve as a stand-alone and comprehensive reference on the subject of *qiyām* and related issues. From Allāh (ﷻ) we seek *tawfiq* (facilitation).

THIRD EDITON

In this third edition, the Author’s children made the follow changes:

- The typesetting and typography (including layout, spacing, and fonts) was improved.
- The layout of the chapters was improved.
- Some discussions were abridged.
- Chapter 5, which was a discussion on the limit of the number of *rak‘āt*, was removed from the book. It was a technical and lengthy discussion, thus only useful to a subset of readers. In exchange, a brief section (named: “Limiting *Qiyām* to Eleven *Rak‘āt*”) was added to Chapter 4. For those who wish to read the original chapter, it can be found at: kspublications.com/files/qiyam-rakat.pdf.

Acknowledgment

All praise and thanks are due to our Lord (ﷻ) who facilitated the completion of this work.

I ask Allāh (ﷻ) to reward all the Muslims who helped and

supported this effort in various ways.

In particular, I ask Him (ﷺ) to reward my *shaykh* and teacher, Muḥammad Nāṣir-ud-Dīn al-Albānī (رحمته), whose works have been of tremendous benefit to me.

I ask Him (ﷺ) to reward my wife whose ceaseless support and advice have always provided a gentle push toward the completion of my projects.

I ask Him (ﷺ) to reward my children and all individuals who proofread the manuscript and provided beneficial feedback. I ask Him (ﷺ) to reward my friend Abū Khalīl al-Amrīkī who helped in the translation and editing of the first edition.

I ask Him (ﷺ) to reward my brother Sādiq al-Jibāly who has always been instrumental in supervising the editing and printing of my books, as well as stocking and shipping them.

I ask Him (ﷺ) to make this humble effort helpful and profitable to the Muslims, forgive my shortcomings, purify my work from hypocrisy and conceit, and accept it from me.

﴿رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي رَبَّنَا وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءَنَا ﴿١﴾ رَبَّنَا
أَغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْحِسَابُ ﴿٢﴾﴾

«My Lord, keep me constant in prayer, and the same for my progeny. Our Lord, answer my *du'a*. Our Lord, forgive me, my parents, and the believers on Judgment Day.»¹

My Lord, bestow Your peace and praise upon our Prophet Muḥammad (ﷺ).

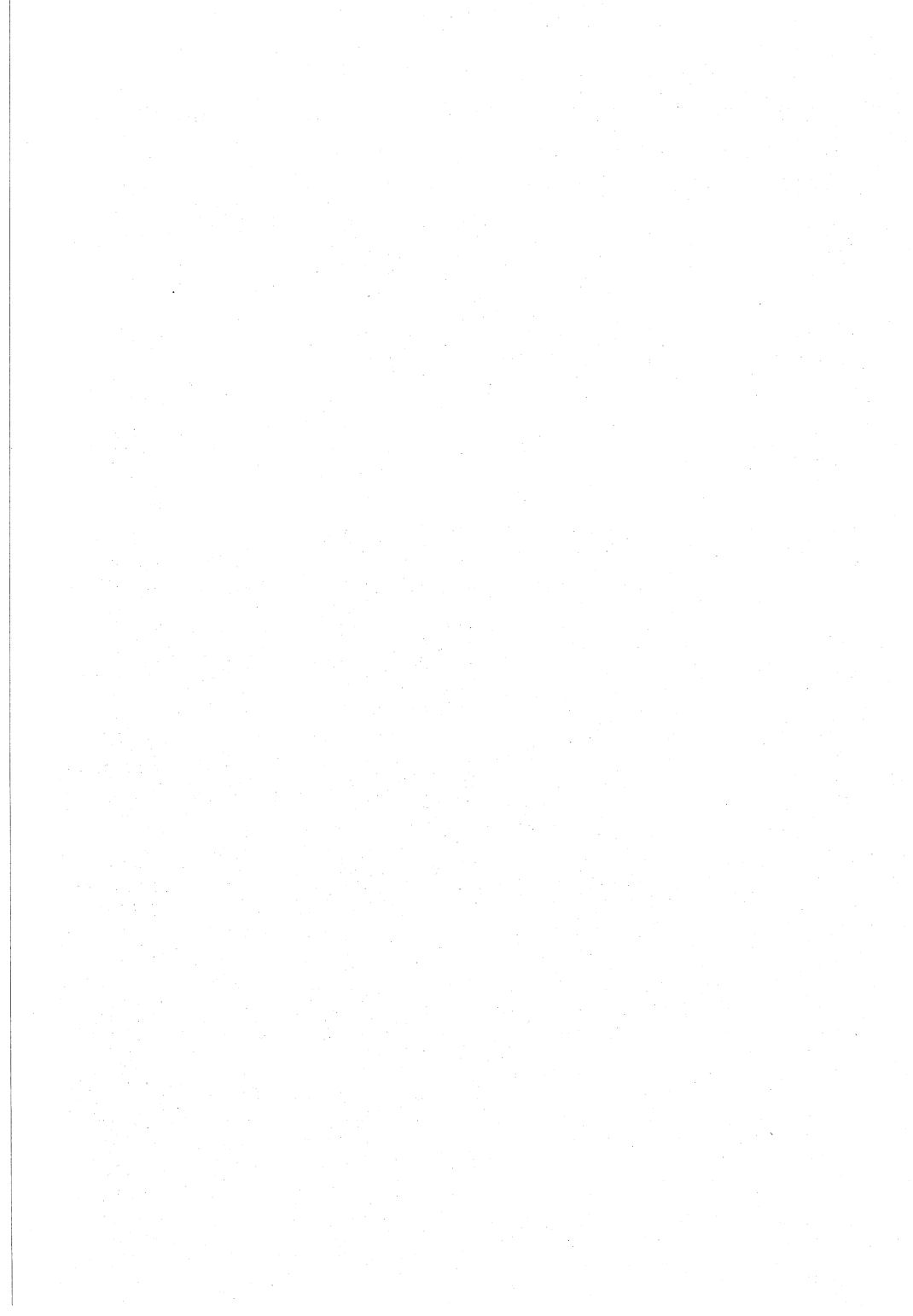
أبو عبد الله محمد بن مصطفى الجبالي
Muḥammad ibn Muṣṭafā al-Jibāly

And we, the Author's children, ask Allāh (ﷻ) to accept this

1. *Ibrāhīm* 14:40-41.

work from our father, and all of his works, and ask Allāh (ﷻ) to cure him completely, and to return him to his full health.

Jumāda al-Ākhirah 1443 H
January 2022



INTRODUCTION

1

Qiyām, Tahajjud, Tarāwīḥ, and Witr

DEFINITIONS

The night prayer (*ṣalāt ul-layl*) is defined as:

“The voluntary night prayer whose time extends from after ‘*ishā*’ prayer until dawn.”

Different names are used to describe this prayer, as follows:

Name	Meaning	Reason for this Name
<i>Ṣalāt ul-layl</i>	The night prayer	It is prayed at night.
<i>Qiyām</i>	Standing	It involves a long standing for reciting lengthy portions of the Qur’ān.
<i>Qiyām ul-layl</i>	Standing at night	
<i>Tahajjud</i> ¹	Remaining awake	It requires being awake during the night.
<i>Witr</i>	Odd-numbered	It consists of an odd number of <i>rak’āt</i> . <i>Witr</i> often refers to the last one or three <i>rak’āt</i> of this prayer.
<i>Tarāwīḥ</i>	Prayer with resting periods	It may require resting between consecutive pairs of <i>rak’āt</i> .

1. See *Lisān ul-‘Arab* under “*Hajada*”.

Qiyām, *tahajjud*, and *tarāwīḥ* are all the same prayer. There is only one voluntary night prayer, with different names used to describe it. Praying it at the later part of the night does not make it different from *qiyām*.

In this book, we will most often use “*qiyām*” to refer to this prayer. Sometimes we will use the term *tarāwīḥ*, because people are more familiar with it than *qiyām* when referring to the *qiyām* of *Ramaḍān*.

In some countries and *masjids*, mostly during the last part of *Ramaḍān*, people pray *tarāwīḥ* early in the night, and then pray another prayer that they call *tahajjud* at the end of the night.¹

TARĀWĪḤ

From the earliest times, Muslims have used the name *tarāwīḥ* to describe the night prayers of *Ramaḍān*. Ibn ul-Manzūr (رحمته الله) said:

“*Tarwīḥah* of the month of *Ramaḍān* was thus named because people would rest after every four *rak‘āt*. In one report (it is named), ‘*salāt-ut-Tarāwīḥ*’ because they used to rest after every two *taslīms*.”²

While most ‘*ulamā’* allow using this name, some of them have reservations because it carries the implication that one must rest after every four *rak‘āt* of *tarāwīḥ*. According to Shaykh Muḥammad Shaqrah:

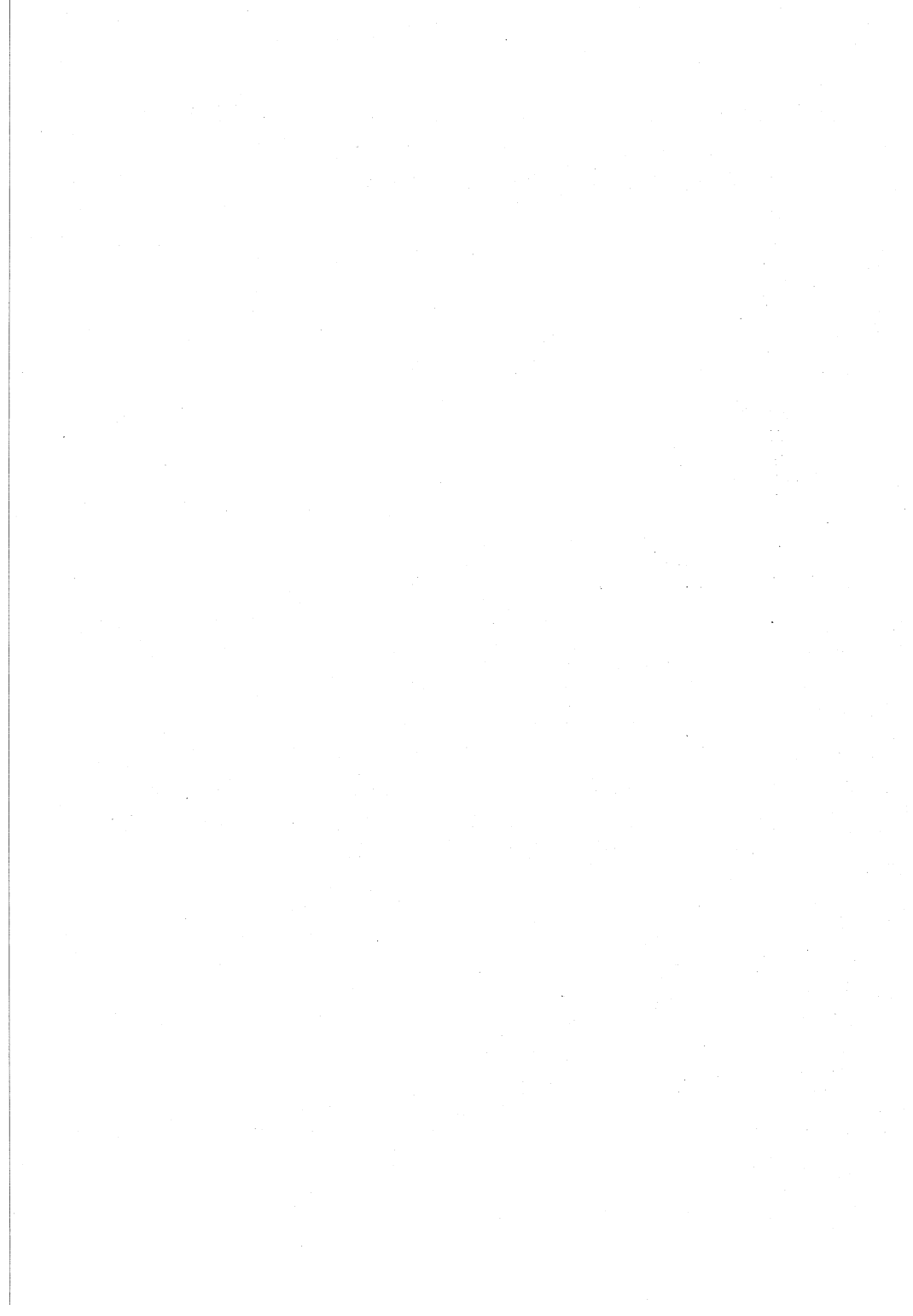
“The reason for this name is that, due to long recitation, the people used to rest after every four *rak‘āt*. This rest became a necessary element of *tarāwīḥ*, even with very short recitations. This led people to think that this is a correct name revealed to Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ). ... Thus, it should be brought to the attention of people that

1. The *salaf* called this *ta‘qīb*, and it was deemed acceptable by Anas (رضي الله عنه) and others after him.

2. See *Lisān ul-‘Arab* under “*Rawaha*”.

this is a novel name. It is better to use the name that the Prophet (ﷺ) used for this prayer: *qiyām*.”¹

1. *Irshād us-Sāri* 3:75-77.



EXCELLENCE OF QIYĀM

2

Excellence of the Night Worship

THE BLESSED TIME INTERVAL

Each night, there is a blessed time interval during which Allāh (ﷻ) accepts the supplication. Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ فِي اللَّيْلِ لَسَاعَةً لَا يُوَفَّقُهَا رَجُلٌ مُسْلِمٌ يَسْأَلُ اللَّهَ فِيهَا خَيْرًا مِنْ أَمْرِ
الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ، إِلَّا أَعْطَاهُ إِيَّاهُ، وَذَلِكَ كُلُّ لَيْلَةٍ.»

(Indeed, there is a period of the night during which no Muslim would be asking Allāh for a favor from this life or the hereafter, but that Allāh grants it to him. And this (hour) is every night.)¹

Commenting on this *ḥadīth*, an-Nawawī (رحمته) said:

“This affirms that there is an interval of acceptance every night, encouraging the believers to supplicate throughout the night — with the hope of encountering that interval.”²

EXCELLENCE OF THE LAST ONE-THIRD OF THE NIGHT

The blessed interval in Jābir’s above *ḥadīth* coincides with the last

1. Recorded by Muslim (757) and Aḥmad.

2. Al-Minhāj 6:278.

one-third of the night.

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«يَنْزِلُ رَبُّنَا ﷻ كُلَّ لَيْلَةٍ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الدُّنْيَا حِينَ يَبْقَى ثُلُثُ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرِ يَقُولُ: "أَنَا الْمَلِكُ، أَنَا الْمَلِكُ! مَنْ يَدْعُونِي، فَأَسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ؟ مَنْ يَسْأَلُنِي فَأُعْطِيَهُ؟ مَنْ يَسْتَغْفِرُنِي فَأَغْفِرَ لَهُ؟"»

(Our Lord (ﷻ) descends every night to the lowest heaven when only one third of the night has remained. He says, "I am the King, I am the King! Who will invoke Me, so that I may answer him? Who will ask Me, so that I may give him? Who will seek My forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?")¹

Abū Umāmah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«أَسْمَعُ الدَّعَاءَ جَوْفَ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرِ، وَدُبُرِ الصَّلَوَاتِ الْمَكْتُوبَاتِ.»

(Supplications are most acceptable in the last depth of the night, and at the end of the prescribed prayers.)²

‘Amr Ibn ‘Abasah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«أَقْرَبُ مَا يَكُونُ الرَّبُّ مِنَ الْعَبْدِ فِي جَوْفِ اللَّيْلِ الْآخِرِ، فَإِنْ اسْتَطَعْتَ أَنْ تَكُونَ مِمَّنْ يَذْكُرُ اللَّهَ فِي تِلْكَ السَّاعَةِ فَكُنْ.»

(The closest the Lord is to the (believing) servant is in the last part of the night. If you can be among those who extol Allāh during that hour, do so.)³

Because of this, the Prophet (ﷺ) was consistent in rising to

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1145, 6321, 7494), Muslim (758), and others.
2. Recorded by at-Tirmithī. Verified to be ḥasan by al-Albānī (*Hidāyat ur-Ruwāh* no. 1188).
3. Recorded by at-Tirmithī, an-Nasā’ī, and al-Ḥākim. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi’* no. 1173 and *Hidāyat ur-Ruwāh* no. 1186).

worship Allāh (ﷻ) during the last part of the night. ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported:

(كَانَ يَنَامُ أَوَّلَ اللَّيْلِ، وَيُحْيِي آخِرَهُ.)

“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to sleep in the early part of the night, and wake up (for worship) during its last part.”¹

And ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported:

(كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ يَقُومُ إِذَا سَمِعَ الصَّارِخَ.)

“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to rise (for the night prayer) when he heard the rooster crowing.”²

Likewise, a Muslim who plans to wake up during the night for worshipping Allāh should give priority to the blessed interval: the night’s last one-third.

We note that the night extends from sunset to dawn, and can be divided into three parts. As an example, if sunset is at 6:00 p.m., and dawn at 4:30 a.m., the night is 10½ hours long, and each one third is 3½ hours. The blessed interval would then extend from 1:00 a.m. to 4:30 a.m.

Excellence of Praying Qiyām

When a Muslim wakes up during the night, even accidentally, he should be keen to pray two or more *rak‘āt* of *qiyām*. *Qiyām* entails for a Muslim countless virtues and benefits.

A PRACTICE OF THE RIGHTEOUS BELIEVERS

A great quality of true believers is that they allocate a good portion of their night for worshipping Allāh and supplicating to

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1146), Muslim (739), and others.

2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1132, 6461, 6462), Muslim (741), and others.

Him. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾﴾

«Their (the believers') sides forsake their beds, invoking their Lord in fear and aspiration, and spending out of what We bestowed on them. And no soul knows what has been concealed for them of (pleasures) that comforts the eye as reward for what they used to do.»¹

Abū Hurayrah and Sahl Ibn Sa'd as-Sā'idi (رضي الله عنه) reported from the Prophet (ﷺ) that Allāh (ﷻ) says:

«أَعَدَدْتُ لِعِبَادِي الصَّالِحِينَ مَا لَا عَيْنٌ رَأَتْ، وَلَا أُذُنٌ سَمِعَتْ، وَلَا خَطَرَ عَلَى قَلْبِ بَشَرٍ، مُصَدِّقًا ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابِ اللَّهِ.»

I have prepared for My righteous servants that which no eye has seen, no ear has heard of, and never occurred to a human heart. This is testified to by the Book of Allāh.)

The Prophet (ﷺ) then recited the two above *āyāt* (32:16-17).² Mu'āth Ibn Jabal (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) told him:

«أَلَا أَدُلُّكَ عَلَىٰ أَبْوَابِ الْخَيْرِ؟ الصَّوْمُ جُنَّةٌ، وَالصَّدَقَةُ تُطْفِئُ الْحَطِيبَةَ كَمَا يُطْفِئُ النَّارَ الْمَاءُ، وَصَلَاةُ الرَّجُلِ مِنْ جَوْفِ اللَّيْلِ.»

(Should I not guide you to the doors to goodness? Fasting is a protection (from sins), charity extinguishes sin as water extinguishes fire, and a man's prayer

1. *As-Sajdah* 32:16-17.

2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (3244, 4779, 4780, 7498), Muslim (2824, 2825), and others.

during the night's depth (is also one of those doors).)

The Prophet (ﷺ) then recited the above two *āyāt* from *Sūrat-us-Sajdah* (32:16-17).¹

From the above *āyāt* and two *ḥadīths*, we learn that *qiyām* is one of the doors of goodness for a believer, and that it brings in its folds great and concealed rewards that Allāh (ﷻ) keeps as a surprise for the believers, for when they enter *Jannah*.

Allāh (ﷻ) also says:

﴿إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿١٥﴾ ءَأَحْزِينَ مَا ءَاتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَإِلَّا سَحَارًا هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾﴾

«Indeed, the pious will be (in *Jannah*) among gardens and springs, enjoying what their Lord has granted them. Indeed, they previously were doers of good. They used to sleep but little of the night, and in the hours before dawn they would beseech forgiveness.»²

And Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا ﴿٦٤﴾﴾

«And they (Allāh's truthful servants) are those who spend the night prostrating and standing (in prayer) for their Lord.»³

Abū Umāmah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

﴿عَلَيْكُمْ بِقِيَامِ اللَّيْلِ فَإِنَّهُ دَأْبُ الصَّالِحِينَ قَبْلَكُمْ، وَهُوَ قُرْبَةٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ،﴾

1. Recorded by at-Tirmithī, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhīb wat-Tarhīb* no. 2866).

2. *Ath-Thāriyāt* 51:15-18.

3. *Al-Furqān* 25:64.

وَمَكْفَرَةٌ لِلْسَّيِّئَاتِ، وَمَنْهَاءٌ لِلْإِثْمِ.»

[I urge you to perform *qiyām* at night, because it was the consistent way of the righteous people who preceded you, it is a means of coming closer to your Lord, it is a means of expiating your wrongdoings, and is a restraint against sinning.]¹

Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that when the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to make a strong supplication for some people, he would say:

«جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ صَلَاةَ قَوْمٍ أَبْرَارٍ، يَقُومُونَ اللَّيْلَ وَيَصُومُونَ النَّهَارَ، لَيْسُوا بِأَثْمَةٍ وَلَا فُجَّارٍ.»

Ja'al-Allāhu 'alaykum ṣalāta qawmin abrār, yaqūmūn-al-layla wa-yaṣūmūn-an-nahār, laysū bi-athamatin walā fujjār — May Allāh make righteous people pray for you, who stand at night (in worship) and fast during the day, and who are neither avid sinners nor corrupt.)²

A MEANS FOR ATTAINING ALLĀH'S NEARNESS, MERCY, LOVE, AND APPROVAL

Qiyām is a means of coming closer to Allāh (ﷻ). In Abū Umāmah's (رضي الله عنه) earlier *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«عَلَيْكُمْ بِقِيَامِ اللَّيْلِ فَإِنَّهُ قُرْبَةٌ إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ.»

[I urge you to perform *qiyām* at night, because it is a means of coming closer to your Lord.]³

1. Recorded by at-Tirmithī, at-Ṭabarānī, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Hidāyat ur-Ruwāh* no. 1184 and *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 452).

2. Recorded by Ibn Hamīd and ad-Ḍiyā'. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1810).

3. Recorded by at-Tirmithī, at-Ṭabarānī, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Hidāyat ur-Ruwāh* no. 1184 and *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 452).

Furthermore, Allāh’s mercy engulfs a Muslim who rises and also wakes his spouse for *qiyām*. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«رَحِمَ اللَّهُ رَجُلًا قَامَ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَصَلَّى، وَأَيَقظَ امْرَأَتَهُ فَصَلَّتْ، فَإِنْ أَبَتْ نَضَحَ فِي وَجْهِهَا الْمَاءَ. رَحِمَ اللَّهُ امْرَأَةً قَامَتْ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَصَلَّتْ، وَأَيَقظَتْ زَوْجَهَا فَصَلَّى، فَإِنْ أْبَى نَضَحَتْ فِي وَجْهِهِ الْمَاءَ.»

(May Allāh have mercy on a man who wakes up at night, prays, and wakes his wife to pray; and if she refuses, he sprinkles water on her face. And may Allāh have mercy on a woman who wakes up at night, prays, and wakes her husband to pray; and if he refuses, she sprinkles water on his face.)¹

Also, Allāh loves and appreciates a person who is consistent in praying *qiyām*. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«ثَلَاثَةٌ يُحِبُّهُمُ اللَّهُ وَيُحِبُّكَ، يَضْحَكُ إِلَيْهِمْ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُ بِهِمْ: الَّذِي إِذَا انْكَشَفَتْ فِتْنَةٌ قَاتَلَ وِإِذَا بَنَفْسِهِ لِلَّهِ يَضْحَكُ، فَإِمَّا أَنْ يُقْتَلَ، وَإِمَّا أَنْ يَنْصُرَهُ اللَّهُ وَيُحِبُّهُ وَيُكْفِيهِ، فَيَقُولُ: "انظُرُوا إِلَى عَبْدِي كَيْفَ صَبَرَ لِي نَفْسُهُ،" وَالَّذِي لَهُ امْرَأَةٌ حَسَنَاءُ وَفِرَاشٌ لَيِّنٌ حَسَنٌ، فَيَقُومُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَيَذُرُ شَهْوَتَهُ فَيَذُكُرُنِي وَيُنَاجِيَنِي وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَرَقَدَ، وَالَّذِي يَكُونُ فِي سَفَرٍ وَكَانَ مَعَهُ رَكْبٌ فَسَهَرُوا وَنَصَبُوا ثُمَّ هَجَعُوا فَقَامَ فِي السَّحَرِ فِي سَرَّاءٍ أَوْ ضَرَّاءٍ.»

(There are three individuals that Allāh loves, smiles at, and is pleased with: (1) A soldier who, finding a group of the army running away, fights in their place, putting his life at stake. Thus, he is either killed, or Allāh helps

1. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 3494 and *Ṣaḥīḥu Abi Dāwūd* no. 1181).

and protects him. Allāh would say (to the angels), “Look at my servant, putting his life at stake for My sake.” (2) A person who has a beautiful wife and a soft and good bed. Yet, he rises up (for worship) a portion of the night. Allāh would say, “He leaves off his desire to extol and address Me, even though he could have slept.” (3) And a person traveling with some company. They stay up late working and then go to sleep, but he rises up (for worship) before dawn, both during ease and hardship.¹

A MEANS FOR REACHING A HIGH STATUS IN *JANNAH*

Praying at night is one of the simple and effective means for entering *Jannah*. We saw this earlier in the *āyāt* of *ath-Thāriyāt* (15-18).

‘Abdullāh Ibn Salām (رضي الله عنه) reported that the first thing that he heard from the Prophet (ﷺ) when he (رضي الله عنه) entered al-Madīnah was:

«أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، أَفْشُوا السَّلَامَ، وَأَطْعُمُوا الطَّعَامَ، وَصَلُّوا الْأَرْحَامَ، وَصَلُّوا بِاللَّيْلِ
وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ، تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ.»

‘O people, spread (the greeting of) *salām*, provide food (for the needy), be kind to your kin, and pray at night while (other) people are asleep — you would then enter *Jannah* in peace.’²

Qiyām is a means not for merely entering *Jannah*, but also for rising to high levels in it. Mu‘āth Ibn Jabal (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«الدَّرَجَاتُ: إِطْعَامُ الطَّعَامِ، وَأَفْشَاءُ السَّلَامِ، وَلِينُ الْكَلَامِ، وَالصَّلَاةُ بِاللَّيْلِ

1. Recorded by al-Ḥākim, al-Bayhaqī, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 3478 and *Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib wat-Tarhīb* no. 629).
2. Recorded by at-Tirmithī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhib wat-Tarhīb* no. 616).

وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ.»

(The (acts that elevate in) levels (of *Jannah*) are: feeding food (to the needy), spreading (the greeting of) *salām*, speaking kindly (to others), and praying at night while people are asleep.)¹

And ‘Alī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ فِي الْجَنَّةِ غُرَفًا تَرَى ظُهُورُهَا مِنْ بُطُونِهَا وَيُطَوَّنُهَا مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا، أَعَدَّهَا اللَّهُ لِمَنْ أَلَانَ الْكَلَامَ، وَأَطْعَمَ الطَّعَامَ، وَتَابَعَ الصَّيَامَ، وَصَلَّى بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ.»

Indeed, there are in *Jannah* (transparent and luxurious) rooms whose outside is visible from inside, and whose inside is visible from outside. Allāh prepared them for those who speak kindly, feed food (to the needy), fast consecutively, and pray at night while people are asleep.)²

A PRACTICE OF THE KNOWLEDGEABLE

Those who are endowed with true knowledge spend portions of their night worshiping their Lord (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) with utter devotion.

Allāh (جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ) says;

﴿أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَنِيتُ عَائَةَ الْيَلِيلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُوا رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ
فَلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ



«Or (can an ungrateful human being be ever compared

1. Recorded by at-Tirmithī, Aḥmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 3169, *as-Sunnah* nos. 388, 465-471, and *Irwāʾ ul-Ghālīl* no. 684).
2. Recorded by at-Tirmithī, Aḥmad, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Hidāyat ur-Ruwāh* no. 1189).

to) that who devoutly worships (Allāh) during portions of the night, prostrating and standing (in prayer), fearing the hereafter and hoping for his Lord's mercy? Say, "Can those who know (the Truth) ever equal those who do not know?" Indeed, only those who are endowed with (conscious) hearts will remember this.»¹

A MEANS FOR EXPIATION AND SUPPRESSION OF SINS

Qiyām is a means of expiating our sins, and it also helps us refrain from committing many sins. In Abū Umāmah's (رضي الله عنه) earlier *ḥadīth*, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«عَلَيْكُمْ بِقِيَامِ اللَّيْلِ فَإِنَّهُ مَكْفَرَةٌ لِلْسَّيِّئَاتِ وَمَنْهَأَةٌ عَنِ الْإِثْمِ.»

﴿I urge you to perform *qiyām* at night, because it is a means of expiating your wrongdoings, and is a restraint against sinning.﴾²

THE BEST OF VOLUNTARY PRAYERS

Qiyām is the best of voluntary prayers, because it is performed at a time when there is little interruption and distractions, and because it is less likely to contain elements of show-off. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«أَفْضَلُ الصَّلَاةِ بَعْدَ صَلَاةِ الْمَكْتُوبَةِ الصَّلَاةُ فِي جَوْفِ اللَّيْلِ.»

﴿The best of prayers, after those prescribed, are those prayed in the depth of the night.﴾³

A SHOW OF GRATITUDE TO ALLĀH

Rising for *qiyām* is an important expression of gratitude for Allāh's infinite favors upon us. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) practiced

1. *Az-Zumar* 39:9.

2. Recorded by at-Tirmidhī, at-Ṭabarānī, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ḥidāyat ur-Ruwāh* no. 1184 and *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 452).

3. Recorded by Muslim (1163) and Aḥmad.

this in the finest manner.

Al-Mughīrah, Abū Hurayrah, and ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet’s (ﷺ) *qiyām* prayer was so long that his legs swelled and his feet cracked. They asked him, “Why should you do this, O Allāh’s Messenger, when all of your sins, past and future, have been forgiven?” He replied:

«أَفَلَا أَكُونُ عَبْدًا شَكُورًا؟»

«Should I not be a servant who is perpetually grateful (to Allāh)?»¹

AN INDICATION OF EXCELLENCE

Consistency in *qiyām* is an important trait of goodness and righteousness for a believer. ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنهما) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said about him:

«نِعْمَ الرَّجُلُ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، لَوْ كَانَ يُصَلِّي مِنَ اللَّيْلِ.»

«A good man ‘Abdullāh is — if only he prays at night.»

‘Abdullāh’s son, Sālim (رضي الله عنه), reported that after the Prophet (ﷺ) said this, his father would not sleep at night but very little.²

A SOURCE OF HONOR

A believer who consistently prays *qiyām* is awarded honor among Allāh’s creation. Sahl Ibn Sa’d, Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh, and ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنهم), all reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«أَتَانِي جِبْرِيلُ فَقَالَ: ”يَا مُحَمَّدُ، عِشْ مَا شِئْتَ فَإِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ، وَأَحِبِّ مَنْ شِئْتَ فَإِنَّكَ مُفَارِقُهُ، وَاَعْمَلْ مَا شِئْتَ فَإِنَّكَ مَجْرِيٌّ بِهِ. وَاَعْلَمْ أَنَّ شَرَفَ الْمُؤْمِنِ قِيَامُ اللَّيْلِ، وَعِزَّهُ اسْتِغْنَاؤُهُ عَنِ النَّاسِ.“»

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1130, 4836, 6471), Muslim (2819), and others.

2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1121, 3740, 3741, 7030) and Muslim (2479).

Jibrīl came to me and said, “O Muḥammad, live as long as you wish — you will then surely die; love whoever you wish — you will surely depart from him; and do as you wish — you will surely be judged according to it. And know that a believer’s honor lies in his *qiyām* at night, and his dignity is in being (financially) independent from other people.”¹

ATTAINING AWARENESS AND EXPELLING INDIFFERENCE

Praying at least two *rak‘āt* at night gives a Muslim the status of those who frequently remember Allāh. This makes him aware of his position and duties in life — contrary to most people who live a marginal life, neglecting their major duties for the sake of worthless worldly pleasures.

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) and Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا أُيقِظَ الرَّجُلُ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَصَلَّى، أَوْ صَلَّى رُكْعَتَيْنِ جَمِيعًا، كُتِبَا فِي
الذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهُ وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ.»

«When a man wakes his wife at night, and they pray two *rak‘āt* together, they are recorded among the men and women who frequently remember Allāh.»²

Reciting as little as ten *āyāt* during *qiyām* protects against neglect and carelessness. Furthermore, reciting more Qur‘ān increases a Muslim’s awareness and enhances his status and records. ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ قَامَ بِعَشْرِ آيَاتٍ لَمْ يُكْتَبْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ، وَمَنْ قَامَ بِإِمَانَةٍ آيَةٍ كُتِبَ مِنْ

1. Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Awsaṭ*), al-Bayhaqī, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 831).
2. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā‘ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Tarḥīb wat-Tarḥīb* no. 626 and *Hidāyat ur-Ruwāḥ* no. 1194).

القَائِمِينَ، وَمَنْ قَامَ بِأَلْفِ آيَةٍ كُتِبَ مِنَ الْمُقْنَطِرِينَ.»

﴿Whoever prays *qiyām* reciting ten *āyāt*, he will not be recorded among the neglectful. Whoever prays *qiyām* reciting one hundred *āyāt*, he will be recorded among the devout. And whoever prays *qiyām* reciting one thousand *āyāt*, he will be recorded among those with a multitude of good deeds.﴾¹

ACCEPTANCE OF SUPPLICATIONS

When a Muslim rises up at night for prayer and supplication, his supplications become more likely to be accepted.

We saw earlier (p. 5) that Allāh particularly accepts the supplications during the later part of the night. In one of the narrations of Abū Hurayrah's *ḥadīth* that we cited there, the Prophet (ﷺ) added:

«تُمْ يَبْسُطُ يَدَيْهِ وَيَقُولُ: "مَنْ يُقْرِضُ غَيْرَ عُدُومٍ، وَلَا ظُلُومٍ؟" حَتَّى يَنْفَجِرَ الْفَجْرُ.»

﴿Allāh then extends His hand and says, "Who wants to invest (good deeds) with the One who is not wasteful or unjust?" He continues to say this until the dawn arrives.﴾²

REMEMBERING THE QUR'ĀN

Praying *qiyām* provides an important means of memorizing and remembering Qur'ān. 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا قَامَ صَاحِبُ الْقُرْآنِ فَقَرَأَهُ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ ذَكَرَهُ، وَإِذَا لَمْ يَقُمْ بِهِ نَسِيَهُ.»

1. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Ḥibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 642 and *Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhīb wat-Tarhīb* no. 639).

2. Recorded by Muslim (758).

«When the holder of Qur'an stands (in prayer) and recites it during the night and day, he remembers it; and when he does not stand (for reciting it), he forgets it.»¹

PROTECTION FROM TRIBULATIONS

Qiyām provides an abode and protection from tribulations. Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) once woke up terrified and said:

«سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، ماذا أنزلَ اللهُ مِنَ الْخَرَائِنِ، وما أنزلَ مِنَ الْفِتَنِ! مَنْ يُوقِظُ صَوَاحِبَاتِ الْحُجْرَاتِ لِكَيْ يُصَلِّيْنَ؟ رَبِّ كَاسِيَةٍ فِي الدُّنْيَا عَارِيَّةٌ فِي الْآخِرَةِ.»

«Exalted be Allāh! What treasures has Allāh sent down, and what tribulations! Who would wake up the Women of the Rooms (i.e., my wives) to pray? How many dressed (wealthy) woman in this life who will be naked (in hell) in the hereafter.»²

INTERCESSION IN THE HEREAFTER

Praying *qiyām* involves reciting portions of the Qur'an. This recited Qur'an will intercede on Judgment Day for the person who used to recite it. 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«الصِّيَامُ وَالْقُرْآنُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَشْفَعَانِ لِلْعَبْدِ، يَقُولُ الصِّيَامُ: "رَبِّ مَنَعْتُهُ الطَّعَامَ وَالشَّرَابَ بِالنَّهَارِ فَشَفِّعْنِي فِيهِ"، وَيَقُولُ الْقُرْآنُ: "رَبِّ مَنَعْتُهُ النَّوْمَ بِاللَّيْلِ فَشَفِّعْنِي فِيهِ"، فَيُشَفِّعَانِ.»

«Both fasting and the Qur'an intercede for a (believing)

1. Recorded by Muslim (789).

2. Recorded by al-Bukhāri (115, 5844, 6218, 7069).

servant on Resurrection Day. Fasting will say (to Allāh), “O my Lord, I prevented him from eating and fulfilling his desire during the day, so allow me to intercede for him.” And the Qur’ān will say, “(My Lord,) I prevented him from sleeping during the night, so allow me to intercede for him.” Thus they are allowed to intercede for him.¹

The Excellence of Qiyām in Ramaḍān

There are many *ḥadīths* describing an additional merit for *qiyām* during the nights of *Ramaḍān*.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS

Praying *qiyām* during *Ramaḍān*, if it is done with sincerity and according to the Sunnah, is a great means of atonement of sins. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported:

“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) encouraged the people, without making it an absolute obligation, to perform *qiyām* during *Ramaḍān*. He used to say:

«مَنْ قَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا، غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.»

(Whoever stands (in *qiyām*) in *Ramaḍān* out of faith and expectation (of Allāh’s reward), all his previous sins will be forgiven.)

This continued until Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) passed, and during the *khilāfah* of Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and a portion of that of ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه).²

1. Recorded by Aḥmad, at-Ṭabarānī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhīb wat-Tarhīb* no. 984, 1429).
2. Recorded by Muslim (759). The Prophet’s words in this *ḥadīth* are in al-Bukhārī (37) as well.

A MOST VIRTUOUS ACT

Praying *qiyām* during *Ramaḍān* is one of the acts that would bring a person to the status of the most righteous and the martyrs. ‘Amr Ibn Murrah al-Juhanī reported that a man from the tribe of Quḍā’ah said to the Messenger (ﷺ), “O Allāh’s Messenger, what would be my status if I should testify that there is no (true) god except Allāh and that you are Allāh’s Messenger, pray the five prayers, fast and pray *qiyām* in *Ramaḍān*, and give *zakāh*?” The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ مَاتَ عَلَىٰ هَذَا كَانَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ وَالشُّهَدَاءِ.»

(Anyone dying upon this will be (in *Jannah*) among the most truthful and the martyrs.)¹

SUMMARY: THE BENEFITS AND EXCELLENCE OF QIYĀM

1. A practice of the righteous believers
2. Attaining Allāh’s nearness, mercy, love, and approval
3. A means for reaching a high status in *Jannah*
4. A way of the knowledgeable
5. Expiation and suppression of sins
6. The best of voluntary prayers
7. A show of gratitude to Allāh
8. An indication of excellence
9. A source of honor
10. Attaining awareness and expelling indifference
11. Acceptance of supplications
12. Remembering the Qur’ān
13. Protection from tribulations
14. Intercession in the hereafter

1. Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Hībbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Saḥīḥ ut-Targhīb wat-Tarhīb* no. 355,745, 989).

CONSISTENCY

It is important to be regular in praying *qiyām* and in maintaining a constant number of *rak'āt* and length of recitation. A regular and moderate *qiyām* is better than a sporadic and long one.

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَدْوَمُهَا وَإِنْ قَلَّ.»

‘The most beloved deeds to Allāh are the most consistent, even if they are little.’¹

And ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported:

«كَانَ أَحَبُّ الْأَعْمَالِ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ: الدَّائِمُ.»

“The most beloved deeds to Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) were the consistent ones.”²

Consistency and moderation help maintain the deeds for a long term, whereas deeds that come in big bursts tend to fade away quickly. This is particularly true for *qiyām* where a person may slacken in performing it because of sleeping late, or because of cold weather that makes him reluctant to rise from the warmth of his bed. This would then make him blameworthy for dropping a good practice that he used to uphold. ‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Amr (رضي الله عنه)

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (6462) and Muslim (783).

2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1132, 6461, 6462), Muslim (741), and others.

reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him:

«يا عَبْدَ اللَّهِ، لا تَكُنْ مِثْلَ فُلَانٍ كَانَ يَقُومُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ، فَتَرَكَ قِيَامَ اللَّيْلِ.»

(O ‘Abdullāh, do not be like so-and-so. He used to pray at night, then he stopped doing it.)¹

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) said to Masrūq (رضي الله عنه):

«لا تَدَعِ قِيَامَ اللَّيْلِ فَإِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَانَ لا يَدْعُهُ، وَكانَ إِذا مَرَضَ، أَوْ كَسِلَ، صَلَّى قَاعِدًا.»

“Do not ever stop praying *qiyām*. The Prophet (ﷺ) never ceased praying it. When he was sick or weak, he prayed sitting.”²

When a believer is consistent in praying *qiyām*, but is forced to miss it sometimes for travel or sickness, Allāh (ﷻ) would record his *qiyām* during the nights that he missed as if he prayed normally during them. Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِذا مَرَضَ الْعَبْدُ، أَوْ سافَرَ، كُتِبَ لَهُ مِثْلُ ما كانَ يَعمَلُ مُقيماً صَحيحاً.»

(When a servant (of Allāh) becomes sick or travels, it is recorded for him similar (good deeds) to what he used to do when he was settled or healthy.)³

In addition, if a believer takes all measures to rise up for *qiyām*, but is overwhelmed with sleep on a particular night, Allāh, the Most Merciful (ﷻ), would also record for him that night as though he prayed normally during it. Abū ad-Dardā’ (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1152) and Muslim (1159).

2. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Khuzaymah. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Targhīb wat-Tarhīb* no. 632).

3. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2996), Abū Dāwūd, and others.

«مَنْ أَتَى فِرَاشَهُ، وَهُوَ يَنْوِي أَنْ يَقُومَ فَيُصَلِّيَ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ، فَغَلَبَتْهُ عَيْنُهُ حَتَّى يُضْبِحَ، كُتِبَ لَهُ مَا نَوَى، وَكَانَ نَوْمُهُ صَدَقَةً عَلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ.»

‘When a person goes to bed intending to rise up for prayer during the night, but is overcome by sleep until the morning, what he intended is recorded for him. In addition, his sleep is a *ṣadaqah* for him from his Lord.’¹

MODERATION

Qiyām does not have to be extensive and straining. ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«خُذُوا مِنَ الْعَمَلِ مَا تُطِيقُونَ، فَوَاللَّهِ، لَا يَسْأَمُ اللَّهُ حَتَّى تَسْأَمُوا.»

‘Take upon yourselves only deeds that you can (consistently) maintain, for by Allāh, Allāh is never bored (i.e., never stops accepting your deeds) until you are (by interrupting your worship).’²

We have seen above that *qiyām* may be fulfilled by merely praying two *rak‘āt* and reciting ten *āyāt*.

So a Muslim should assess his ability and tailor his *qiyām* accordingly.

ATTENTIVENESS

Qiyām should be prayed with a present mind, paying attention to the meanings of the recitation and *athkār*. This is why it is important to sleep early in the night. A person who had too little sleep may completely lose attention, and may twist the texts and meanings that he utters. ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) and Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

1. Recorded by an-Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā’ ul-Ghalīl* no. 454).

2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (43) and Muslim (785).

«إِذَا نَعَسَ أَحَدُكُمْ فِي الصَّلَاةِ فَلْيَرْقُدْ حَتَّى يَذْهَبَ عَنْهُ النَّوْمُ، فَإِنَّ أَحَدَكُمْ إِذَا صَلَّى وَهُوَ نَاعِسٌ لَعَلَّهُ يَذْهَبُ يَسْتَغْفِرُ، فَيَسُبُّ نَفْسَهُ.»

(When one of you becomes sleepy while praying (*qiyām*), let him lie down (for a short sleep) until sleep departs from him. Indeed, when one of you prays while he is sleepy, instead of seeking forgiveness, he might curse himself.)¹

LONG STANDING AND RECITATION

We indicated above that it is best to be moderate in performing *qiyām* (and other acts of worship). Moderation varies with people's circumstances and abilities. A person who is capable of standing in *qiyām* for a long time should do so, because this is the best form of *qiyām* and the most beloved to Allāh (ﷻ).

We cite again 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr's (رضي الله عنه) *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ قَامَ بِمِائَةِ آيَةٍ كُتِبَ مِنَ الْقَائِمِينَ، وَمَنْ قَامَ بِأَلْفِ آيَةٍ كُتِبَ مِنَ الْمُقْنَطِرِينَ.»

(Whoever prays *qiyām* reciting one hundred *āyāt*, he will be recorded among the devout. And whoever prays *qiyām* reciting one thousand *āyāt*, he will be recorded among those with a multitude of good deeds.)²

Miscellaneous Etiquettes

MENTIONING ALLĀH UPON RISING FROM BED

The first thing to do when getting up from sleep is mentioning Allāh. There are many *ḥadīths* reporting what the Prophet (ﷺ) said

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (212, 213) and Muslim (786).

2. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Ḥibbān, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 642 and *Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Tarḥīb wat-Tarḥīb* no. 639).

when he got up at night. In the following we list a few of them.

‘Ubādah Ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ تَعَارَّ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَقَالَ حِينَ يَسْتَقِيطُ: «لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ، وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ، بِيَدِهِ الْخَيْرُ، وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ. وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ، وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ، وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، وَاللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ، وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ، رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي.» ثُمَّ دَعَا، اسْتَجِيبَ لَهُ، فَإِنْ عَزَمَ قَامَ فَتَوَضَّأَ، ثُمَّ صَلَّى تُقُبِلَتْ صَلَاتُهُ.»

(Whoever wakes up at night and says:

“Lā ilāha illallāhu waḥdahū lā sharīka lahū, lah ul-mulku wa-lah ul-ḥamdu, yuhyī wa-yumīt, bi-yadih il-khayr, wa-huwa ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr. Wa-subḥān allāhi, wal-ḥamdu lillāhi, wa-lā ilāha illallāhu, wallāhu akbaru, wa-lā ḥawla wa-lā quwwata illā billāh, rabb ighfir lī.”—

“There is no (true) god except Allāh, alone without any partners. To Him belongs the sovereignty; and to Him belongs all praise. He gives life and death, in His Hand is all good, and He is capable of everything. Exalted is Allāh; all praise be to Allāh; there is no (true) god except Allāh; Allāh is the Greatest; there is no power or might except from Allāh. My Lord! Forgive me.”

Anyone who says this then supplicates, his supplication will be answered; and if he performs *wuḍu’* then prays, his prayer will be accepted.)¹

Rabī’ah Ibn Ka’b al-Aslamī (رضي الله عنه) reported that he used to sleep by the house of the Prophet (ﷺ). When he (ﷺ) got up at night, he would hear him repeat for a long time:

«سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.»

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1154), Aḥmad, and others.

(Subhāna rabb il-‘ālamīn — Exalted is the Lord of the creation.)

Then he (ﷺ) would repeat for a long time:

«سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ.»

(Subhānallāhi wa bi-ḥamdih — Exalted is Allāh, all praise belongs to Him.)¹

Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that one night he slept in his Aunt Maymūna’s² (رضي الله عنها) house when the Prophet (ﷺ) was there (for her turn). The Prophet (ﷺ) chatted with his wife for a while and then slept. When it was the last one-third of the night or shortly thereafter, the Prophet (ﷺ) sat up, looked at the sky, and recited the last eleven āyāt of Sūrat Āl ‘Imrān:

﴿إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

«Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and earth, and in the alternation of the night and day, are signs for those of understanding ...»³

He (ﷺ) then reached for the waterskin, untied its cap, poured water in a vessel, and performed a good and complete *wuḍū’* without being excessive (in using the water). The Prophet (ﷺ) then stood for prayer, and he (Ibn ‘Abbās) got up, performed *wuḍū’*, and stood on his left side. He (ﷺ) held him with his ear and moved him to his right side. He completed thirteen *rak‘āt* of prayer, then lied down and slept until his breathing became audible — as he used to do when he slept — until Bilāl came to

1. Recorded by an-Nasā’ī, at-Tirmithī, Abū ‘Uwānah, and Muslim (in part). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*al-Mishkāt* no. 1218).

2. This was also the house of Ibn ‘Abbās’s maternal aunt, Maymūnah (رضي الله عنها).

3. *Āl ‘Imrān* 3:190-200.

announce that it is time for the (morning) prayer, upon which he (ﷺ) prayed without performing *wuḍūʿ*. Among what he (ﷺ) said in supplication (during the night prayers):

«اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْ فِي قَلْبِي نُورًا، وَفِي بَصَرِي نُورًا، وَفِي سَمْعِي نُورًا، وَفِي لِسَانِي نُورًا، وَعَنْ يَمِينِي نُورًا، وَعَنْ يَسَارِي نُورًا، وَفَوْقِي نُورًا، وَتَحْتِي نُورًا، وَأَمَامِي نُورًا، وَخَلْفِي نُورًا، وَاجْعَلْ لِي نُورًا.»

Allāhum-aj'al fī qalbī nūran wa-fī baṣarī nūrā, wa-fī sam'ī nūran wa-fī lisānī nūrā, wa-'an yamīnī nūran wa-'an yasārī nūrā, wa-fawqī nūran wa-taḥṭī nūrā, wa-'amāmī nūran wa-khalfī nūrā, wa-ǰ'al lī nūran —

O Allāh! Place light in my heart, light in my eyesight, light in my hearing, light in my tongue, light on my right, light on my left, light above me, light underneath me, light in front of me, and light behind me, and grant me light.¹

PRAYING DURING THE LAST PART OF THE NIGHT

The best time for praying *qiyām* is the last one-third of the night. This has been mentioned in several of the earlier *ḥadīths*. Furthermore, 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Amr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ أَحَبَّ الصَّيَامِ إِلَى اللَّهِ صِيَامُ دَاوُدَ، وَأَحَبُّ الصَّلَاةِ إِلَى اللَّهِ صَلَاةُ دَاوُدَ، كَانَ يَنَامُ نِصْفَ اللَّيْلِ، وَيَقُومُ ثُلُثَهُ، وَيَنَامُ سُدُسَهُ، كَانَ يَصُومُ يَوْمًا وَيُفْطِرُ يَوْمًا.»

⟨The most beloved prayer to Allāh is Dāwūd's. He slept one half of the night, got up (and prayed) for one third, and then slept (the remaining) one sixth.⟩²

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1120) and Muslim (763).

2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (3420) and Muslim (1159).

ABLUTION AND CLEANING THE TEETH

As soon as he got up, the Prophet (ﷺ) would brush his teeth with *siwāk*¹ and perform *wuḍū*'. A number of such reports, narrated by 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) and Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما), will be cited later.

PRAYING WITH A MODERATE VOICE-LEVEL

One may pray *qiyām* silently or aloud, but it is best to raise one's voice moderately. Abū Qatādah (رضي الله عنه) reported that one night, the Prophet (ﷺ) saw Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) praying with a low voice. He then saw 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) praying with a loud voice. Afterwards, he (ﷺ) said to Abū Bakr, «يا أبا بكرٍ مررتُ بكِ وَأَنْتَ تُصَلِّي تَخْفِضُ صَوْتَكَ.» (O Abū Bakr! I passed by you praying and lowering your voice.) He replied, "I have been heard by Him whom I was privately addressing, O Allāh's Messenger!" Then the Prophet (ﷺ) said to 'Umar, «يا عُمَرُ، «مررتُ بكِ وَأَنْتَ تُصَلِّي رَافِعًا صَوْتَكَ.» (O 'Umar! I passed by you praying and raising your voice.) He replied, "O Allāh's Messenger! Thereby, I wake the sleepy and drive away Satan!" So the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«يا أبا بكرٍ، ارفع من صوتك شيئًا، يا عُمَرُ، اخفض من صوتك شيئًا.»

(O Abū Bakr, raise your voice a little. And you 'Umar, lower your voice a little.)²

Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنهما) reported:

"The Prophet's (ﷺ) recitation (in *qiyām*) was such that one would hear him from the outer room while he is inside (in the bedroom)."³

1. A stick cut from the roots of a desert tree called *arāk*, and used to clean the teeth; it is also called *miswāk*. The act of cleaning the teeth with *siwāk* is called *tasawwuk*.
2. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and at-Tirmithī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*al-Mishkāt* no. 1204).
3. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and at-Tirmithī. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*al-Mishkāt* no. 1203).

HOLDING THE *MUŞĤAF*

As much as possible, the *imām* should avoid holding a *muşĥaf* (Qurʾān-book) during the prayer. He should read from his memory, because this was the predominant practice of the *salaf*. The desire to complete the Qurʾān during *Ramaḍān* should not lead to violations of the Sunnah. The *imām* should not recur to reading from the *muşĥaf* during the prayer unless his memorization is very limited.

As for the people praying behind the *imām*, they should not hold the *muşĥaf*, because that was not the practice of the *salaf* either. Only if the *imām*'s memorization is weak, requiring frequent prompting, may one of the men behind him help by holding a *muşĥaf*.

Ibn Bāz (رحمته الله) was asked in regard to holding the *muşĥaf* during *tarāwīḥ* by the *imām* or the people behind him. He replied:

“There is a difference in this regard among the scholars. Most probably, it is permissible for the *imām* to read from the *muşĥaf* if he does not memorize much ... This is confirmed by the report from ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها). But if an *imām* with good memorization is available, that is better, because it helps the concentration and reduces impermissible actions — since holding a *muşĥaf* necessitates putting it down, taking it up, and searching through the pages. Thus, this should not be done unless necessary, and it is better to do without it.

As for holding the *muşĥaf* by the people behind the *imām*, I know of no basis for this. The proper thing for a person is to have serenity and devotion. He should not hold a *muşĥaf*, but should place his right hand over the left one and place both over his chest. Holding a *muşĥaf* will divert him from applying these *sunnahs* and would probably involve his heart and eyes in reviewing

the pages and *āyāt* instead of listening to the *imām*. My opinion is that one should avoid this and listen carefully. If he has knowledge, he may prompt the *imām*; otherwise, other people may do that. And even if the *imām* made a mistake and no one corrected him, that does not affect the prayer — except for *al-Fātiḥah* ... If one person only holds a *muṣḥaf* and prompts the *imām* if needed, that may be permissible.”¹

Supplication for Starting Qiyām

There are various supplications and *thikrs* for starting the prayer reported from the Prophet (ﷺ). In particular, there are some that he used to say at the beginning of *qiyām*. It is recommended to learn at least one of them. Learning more would allow practicing the *Sunnah* in a better way by saying them at various times. In what follows we present three such reports.

1. IBN ‘ABBĀS’S REPORT

Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that when the Prophet (ﷺ) got up for the prayer in the depth of night, he would say:

«اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ أَنْتَ قَيِّمُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ، وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ أَنْتَ نُورُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ، وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ أَنْتَ مَلِكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ، وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ أَنْتَ الْحَقُّ وَعَدُّكَ الْحَقُّ، وَلِقَاؤُكَ حَقٌّ، وَقَوْلُكَ حَقٌّ، وَالجَنَّةُ حَقٌّ، وَالنَّارُ حَقٌّ، وَالنَّبِيُّونَ حَقٌّ، وَمُحَمَّدٌ حَقٌّ، وَالسَّاعَةُ حَقٌّ.

اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ أَسْلَمْتُ، وَبِكَ آمَنْتُ، وَعَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْتُ، وَإِلَيْكَ أُنْبْتُ، وَبِكَ خَاصَمْتُ، وَإِلَيْكَ حَاكَمْتُ، فَاعْفِرْ لِي مَا قَدَّمْتُ وَمَا أَخَّرْتُ، وَمَا أَسْرَرْتُ

1. *Al-Jawāb uṣ-Ṣaḥīḥ* p. 17-19.

وما أعلّنتُ، وما أنتَ أعلمُ به مِنِّي، أنتَ المُقدّمُ، وأنتَ المُؤخّرُ، لا إلهَ إلاَّ أنتَ، ولا إلهَ غَيْرُكَ.»

Allāhumma lak al-ḥamdu, anta qayyim us-samāwāti wal-Arḍi waman fihinn, walak al-ḥamdu, anta nūr us-samāwāti wal-Arḍi waman fihinn, walak al-ḥamdu, anta malik us-samāwāti wal-Arḍi waman fihinn, walak al-ḥamdu, ant al-ḥaqqu, wa-wa'duk al-ḥaqqu, wa-liqā'uka ḥaqqun, wa-qawluka ḥaqqun, wal-jannatu ḥaqqun, wan-nāru ḥaqqun, wan-nabiyyūna ḥaqqun, wa muḥammadun ḥaqqun, was-sā'atu ḥaqq.

Allāhumma lak aslamtu, wa-bika āmantu, wa-'alayka tawakkaltu, wa-ilyaka anabtu, wa-bika khāsamtu, wa-ilyaka ḥakamt. Faghfir lī mā qaddamtu, wa-mā akhkhartu, wa-mā asrartu, wa-mā a'lantu, wa-mā anta a'lamu bihi minnī. Ant al-muqaddimu, wa-ant al-mu'akhhiru, lā ilāha illā anta, walā ilāha ghayruk —

O Allāh! All praise belongs to You; You are the Custodian of the heavens and the earth and all that is therein. And all praise belongs to You; You are the One who gives light to the heavens and earth and all that is therein. And all praise belongs to You; You are the Sovereign of the heavens and the earth and all that is therein. And all praise belongs to You; You are the Truth; Your promise is the truth; meeting You (in the hereafter) is true; Your speech is true; *Jannah* is true; the Fire is true; the prophets are true; Muḥammad is true; and the Hour (of doom) is true.

O Allāh! I submit myself to You, believe in You, rely on You, turn to You, fight for You, and arbitrate to You. So forgive what I have done in the past or will do in the future, what I hide or declare, and what You know

better than me (of what I did). You are the One who brings (some people) forward, and move (others) back. There is no (true) god except You, and there is no (true) god other than You.¹

2. 'Ā'ISHAH'S REPORT

'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that when the Prophet (ﷺ) got up at night (to pray), he would open his prayer by saying:

«اللَّهُمَّ رَبَّ جِبْرِيْلَ وَمِيكَائِيْلَ وَإِسْرَافِيْلَ، فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ، عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ، أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ، اهْدِنِي لِمَا اخْتَلَفْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ الْحَقِّ بِإِذْنِكَ، إِنَّكَ تَهْدِي مَنْ تَشَاءُ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ.»

Allāhumma rabba jibrīla wa-mikā'ila wa-isrāfīl, fātir as-samāwāti wal-ard, 'ālim al-ghaybi wash-shahādah, anta tahkumu bayna 'ibādika fīmā kānū fihi yakhtalifūn. Ihdinī lima khtulifa fihi min al-ḥaqqi bi-ithnika, innaka tahdī man tashā'u ilā širāṭin mustaqīm —

O Allāh, Lord of Jibrīl, Mikā'il, and Isrāfīl, Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the hidden and witnessed things, You will judge among Your servants about that wherein they used to differ. Guide me to the truth in matters of difference, with Your permission, You guide whomever You will to a straight path.²

3. ABŪ SA'ĪD'S REPORT

Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that when the Prophet (ﷺ) got up for *qiyām*, he would start the prayer by saying *Allāhu akbar*, then before reciting Qur'ān, he would say:

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1120) and Muslim (769).

2. Recorded by Muslim (770).

«سُبْحَانَكَ اللَّهُمَّ وَبِحَمْدِكَ، وَتَبَارَكَ اسْمُكَ، وَتَعَالَى جَدُّكَ، وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ،
 لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ كَبِيرًا، اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ كَبِيرًا،
 اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ كَبِيرًا، أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ السَّمِيعِ الْعَلِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ مِنْ هَمَزِهِ،
 وَنَفْسِهِ، وَنَفْسِهِ.»

*(Subhānak allāhumma wa-biḥamdika, wa-tabāarak
 asmuka, wa-ta'ālā jadduka, wa-lā ilāha ghayruk.*

Lā ilāha illallāh. (Three times)

Allāhu akbaru kabirā. (Three times)

*A'ūthu billāh is-samī' il-'alīmi min ash-shayṭān ir-rajīm,
 min hamzihi wa-nafkhihi wa-nafthih —*

Exalted are You, my God; all praise belongs to You,
 hallowed is Your name; great is Your honor; and there
 is no (true) deity but You.

There is no (true) god except Allāh. (Three times)

Allāh is the Greatest — He is great indeed. (Three
 times)

I seek refuge with Allāh, the All-Hearing, All-Knowing,
 from the outcast Satan — from his spurring, blowing,
 and breathing.¹

Recitation During Qiyām

THE PROPHET'S PRACTICE

The Prophet (ﷺ) did not fix the length of recitation for *qiyām*. His recitation varied in length; it was sometimes short, more often long, and extremely long on some occasions. Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) said:

1. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and an-Nasā'ī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*al-Mishkāt* no. 1217).

صَلَّيْتُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ لَيْلَةً، فَلَمْ يَزَلْ قَائِمًا حَتَّى هَمَمْتُ بِأَمْرٍ سَوْءٍ..

“I prayed with the Prophet (ﷺ) one night. He stood (in recitation) for so long that I was inclined to do something wrong.”

قُلْنَا: وما هَمَمْتَ؟ قَالَ: هَمَمْتُ أَنْ أَقْعُدَ وَأَذَرَ..

He was asked, “What were you inclined to do?” And he replied, “I was inclined to sit down and let him pray alone.”¹

Huthayfah Ibn al-Yamān (رضي الله عنه) reported:

صَلَّيْتُ مَعَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ ذَاتَ لَيْلَةٍ، فَافْتَتَحَ الْبَقْرَةَ، فَقُلْتُ: يَرْكَعُ عِنْدَ الْمِائَةِ، ثُمَّ مَضَى، فَقُلْتُ: يُصَلِّي بِهَا فِي رُكْعَةٍ، فَمَضَى، فَقُلْتُ: يَرْكَعُ بِهَا، ثُمَّ افْتَتَحَ النِّسَاءَ، فَقَرَأَهَا، ثُمَّ افْتَتَحَ آلَ عِمْرَانَ، فَقَرَأَهَا، يَقْرَأُ مُتْرَسِّلاً، إِذَا مَرَّ بِآيَةٍ فِيهَا تَسْبِيحٌ سَبَّحَ، وَإِذَا مَرَّ بِسُؤَالٍ سَأَلَ، وَإِذَا مَرَّ بِتَعْوِذٍ تَعَوَّذَ، ثُمَّ رَكَعَ.

“I prayed with the Prophet (ﷺ) one night; he started reciting *sūrat ul-Baqarah* (2). I said to myself, ‘He will make *rukū‘* after one hundred *āyat*’. But he carried on; so I thought, ‘He will finish it (the *sūrah*) in two *rak‘āt*.’ But he carried on; so I thought, ‘He will make *rukū‘* when he has finished it.’ But he started *sūrat un-Nisā‘* (4) and recited it all; then he started *sūrat Āl-Imrān* (3) and recited it all. He was reciting slowly; when he read an *āyah* in which there was glorification of Allāh, he glorified Him; when an *āyah* called for asking (of Allāh), he asked; when an *āyah* called for seeking refuge (with Allāh), he sought refuge. Then he made *rukū‘* ...”²

One night when the Prophet (ﷺ) was ill, he (ﷺ) recited the seven long *sūrahs*: *al-Baqarah* (2), *Āl Imrān* (3), *an-Nisā‘* (5), *al-Mā‘idah* (4),

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1135) and Muslim (772).

2. Recorded by Muslim (772) and an-Nasā‘ī.

al-An‘ām (6), *al-A‘rāf* (7), and *at-Tawbah* (8).¹

Also, the Prophet (ﷺ) would sometimes recite one of these *sūrahs* in each *rak‘ah*.² He (ﷺ) would sometimes recite in one *rak‘ah* the amount of *sūrat ul-Muzzammil* (73), which is twenty *āyāt*³; other times he would recite about fifty or more *āyāt*⁴. And he (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ صَلَّى فِي لَيْلَةٍ بِمِائَةِ آيَةٍ لَمْ يُكْتَبْ مِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ.»

Whoever prays reciting one-hundred *āyāt* in one night, he will not be recorded among the heedless.⁵

In another narration:

«مَنْ صَلَّى فِي لَيْلَةٍ بِمِائَتَيْ آيَةٍ فَإِنَّهُ يُكْتَبُ مِنَ الْقَائِتِينَ الْمُخْلِصِينَ.»

Whoever prays reciting two hundred *āyāt*, he will be recorded among the devoted and sincere.⁶

‘UMAR’S PRACTICE

As established earlier, when ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) commanded Ubayy Ibn Ka‘b (رضي الله عنه) to lead the people in prayer during *Ramaḍān* with eleven *rak‘āt*. Ubayy used to recite hundreds of *āyāt*, until those behind him would lean on their staffs because of the length of standing. They would only finish with the approach of *fajr*.⁷

1. Recorded by Abū Ya‘lā and al-Ḥākim. Verified authentic by the latter, *ath-Thahabī*, and al-Albānī (in *Ṣifat uṣ-Ṣalāh*).

2. Recorded by an-Nasā‘ī and Abū Dāwūd. Verified authentic by al-Albānī (in *Ṣifat uṣ-Ṣalāh*).

3. Recorded by Aḥmad and Abū Dāwūd. Verified authentic by al-Albānī (in *Ṣifat uṣ-Ṣalāh*).

4. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (576) and Abū Dāwūd.

5. Recorded by ad-Dārimī and al-Ḥākim. Verified authentic by the latter, *ath-Thahabī*, and al-Albānī (in *Ṣifat uṣ-Ṣalāh*).

6. Recorded by ad-Dārimī and al-Ḥākim. Verified authentic by the latter, *ath-Thahabī*, and al-Albānī (in *Ṣifat uṣ-Ṣalāh*).

7. Recorded by Mālik, and discussed earlier in the book.

It is also confirmed that ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) summoned the reciters of *Ramaḍān* and ordered the quicker of them to recite thirty *āyāt* (in one *rak‘ah*), the moderate to recite twenty-five *āyāt*, and the slower to recite twenty *āyāt*.¹

CORRECT LENGTH OF RECITATION

The longer the *qiyām* prayer, the better. Thus, when one prays alone, he is encouraged to make his recitation as long as possible. The same holds true when one prays with those who do not mind a lengthy recitation. The only restriction in such cases is that one should not pray the whole night except on rare occasions. This is in accordance with the Prophet (ﷺ) who said:

«وَحَيْرُ الْهَدْيِ، هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ.»

(The best guidance is that of Muḥammad.)²

On the other hand, when one prays as *imām* (leader), he should only lengthen the recitation to an extent that would not be a burden on those praying with him. Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا مَا قَامَ أَحَدُكُمْ لِلنَّاسِ فَلْيُخَفِّفِ الصَّلَاةَ، فَإِنَّ فِيهِمُ الْكَبِيرَ وَفِيهِمُ الصَّغِيرَ، وَإِذَا قَامَ وَحْدَهُ فَلْيُطِيلْ صَلَاتَهُ مَا شَاءَ.»

(When one of you leads the people, he should shorten the prayer; among them are the young, the old, the weak, the sick, and those who have needs to fulfill. And when he stands alone, let him lengthen his prayer as he wishes.)³

1. This *ḥadīth*, recorded by ‘Abd ur-Razzāq and al-Bayhaqī, was discussed earlier as well.
2. Recorded by Muslim (867) and an-Nasā’ī.
3. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (7159) and Muslim (467).

RECITATION IN THE THREE RAK'ĀT OF WITR

The Prophet's Sunnah (way) for the three *rak'āt* of *witr* was to recite *sūrat ul-A'la* (87) in the first *rak'ah*, *sūrat ul-Kāfirūn* (109) in the second, and *sūrat ul-Ikhlāṣ* (112) in the third. Sometimes he would add to the latter: *sūrat ul-Falāq* (113) and *sūrat an-Nās* (114). Once he (ﷺ) recited one hundred *āyāt* from *sūrat un-Nisā'* (3) in the last *rak'ah* of *witr*.¹

The Time of Qiyām

The time of *qiyām* is from after '*ishā*' prayer up to *fajr* prayer. Abū Baṣrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ زَادَكُمْ صَلَاةً، وَهِيَ الْوَيْتْرُ، فَصَلُّوْهَا بَيْنَ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ إِلَى صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ.»

(Indeed Allāh added a prayer for you: it is *witr*; so pray it between '*ishā*' and *fajr*.)²

However, one should try to pray it in the later part of the night, because that is better than the earlier part, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ خَافَ أَنْ لَا يَقُومَ آخِرَ اللَّيْلِ، فَلْيُوتِرْ أَوَّلَهُ، وَمَنْ طَمِعَ أَنْ يَقُومَ آخِرَهُ فَلْيُوتِرْ آخِرَ اللَّيْلِ، فَإِنَّ صَلَاةَ آخِرِ اللَّيْلِ مَشْهُودَةٌ، وَذَلِكَ أَفْضَلُ.»

(Whoever fears that he will not wake up in the later part of the night, let him perform *witr* in the first part of it. And whoever expects to wake up in the later part of the night, let him pray it then. Indeed the prayer at the later part of the night is witnessed (by the angels),

1. Recorded by an-Nasā'ī and Aḥmad with an authentic chain.

2. Recorded by Aḥmad and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī in *aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* (no. 108) and *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* (2:158).

and that is better.)¹

If one has a choice of praying in the first part of the night with a *jamā'ah* (congregation) or the later part alone, then praying with the *jamā'ah* is better, because it counts as if he prayed the whole night — as was established earlier (p. 121). This was the practice of the companions during the time of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), as was cited earlier from the report of 'Abd ur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Abd al-Qārī (p. 123). Also, Zayd Ibn Wahb said:

“Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd used to lead us in the month of *Ramaḍān*; and he would finish while it was still night.”²

As was mentioned earlier, Imām Aḥmad was asked, “Should we delay *qiyām* till the end of the night?” In response, he expressed his understanding of this and the previous report by saying, “No, the *sunnah* of the Muslims is dearer to me.”³

Concluding Qiyām

QUNŪT

The *qiyām* is concluded with a final *rak'ah*, in which one may say the *qunūt*, before or after *rukū'*. This is explained in chapter 5.

WHAT TO SAY AT THE END OF WITR

It is recommended in the *sunnah* to say at the end of *witr*, either before or after *taslīm*:

«اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِرِضَاكَ مِنْ سَخَطِكَ، وَبِمُعَافَاتِكَ مِنْ عُقُوبَتِكَ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْكَ، لَا أَحْصِي ثَنَاءً عَلَيْكَ، أَنْتَ كَمَا أَثْنَيْتَ عَلَيَّ نَفْسِكَ.»

Allāhmma innī a'ūthū biriḍāka min sakhaṭik, wa bi-

1. Recorded by Muslim (755) and others.

2. Recorded by 'Abd ur-Razzāq with an authentic *isnād*.

3. Reported by Abū Dāwūd in his *Masā'il*.

mu'āfātika min 'uqūbatic, wa a'ūthu bika mink; lā uḥṣī thanā'an 'alayk, anta kamā athnayta 'alā nafsik —

O Allāh! Indeed I seek refuge in Your pleasure from Your wrath, in Your protection from Your punishment, and I seek refuge in You from You. None can count Your praise, You are as only You praise Yourself.)¹

When the Prophet (ﷺ) made *taslīm* at the end of *witr*, he would say:

«سُبْحَانَ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ.»

Subhāna 'l-malik il-quddūs — Exalted is the Holy Sovereign.)

He would repeat this three times, extending his voice and raising it on the third time.²

THE TWO RAK'ĀT FOLLOWING WITR

One may pray two *rak'āt* after *witr*. We cited earlier 'Ā'ishah's (رضي الله عنها) report (p. 187?) that the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed them consistently. Furthermore, he recommended praying them to the travellers. Thawbān (رضي الله عنه) reported that they (the *ṣahābah*) were travelling with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), and he told them:

«إِنَّ هَذَا السَّفَرَ جُهْدٌ وَثِقَلٌ، فَإِذَا أَوْتَرَ أَحَدُكُمْ فَلْيَرْكَعْ رَكَعَتَيْنِ، فَإِنْ اسْتَيْقَظَ، وَإِلَّا كَانَتْ لَه.»

Indeed, this travel constitutes struggle and hardship. So, after one of you prays *witr*, let him pray two *rak'āt*. If he later wakes up, (he may pray *qiyām*), otherwise,

1. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 430).

2. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and an-Nasā'ī from Ubayy Ibn Ka'b and Ibn Abzā (رضي الله عنه). Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*al-Mishkāt* no. 1274,1275).

they will be recorded for him (as *qiyām*).¹

These two *rak‘āt* following *witr* seem to conflict with the Prophet’s (ﷺ) statement:

«اجْعَلُوا آخِرَ صَلَاتِكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَتَرًا.»

«Let your last prayer at night be *witr*.²»

The scholars have tried to reconcile in various ways between this *ḥadīth* and the above two reports. We find the best understanding in this regard is that of Ibn Naṣr who said that the command in the latter *ḥadīth* is, “A command of choice, not obligation.”

The *sunnah* is to recite in these two *rak‘āt*: *sūrat uz-Zalzalah* (99), and *Sūrat ul-Kāfirūn* (109).³

Miscellaneous *Witr* Issues

ONE *WITR* PER NIGHT

One may pray *witr* only once per night. This follows from many of the previous reports. In addition, Ṭalq Ibn ‘Alī reported from his father that he heard Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) say:

«لا وتران في ليلة.»

«One may not pray two *witrs* in one night.⁴»

Commenting on this *ḥadīth*, at-Tirmithī said:

“The scholars among the Prophet’s (ﷺ) companions and those who came after them have differed in regard to

1. Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah, ad-Dāraquṭnī and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 1993).
2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (998), Muslim (751), and others.
3. Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah with reports from ‘Ā’ishah and Anas whose chains strengthen each other. See *Ṣifat uṣ-Ṣalāh*.
4. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others; verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no. 7567).

one who prays *witr* early in the night, then wakes up later.

Some of them took the position that he should revoke his earlier *witr* by adding one *rak'ah* to it, pray as much as he wishes, then end it with *witr*, because one may not pray two *witrs* in one night. This is the opinion of Abū Ishāq.

Others took the position that he may pray as much as he wishes, without revoking his *witr*. This is the opinion of Sufyān ath-Thawrī, Mālik Ibn Anas, Aḥmad, and Ibn ul-Mubārak.

The latter is the correct opinion, because it has been reported with various chains that the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed after *witr*.¹

MISSING WITR

There are various *ḥadīths* allowing one who misses *witr* to make it up in the morning. For example, Abū Sa'īd (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ نَامَ عَنِ الْوَيْتْرِ أَوْ نَسِيَهِ فَلْيُصَلِّ إِذَا ذَكَرَ وَإِذَا اسْتَيْقَظَ.»

If one misses *witr* because of sleep or forgetfulness, let him pray it when he remembers or wakes up.²

And Zayd Ibn Aslam reported from his father that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ نَامَ عَنِ وَيْتْرِهِ فَلْيُصَلِّ إِذَا أَصْبَحَ.»

If one misses *witr* because of sleep, let him pray it in

1. Sunan ut-Tirmithī.

2. Recorded by Ibn Mājah, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 6562).

the morning.)¹

On the other hand, there are various *ḥadīths* declaring that *witr* may not be prayed in the morning. For example, Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا طَلَعَ الْفَجْرُ فَقَدْ ذَهَبَ كُلُّ صَلَاةِ اللَّيْلِ، وَالْوَيْتْرُ، فَأَوْتِرُوا قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الْفَجْرِ.»

When the dawn arrives, all night prayer and *witr* are gone. So pray *witr* before dawn.²

The best reconciliation between these *ḥadīths* is to say that one who voluntarily misses *witr* may not make it up, contrary to him who intended to wake up but slept through the night.

PRAYING *WITR* WHILE RIDING

Sa‘īd Ibn Yasār (رضي الله عنه) reported that he was travelling with Ibn ‘Umar. During the trip, he stayed behind for a short while, and then he re-joined him. Ibn ‘Umar asked him, “Where have you been?” He replied, “I stopped to pray *witr*.” He then said:

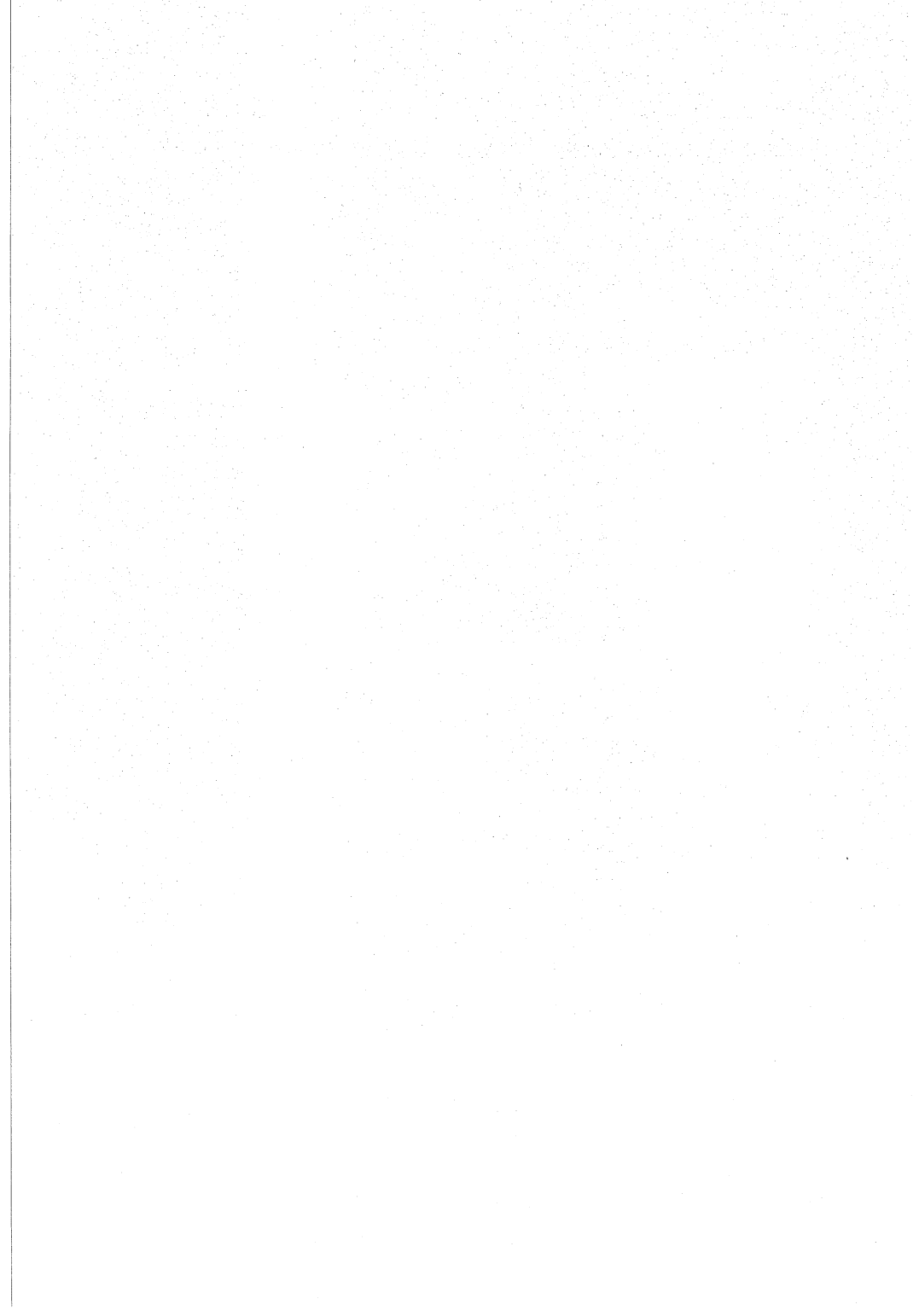
«أَلَيْسَ لَكَ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ إِسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ؟ فَقُلْتُ: بَلَىٰ وَاللَّهِ، قَالَ: فَإِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَانَ يُوتِرُ عَلَى الْبَعِيرِ.»

“Shouldn’t you take a good example from Allāh’s Messenger? I saw Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) pray *witr* on his camel.”³

This indicates that a traveller may pray *witr* while sitting on a moving animal or, in our time, in an automobile, airplane, or

1. Recorded by at-Tirmithī who said, “This is more authentic than the previous one,” meaning Abū Sa‘īd’s *ḥadīth* (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no. 6563).
2. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Irwa‘ ul-Ghalīl* no. 422).
3. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (999), Muslim (700), and others.

similar. In such cases, one should do his best to face the direction of the *Qiblah*, especially at the beginning of the prayer.



The Number that the Prophet Prayed

Abū Salamah Bin ‘Abd ur-Raḥmān reported that he asked ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) about the Messenger’s prayer during *Ramaḍān*. She said,

«مَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ يَزِيدُ فِي رَمَضَانَ وَلَا فِي غَيْرِهِ عَلَى إِحْدَى عَشْرَةَ رَكْعَةً. يُصَلِّي أَرْبَعًا، فَلَا تَسَلُّ عَنْ حُسْنِهِنَّ وَطُولِهِنَّ، ثُمَّ يُصَلِّي أَرْبَعًا، فَلَا تَسَلُّ عَنْ حُسْنِهِنَّ وَطُولِهِنَّ، ثُمَّ يُصَلِّي ثَلَاثًا.»

“Whether it was *Ramaḍān* or any other month, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) did not pray more than eleven *rak’āt*. He would pray four¹ - and do not ask about their excellence or length. Then he would pray four - and do not ask about their excellence or length. Then he would pray three.”²

An-Nawawī commented in his explanation of *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, “This indicates the permission to do so (pray four with one *taslīm*). However, it is better to perform *taslīm* every two *rak’āt*, which was the common practice of the Prophet (ﷺ), and conforms with his command to pray the night prayer in pairs.”

In another report, ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) said,

1. Meaning with one *taslīm*.

2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1147), Muslim (738), Abū ‘Uwānah, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, an-Nasā’ī, Mālik, al-Bayhaqī, and Aḥmad.

كَانَتْ صَلَاتُهُ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ وَغَيْرِهِ ثَلَاثَ عَشْرَةَ رَكْعَةً بِاللَّيْلِ، مِنْهَا رَكْعَتَا
الْفَجْرِ.

“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) prayed thirteen *rak‘āt* at night in Ramaḍān* and other months, of them were the two *rak‘āt* of *fajr*.”¹

And in still another report, ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) said,

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ يُصَلِّي بِاللَّيْلِ ثَلَاثَ عَشْرَةَ رَكْعَةً، ثُمَّ يُصَلِّي إِذَا سَمِعَ النَّدَاءَ
بِالصُّبْحِ رَكْعَتَيْنِ خَفِيفَتَيْنِ.

“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) prayed thirteen *rak‘āt* at night. Then, after hearing the call for *fajr* prayer, he would pray two short *rak‘āt*.”²

Regarding the apparent conflict between the last two reports, al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar said,

“It is possible that, in this report, ‘Ā’ishah included in the night prayer the two post-‘*ishā*’ *rak‘āt* that he (ﷺ) prayed at home, or the two short *rak‘āt* with which he (ﷺ) started the *qiyām*. It is established in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* that he (ﷺ) used to start his night prayer with two short *rak‘āt*. I find the latter possibility more correct, because the report of Abū Salamah, which confines the number to eleven *rak‘āt*, describes that, ‘He prayed four then four then three.’ It does not make any reference to the two short *rak‘āt* mentioned in Mālik’s report. This is permissible, because the addition to a report by a trustworthy *ḥāfiẓ*³ is acceptable. This is further confirmed by a report recorded by Aḥmad and Abū

1. Recorded by Ibn Abī Shaybah, Muslim (738), and others.

2. Recorded by Mālik and, from him, al-Bukhārī (1170) and others.

3. Meticulous recorder or memorizer of *Ḥadīth*.

Dāwūd from ‘Abdullāh Bin Abī Qays from ‘Ā’ishah saying,

‘The Prophet (ﷺ) would make *witr* with four and three, ..., or ten and three. He would not make *witr* with more than thirteen or less than seven’¹

This is the most authentic report that I found in this regard, and with it, one may resolve the apparent conflict between the reports from ‘Ā’ishah.”

This explanation by al-Ḥāfiẓ is also confirmed by Mālik’s report from Zayd Bin Khālid al-Juhanī who narrated:

فَصَلَّى رَكْعَتَيْنِ خَفِيفَتَيْنِ، ثُمَّ صَلَّى رَكْعَتَيْنِ طَوِيلَتَيْنِ طَوِيلَتَيْنِ طَوِيلَتَيْنِ، ثُمَّ صَلَّى رَكْعَتَيْنِ، وَهُمَا دُونَ اللَّتَيْنِ قَبْلَهُمَا، ثُمَّ صَلَّى رَكْعَتَيْنِ، وَهُمَا دُونَ اللَّتَيْنِ قَبْلَهُمَا، ثُمَّ صَلَّى رَكْعَتَيْنِ، وَهُمَا دُونَ اللَّتَيْنِ قَبْلَهُمَا، ثُمَّ صَلَّى رَكْعَتَيْنِ، وَهُمَا دُونَ اللَّتَيْنِ قَبْلَهُمَا، ثُمَّ أَوْتَرَ فَذَلِكَ ثَلَاثَ عَشْرَةَ رَكْعَةً.

“One night, I decided to closely observe the way the Messenger (ﷺ) performed his night prayer.

So he prayed two short *rak‘āt*.

Then he prayed two extremely long *rak‘āt*.

Then he prayed two *rak‘āt* shorter than the preceding two.

Then he prayed two *rak‘āt* shorter than the preceding two.

Then he prayed two *rak‘āt* shorter than the preceding two.

Then he prayed two *rak‘āt* shorter than the preceding two.

1. This *ḥadīth* is cited later in this chapter.

Then he prayed (one) *witr*.

This totaled to thirteen *rak'āt*.”¹

What seems to be most likely is that these two short *rak'āt* are the *sunnah* of ‘*ishā*’, because there are no reports mentioning them in addition to the thirteen *rak'āt*.

Jābir Bin ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported,

“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) led us (one night) during *Ramaḍān*, praying eight *rak'āt* and *witr*. On the following night, we gathered in the *Masjid* hoping that he will come out again (to lead the prayer). We stayed there until the morning. Then we entered (to the center of the *Masjid*) and said, ‘O Messenger of Allāh! Last night we gathered in the *Masjid* hoping that you would lead us in the prayer.’ To which he replied,

«قَدْ رَأَيْتَ الَّذِي صَنَعْتُمْ، فَلَمْ يَمْنَعْنِي مِنَ الْخُرُوجِ، إِلَّا أَنِّي حَشِيتُ أَنْ
تُفْرَضَ عَلَيْكُمْ.»

(Indeed I feared that it would become an obligation on you.)”²

LIMITING QIYĀM TO ELEVEN RAK'ĀT

The correct number of *rak'āt* for *qiyām* is eleven (11). This follows the Messenger’s (ﷺ) *Sunnah*. One may not add to this number, for he (ﷺ) did not add to it his entire life.

However, one may reduce the number of these *rak'āt*; one may even pray only one *rak'ah* of *witr*. This is supported by the Prophet’s (ﷺ) actions and words.

Regardless of what arguments are presented for or against adding to the reported number of *rak'āt*, no Muslim should

1. Recorded by Mālik, Muslim (765), Abū ‘Uwānah, Abū Dāwūd, and Ibn Naṣr.

2. Recorded by Ibn Naṣr, and at-Ṭabarānī in *al-Mu‘jam uṣ-Ṣaḡīr*. Its *isnād* is *ḥasan* because of the previous *ḥadīth*. In *Fath ul-Bārī* and *at-Talkhīṣ*, al-Ḥāfiẓ indicated its soundness, and referenced it to Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Ḥibbān in their *Ṣaḥīḥs*.

hesitate in acknowledging that the best number to pray is that confirmed from the Prophet (ﷺ), as he (ﷺ) said,

«وَحَيْرُ الْهَدْيِ، هَدْيُ مُحَمَّدٍ.»

‘The best guidance is Muḥammad’s (ﷺ).’¹

Nothing should prevent the Muslims today from adhering to this *sunnah*, thereby fulfilling the Prophet’s (ﷺ) instruction,

«دَعْ مَا يَرِيئَكَ إِلَى مَا لَا يَرِيئَكَ.»

‘Leave what gives you doubt, for that which does not give you doubt.’²

This should be further emphasized when we realize that most Muslims who perform *tarāwīḥ* as twenty *rak‘āt* abuse this prayer by performing it so fast as to lose all form of *khushū‘* (devotion) and serenity. By that, they make all of their prayer liable to being annulled and rejected. Had they only prayed the correct number confirmed in the Sunnah, spending the same amount of time to perform it, their prayer would be more correct and acceptable by any scholar’s judgement. Jābir (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

«أَفْضَلُ الصَّلَاةِ طُولُ الْقُنُوتِ.»

‘The best prayer is that with long *qunūt* (standing).’³

Praying less than Eleven *Rak‘āt*

The Prophet’s (ﷺ) practice and words indicate that it is permissible to pray less than eleven. As for the practice, ‘Abdullāh Bin Abī Qays reported that he asked ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), “How many

1. Recorded by Muslim (867).

2. Recorded by Aḥmad, at-Tirmithī, and others, with an authentic *isnād*.

3. Recorded by Muslim (756) and others.

(*rak'āt*) did Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) pray *witr*?" She replied,

"He prayed *witr* four¹ and three (*rak'āt*), or six and three, or ten and three; he would not pray *witr* less than seven, nor more than thirteen."²

This *ḥadīth* of 'Ā'ishah indicates that what was reported from her in another narration — that the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed three *rak'āt* for *witr* — means three, preceded by four. Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī recorded from her with an authentic *isnād* that she said, "*Witr* used to be seven (*rak'āt*), or five, or three incomplete." Aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī commented,

"She disliked praying *witr* three *rak'āt* only, not preceded by others."

And as for the Prophet's (ﷺ) words, Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

«الْوَيْتْرُ حَقٌّ، فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُوتِرْ بِخَمْسٍ، وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُوتِرْ بِثَلَاثٍ، وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُوتِرْ بِوَاحِدَةٍ.»

(*Witr* is true (as a recommended act of worship). Anyone who wishes may pray five (*rak'āt*); and anyone who wishes may pray three; and anyone who wishes may pray one.)³

This is a clear text which permits reducing *witr* to just one *rak'ah*. The *salaf* practiced this sometimes, as indicated by al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar:

1. The first two of them were the *sunnah* prayers after 'Ishā', or two light *rak'āt* that the Prophet (ﷺ) performed before *qiyām*. This is also the view of al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar.
2. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad and others with a good chain of narrators. It is authenticated by al-Ḥāfiẓ al-ʿIrāqī in *Takhrij ul-Iḥyā'*.
3. Recorded by aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī, al-Ḥākim, and others. The chain of this *ḥadīth* is authentic, as is verified by al-Ḥākim, ath-Thahabī, Ibn Ḥibbān, and others.

“It is authentically reported that a number of the *ṣaḥābah* prayed one *rak’ah* for *witr*, without praying any *nafl* prior to it. It is recorded in Muḥammad Bin Naṣr’s book and others, with an authentic *isnād* from as-Sā’ib Bin Yazīd, that ‘Uthmān recited Qur’ān one night in just one *rak’ah*; and he did not pray anything else. We will also cite in the chapter of *al-Maghāzī* the report of ‘Abdullāh Bin Thaḥlabah that Sa’d prayed one *rak’ah* for *witr*, and in *al-Manāqib* the report that Mu‘āwiyah prayed one *rak’ah* for *witr*, which was approved by Ibn ‘Abbās.”¹

Various Ways of Performing Qiyām

The Prophet (ﷺ) prayed *qiyām* and *witr* in various manners. This is not recorded in most *fiqh* books — whether abbreviated or detailed. It is important to clarify this *sunnah* to the people, so that its lovers will have the chance to follow it, and those that think there is only a single correct form will take heed. May Allāh (ﷻ) enable us to follow His Prophet (ﷺ) in the best way, and avoid the innovations from which he warned us.

Therefore, we present in the following the various manners in which the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed *qiyām*, as confirmed by authentic narrations.

After Ibn Khuzaymah mentioned a number of *ḥadīths* describing the manner of praying *qiyām*, he concluded,

“One is permitted to pray any of the various numbers of *rak’āt* that the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed, and in the manners that he did. No blame may be directed to the person who chooses to pray in any of these manners.”²

SUMMARY OF THE VARIOUS METHODS

In the following table, we present the various methods, reported

1. *Faṭḥ ul-Bārī*.

2. *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Khuzaymah 2:194.

from the Prophet (ﷺ), for praying *qiyām*. The succeeding notes explain some obscure points. The references are numbered after the *hadiths* in the next subsection.

	Total Pre	Core	Post	Ref	Note	
1	13	2	2,2,2,2,2,1	0	1,2,3	Start with very long pair; gradually shorten next pairs.
2	13	2	2,2,2,5	0	4	The last five have only one sitting and <i>taslīm</i> at the very end.
3	11	0	2,2,2,2,2,1	0	5,6	
4	11	0	4,4,3	0	7	The fours are prayed with a sitting and <i>taslīm</i> in their middle.
5	11	0	9	2	8	The nine are prayed without sitting except on the eighth, then on the last one.
6	9	0	7	2	8	The seven are prayed without sitting except on the sixth, then on the last one.

- “Pre” refers to the two *rak‘āt* that precede *qiyām*. They are relatively short.
- “Core” refers to the main body of the *qiyām* prayer. It is divided to different numbers of *rak‘āt* as reported in the Sunnah.
- “Post” refers to the two *rak‘āt* that follow *witr*, which the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed while sitting. They will be further discussed near the end of this chapter.
- The best method (which should be applied most frequently), is the first, or one of its variations (such as the third).
- Other methods can be deduced from the above by decreasing the number of *rak‘āt* in any of the preceding methods, in multiples of two *rak‘āt*, down to a minimum of only one *rak‘ah*.

This derives from the Prophet’s (ﷺ) previous saying (p. 50),

«فَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْتِرْ بِخَمْسٍ، وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْتِرْ بِثَلَاثٍ، وَمَنْ شَاءَ فَلْيُؤْتِرْ
بِوَاحِدَةٍ.»

(One may pray it as five, three, or one *rak'ah*.)

This *ḥadīth* provides a clear proof that it is permissible to pray *witr* with these three numbers, even though none of them has been reported from the Prophet's (ﷺ) action — rather, 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) confirms in a previously cited report (p. 49) that he (ﷺ) never prayed *witr* less than seven *rak'āt*.

One may pray these five or three *rak'āt* as follows:

- With one sitting and *taslīm*, as in the second method above,
- Sitting without *taslīm* after every pair of *rak'āt*, as in the fourth method above (this may not be done in the case of the three *rak'āt*, as will be explained below),
- Make *taslīm* after every pair of *rak'āt*, as in the third and other methods above. This is the best way.

EVIDENCE FROM ḤADĪTHS

- Zayd Ibn Khālid al-Juhanī reported,

“One night, I decided to closely observe the way the Messenger (ﷺ) performed his night prayer.

So he prayed two short *rak'āt*, then two extremely long *rak'āt*, then two *rak'āt* shorter than the preceding two, then two *rak'āt* shorter than the preceding two, then two *rak'āt* shorter than the preceding two, then two *rak'āt* shorter than the preceding two, then two *rak'āt* shorter than the preceding two, then (one) *witr*.

This totalled to thirteen *rak'āt*.”¹

- Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported,

“I spent one night in Allāh's Messenger's (ﷺ) house

1. Recorded by Muslim (765), Mālik, Abū 'Uwānah, Abū Dāwūd, and Ibn Naṣr.

when he was with (my aunt) Maymūnah. After one third or one half of the night had passed, he got up. He went to a suspended waterskin and made *wuḍū'*; and I made *wuḍū'* with him. Then he stood to pray; and I stood on his left side. He moved me to his right side; then he put his hand on my head, as if to touch my ear to alert me. He prayed two short *rak'āt*, reading in each one *Umm ul-Qur'ān*¹; then he made *taslīm*. Next, he prayed, completing eleven *rak'āt*, including *witr*. Then he slept until Bilāl came saying, "The prayer, O Allāh's Messenger!" So he rose up, prayed two *rak'āt*, and (went out and) led the people (in *fajr*)."²

3. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported,

"When Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) got up at night, he would start his prayer with two short *rak'āt*. He would then pray eight *rak'āt*, then *witr*."

In another report, she said,

"Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) used to pray '*ishā'*, followed by two short *rak'āt*. He would prepare his *siwāk* and water for *wuḍū'*. Whenever Allāh willed to wake him up, He did; so he would rise, clean his teeth with *siwāk*, make *wuḍū'*, pray two *rak'āt*, then stand praying eight *rak'āt* and reading equally in all of them; then he would pray *witr* on the ninth *rak'ah*. When Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) grew older, and increased in weight, he turned those eight to six *rak'āt*, prayed *witr* on the seventh, and then prayed two *rak'āt* while sitting, in which he read *al-*

1. This is one of the names of *al-Fatiḥah*.

2. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, and from him Abū 'Uwānah in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*. The origin of this *ḥadīth* is in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* (*al-Bukhārī* (183) and *Muslim* (763)). Note that Ibn ul-Qayyim missed this report in *Zād ul-Ma'ād*, where he said, "Ibn 'Abbās did not mention that the Prophet (ﷺ) started with two short *rak'āt*, as 'Ā'ishah did, ...".

Kāfirūn (109) and *az-Zalzalah* (99).¹¹

Note that this last report from aṭ-Ṭahāwī clearly indicates that the total number of *rak'āt* (after '*ishā*') is thirteen. If we interpret 'Ā'ishah's statement in the first narration, "Then *witr*," to mean three *rak'āt*, it agrees then with the second narration, as well as the previous *ḥadīth* of Ibn 'Abbās.

Note also that in the second report, 'Ā'ishah mentions the two short *rak'āt* after '*ishā*' without mentioning a *sunnah* of '*ishā*' prior to them. This confirms what was mentioned earlier (p. 46) that these two *rak'āt* could be the *sunnah* of '*ishā*'. They could also be two special *rak'āt* that prelude *qiyām* — and Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

4. 'Ā'ishah (ﷺ) reported,

"The Prophet (ﷺ) would go to sleep; then, when he woke up, he would clean his teeth with *siwāk* and perform *wuḍū'*. He would then pray eight *rak'āt*, sitting and making *taslīm* at the end of each pair; then he would pray *witr* as five *rak'āt*, without sitting or making *taslīm* until the fifth. Then when the *athān* was called (for *fajr*), he would rise and pray two short *rak'āt*."²

This *ḥadīth* is clear in that the total number of *rak'āt* is thirteen, in addition to the two *rak'āt* of *fajr*. This may appear to conflict with a previously cited *ḥadīth* from 'Ā'ishah (p. 45) stating, "Allāh's

1. Both reports are recorded by aṭ-Ṭahāwī with an authentic *isnād*. The first half of the first report is also recorded by Muslim and Abū 'Uwānah. All of those have recorded it from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī with '*an'anah* (not declaring that he had heard it directly from the previous narrator). However, both an-Nasā'ī and Aḥmad recorded the second report from al-Ḥasan, where he declared the hearing.
2. Recorded by Aḥmad with an authentic *isnād* conforming with the condition of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. It is also recorded in an abbreviated form (without mentioning *taslīm* after every pair) by Muslim (737), Abū 'Uwānah, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, ad-Dārimī, Ibn Naṣr, al-Bayhaqī, and Ibn Ḥazm (in *al-Muḥalla*).

Furthermore, ash-Shāfi'ī, aṭ-Ṭayālīsī, and al-Ḥākim, have all recorded only the part of this *ḥadīth* regarding praying *witr* as five *rak'āt*.

Messenger (ﷺ) did not pray more than eleven ...” However, we have resolved this above by noting that in this statement, she does not include the two short *rak'āt* with which he (ﷺ) started the *qiyām*.

5. 'Ā'ishah reported,

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ يُصَلِّي فِيمَا بَيْنَ أَنْ يَفْرَغَ مِنْ صَلَاةِ الْعِشَاءِ - وَهِيَ الَّتِي يَدْعُو النَّاسَ الْعَتَمَةَ - إِلَى الْفَجْرِ، إِحْدَى عَشْرَةَ رُكْعَةً، يُسَلِّمُ بَيْنَ كُلِّ رُكْعَتَيْنِ، وَيُوتِرُ بِوَاحِدَةٍ، فَإِذَا سَكَتَ الْمُؤَدِّنُ مِنْ صَلَاةِ الْفَجْرِ، وَبَيَّنَّ لَهُ الْفَجْرُ، وَجَاءَهُ الْمُؤَدِّنُ، قَامَ فَرَكَعَ رُكْعَتَيْنِ خَفِيفَتَيْنِ، ثُمَّ اضْطَجَعَ عَلَى شِقِّهِ الْأَيْمَنِ، حَتَّى يَأْتِيَهُ الْمُؤَدِّنُ لِلْإِقَامَةِ.

“From the time he finished praying ‘*ishā*’ until *fajr*, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) prayed eleven *rak'āt*, making *taslīm* at the end of each pair, and praying *witr* as one *rak'ah*. He would remain in *sujūd*, before raising his head, for as long as one of you would read fifty *āyāt*. Then, after the caller finished the *athān* for *fajr*, and dawn became apparent for him (ﷺ), the caller would come (to alert him). So he would pray two short *rak'āt*, then lie down on his right side until the caller came (to summon him) for *iqāmah* (call to start the prayer).”¹

Note that this *ḥadīth* provides a clear evidence for lying down on the right side between the *sunnah* and *farḍ* of *fajr*. However, there are no reports of any of the *ṣaḥābah* doing that in the *masjid* — rather, some of them disliked doing it there, restricting it to the homes, as was the Prophet’s (ﷺ) practice.

6. This method of praying *qiyām* is further confirmed by the *ḥadīth* reported by Ibn ‘Umar that a man asked Allāh’s

1. Recorded by Muslim (736), Abū ‘Uwānah, Abū Dāwūd, at-Ṭaḥāwī, and Aḥmad. Muslim (749) and Abū ‘Uwānah also recorded it from Ibn ‘Umar; and Abū ‘Uwānah recorded it from Ibn ‘Abbās.

Messenger (ﷺ) about the night prayer. He (ﷺ) replied,

«صَلَاةُ اللَّيْلِ مَثْنَى مَثْنَى، فَإِذَا خَشِيَ أَحَدُكُمْ الصُّبْحَ، صَلَّى رُكْعَةً وَاحِدَةً،
تَوَيَّرَ لَهُ مَا قَدْ صَلَّى.»

‘The night prayer is one pair by one pair. And if one of you fears the arrival of morning, (let him pray) one *rak‘ah* to make his prayer odd (*witr*).’¹

Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) was then asked, “What does ‘pair by pair’ mean?” He replied, “Make *taslīm* at the end of every pair.”²

Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) acted upon this understanding, as is reported that,

«كَانَ يُسَلِّمُ بَيْنَ الرَّكْعَةِ وَالرَّكْعَتَيْنِ فِي الْوَيْتِ حَتَّى يَأْمُرَ بِبَعْضِ حَاجَتِهِ.»

“He would make *taslīm* before the last *rak‘ah* of *witr*, which enabled him to ask for anything that he might need.”³

7. The evidence for the fourth method is a previously cited *ḥadīth*, recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim from ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) (p. 45).

The apparent understanding of that *ḥadīth* is that the Prophet (ﷺ) would sit for *tashahhud*, without making *taslīm*, after the first pair of those four and three *rak‘āt*. This is the interpretation of an-Nawawī, as was mentioned earlier (p. 45).

8. Sa‘ad Ibn Hishām Ibn ‘Āmir reported that he came to Ibn ‘Abbās and asked him about the way the Prophet (ﷺ)

1. Recorded by Mālik, al-Bukhārī (990), Muslim (749), and Abū ‘Uwānah.

2. Recorded by Muslim (749) and Abū ‘Uwānah. Note that this explanation by Ibn ‘Umar was recorded by Aḥmad as being said by the Prophet (ﷺ), and included in the text of the *ḥadīth*. But one of its narrators is ‘Abd ul-‘Aziz Ibn Abī Ruwād, who is generally truthful but sometimes makes mistakes, as is mentioned in *at-Taqrīb*. It is very possible that he mistakenly attributed this part to the Prophet (ﷺ) — and Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

3. Recorded by Mālik and al-Bukhārī (991).

performed his *witr*. Ibn ‘Abbās replied, “Shouldn’t I guide you to the most knowledgeable person on earth about Allāh’s Messenger’s *witr*?” He said, “Who is it?” He said, “Ā’ishah; so go to her and ask her.” So he went to her and said, “O Mother of the Believers! Tell me about the way Allāh’s Messenger performed *witr*.” She replied,

كَانَ نَعْدُهُ لَهُ سِوَاكُهُ وَطَهْرُهُ، فَيَبْعَثُهُ اللَّهُ مَا شَاءَ أَنْ يَبْعَثَهُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ، فَيَتَسَوَّكُ، وَيَتَوَضَّأُ، وَيُصَلِّي تِسْعَ رَكَعَاتٍ لَا يَجْلِسُ فِيهَا إِلَّا فِي الْقَائِمَةِ، فَيَذْكُرُ اللَّهَ وَيَحْمَدُهُ وَيَدْعُوهُ، ثُمَّ يَنْهَضُ وَلَا يُسَلِّمُ، ثُمَّ يَقُومُ فَيُصَلِّ التَّاسِعَةَ، ثُمَّ يَقْعُدُ فَيَذْكُرُ اللَّهَ وَيَحْمَدُهُ وَيَدْعُوهُ، ثُمَّ يُسَلِّمُ تَسْلِيمًا يُسْمِعُنَا، ثُمَّ يُصَلِّي رَكَعَتَيْنِ بَعْدَ مَا يُسَلِّمُ وَهُوَ قَاعِدٌ، فَيَتْلِكَ إِحْدَى عَشْرَةَ رَكَعَةً يَا بُنَيَّ، فَلَمَّا أَسَنَّ نَبِيَّ اللَّهِ ﷺ، وَأَخَذَهُ اللَّحْمُ أُوتِرَ بِسِنْعٍ، وَصَنَعَ فِي الرُّكْعَتَيْنِ مِثْلَ صَنِيعِهِ الْأَوَّلِ، فَيَتْلِكَ تِسْعَ يَا بُنَيَّ.

“We used to prepare his *siwāk* and water; Allāh (ﷻ) would then wake him up whenever He wills during the night. He would brush his teeth with the *siwāk* and perform *wuḍū’*, then pray nine *rak‘āt* without sitting until the eighth, where he would mention Allāh and praise Him, say *ṣalāh* upon His Prophet (ﷺ), and supplicate to Him. He would then stand without making *taslīm*, pray the ninth *rak‘āh*, sit, mention Allāh and praise Him, say *ṣalāh* upon His Prophet (ﷺ), supplicate to Him, and make *taslīm* so loud as to make us hear it. Following that, he would pray two *rak‘āt* while sitting. This, my son, made a total of eleven *rak‘āh*.

When Allāh’s Prophet (ﷺ) grew older and carried more weight, he prayed *witr* as seven *rak‘āt*, and then prayed those two *rak‘āt* as he did before, making a total of nine,

my son.”¹

An important observation from this *ḥadīth* is that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to invoke the *ṣalāh* upon himself, and that he said that in the first as well as the last *tashahhud*. The Muslims should therefore follow this *sunnah* instead of some *mathhabs* claiming that it is extremely disliked to say it in the first *tashahhud*. It is well established among the scholars that no distinction may be made in the way of performing *sunnah* and *farḍ* prayers — unless there is a specific evidence; and there is none in this case.

The Last Three *Rak'āt*

DIFFERING FROM MAGHRIB

Nothing in the Prophet's (ﷺ) practice confirms praying five or three *rak'āt* with an intermediate sitting after every pair (as in (b) above). Yet, this can be derived from the above general texts. But this is not possible in the case of three *rak'āt*, because the Prophet (ﷺ) forbade making them resemble the *maghrib* prayer. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said,

« لا تُوتر بثلاثٍ تشبهُوا بِصلاةِ المَغْرِبِ.. »

(Do not pray *witr* as three *rak'āt* resembling the *maghrib* prayer.)²

There are two ways to pray the three *rak'āt* in a manner different from *maghrib*.

1. With *taslim* between the *shaf'* (even ones) and *witr*. This manner is preferable because it is better founded in the Sunnah.
2. Without any sitting between the *shaf'* and the *witr*.

1. Recorded by Muslim (513), Abū 'Uwānah, Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, Ibn Naṣr, al-Bayhaqī, and Aḥmad.

2. Recorded by at-Ṭaḥāwī, ad-Dāraquṭnī, and others, with an authentic *isnād*.

IBN NAṢR'S UNDERSTANDING

The *hāfiz* Muḥammad Ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī said,

“What we prefer for one who prays *qiyām* during *Ramaḍān* and other times is to make *taslīm* after every pair of *rak'āt*. When he prays (the last) three *rak'āt*, let him read *al-A'lā* (87) in the first and *al-Kāfirūn* (109) in the second. Let him then make *tashahhud* and *taslīm*, then stand up and pray one *rak'ah* in which he reads *al-Fātiḥah*, *al-Ikhlāṣ* (112), and the two *mu'awwizāt* (113,114) ...

It is permissible to imitate the Prophet (ﷺ) in any of these manners (in which he prayed *qiyām*). However, the best choice is the one we just mentioned, because when he was asked about the manner of praying *qiyām*, the Prophet (ﷺ) replied, (The night prayer is two *rak'āt* by two *rak'āt*.) So we choose what he chose for his *Ummah*, and at the same time permit imitating him in what he did, because no prohibition has been reported from him in this regard.”¹

And he said,

“Our opinion is that it is permissible to act according to these various reports. The reports varied because *qiyām*, both *witr* and other *rak'āt*, is an optional prayer. The Prophet's (ﷺ) *qiyām* and *witr* varied as we described; sometimes he prayed one way, others another. These various ways are all permissible and good.

However, we could not find a confirmed report that the Prophet (ﷺ) performed *witr* as three joint *rak'āt*, without *taslīm* except in the last one — as we found in the case of the five, seven, and nine *rak'āt*. The reports

1. *Qiyām ul-Layl* (p. 119).

of his performing *witr* as three *rak'āt* make no mention of *taslīm*. For example, ... that Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) reported that, 'Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) used to perform *witr* as three *rak'āt*, reciting in them *al-A'lā*, *al-Kāfirūn*, and *Qul huwallāhu aḥad*.'

Under the same subject, there are reports from 'Imrān Ibn Ḥuṣayn, 'Ā'ishah, 'Abd ur-Raḥmān Ibn Abzā, and Anas Ibn Mālik. All of these reports are vague, making it possible that the Prophet (ﷺ) made *taslīm* on the second of the three *rak'āt* of *witr* ..."¹

And he said,

"And our opinion is that one may pray *witr* as one, three, five, seven, or nine. All of this is good and permissible in accordance with the reports that we have included from the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions after him. But our choice is as we mentioned earlier.

Thus if one wanted to pray *witr* as one *rak'ah* without praying anything prior to it, we would recommend for him to precede it with two or more *rak'āt*, and then pray a single *rak'ah* for *witr*. If he did not do that, and performed *witr* as only one *rak'ah*, this is permissible. We have reported that a number among the best of Muḥammad's (ﷺ) companions did that. Even though Mālik and other scholars disliked this, the Prophet's (ﷺ) companions are more worthy of being followed."²

RECONCILING BETWEEN TWO REPORTS

Ibn Naṣr also said,

"Some reports that disapprove of praying *witr* as three

1. *Qiyām ul-Layl* (p. 121).

2. *Qiyām ul-Layl* (p. 123).

rak'āt have been attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ), his companions, and the *tābi'in* ...”¹

These reports are weak, except for the portion of Abū Hurayrah’s *ḥadīth* that was cited earlier in this section. This might seem to conflict with Abū Ayyūb’s report (p. 59). But they can be reconciled by saying that the prohibition (in Abū Hurayrah’s *ḥadīth*) applies to praying *witr* with two *tashahhuds*, which would make it resemble the *maghrib* prayer. But if one does not sit, then they would not be similar. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar mentioned this understanding in *Fath ul-Bari*, which was approved by aṣ-Ṣan’ānī in *Subul us-Salām*.

The resemblance would be even less if one separates the two *rak'āt* from the last *rak'ah* of *witr*. Imām Aḥmad was asked, “What is your position regarding *witr*, would you make *taslīm* after the two *rak'āt*?” He replied, “Yes.” He was asked, “Why?” He replied, “Because the *ḥadīths* supporting that are stronger and more authentic.” On another occasion, Aḥmad (رضي الله عنه) said,

“One should make *taslīm* after the last two *rak'āt*. And if one does not make *taslīm*, I hope that it would still be acceptable. But *taslīm* is more confirmed from the Prophet (ﷺ).”²

1. *Qiyām ul-Layl* (p. 125).

2. *Masā'il ul-Imām Aḥmad* reported by his student Ibn Hānī.

Devotion in the Prayer

REPORTS FROM THE PROPHET AND THE SALAF

A Muslim should always strive to be a good example of a righteous believer: obedient to his Lord, and adhering to His Prophet's Sunnah. This is a general rule, which should be applied to the *qiyām* prayer as well. In this regard, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ قَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا، غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.»

«Whoever stands in prayer during *Ramaḍān* out of faith and expectation (of Allāh's reward), all of his previous sins will be forgiven.»¹

Earlier in this book, we have discussed many details concerning the Prophet's (ﷺ) *qiyām* during *Ramaḍān*, as well as other times. We described how his prayer was extremely long and devoted, as in 'Ā'ishah's report:

“... He would pray four *rak'āt*, and do not ask how good and long they were ...”

And her report:

“He would stay in *sujūd* as long as one of you would read fifty *āyāt*.”

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (37), Muslim (759) and others.

And Ḥuṭhayfah's report:

“... Then he read *al-Baqarah* (in the first *rak'ah*); then he made *rukū'*; and his *rukū'* was comparable (in duration) to his standing ...”

Ḥuṭhayfah then described the Prophet's long standing after *rukū'* and his long *sujūd* after that.

Furthermore, the *salaf* during the time of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) recited long portions of Qur'ān in *tarāwīḥ*. When 'Umar summoned the reciters and commanded them to lead the people in *tarāwīḥ*, “He (رضي الله عنه) instructed the fast reciters to recite thirty *āyāt*, the intermediate to recite twenty five, and the slow to recite twenty.”¹

Thus they would recite about three hundred *āyāt* — until some people behind them had to lean on canes because of the long duration of the prayer. And they did not finish their prayer until close to *fajr* time.

In addition, they would make the various parts of prayer comparable in length to the recitation. They would make long *rukū'* and *sujūd*, uttering during them numerous forms of *thikr* and supplications, in accordance with the Sunnah².

This should motivate us to imitate them in our prayer as much as possible, making it long, and saying plenty of *tasbīḥ* and *thikr* during *rukū'*, *sujūd*, and in between. With that, we hope to attain, at least, some level of *khushū'* (devotion), which is the spirit and core of the prayer.

Ḥadīths on Perfecting the Prayer

In what follows, we cite a number of authentic *ḥadīths* calling on Muslims to perform the prayers in a good way, and warning them from neglecting that. By this, we hope to remind the readers of the importance of perfecting all of their prayers — *farḍ* and *nafl*,

1. Recorded by Ibn Abī Shaybah (2:89:2) and al-Faryābī (2:76) with an authentic *isnād*.

2. For details concerning this, review *Ṣifatu Ṣalāt-in-Nabī* by al-Albānī.

qiyaam or otherwise.

1. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that a man entered the Masjid and prayed while Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) was sitting in a corner of the Masjid. After finishing, the man went to the Messenger (ﷺ) and said the *Salām*. He (ﷺ) replied, «إِزْجِعْ فَصَلِّ، فَإِنَّكَ لَمْ، وَعَلَيْكَ السَّلَامُ،» (Wa 'alayk as-Salām (and upon you be peace); go back and pray, because you have not prayed!) So he went back, prayed, and then came back and said the *Salām* again to the Prophet (ﷺ). He (ﷺ) replied, «وَإِنَّكَ لَمْ تُصَلِّ،» (Wa 'alayk as-Salām; go back and pray, because you have not prayed.) (This repeated three times). After the third time, the man said, "I do not know how to pray better, so teach me, O Messenger of Allāh." He (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا قُمْتَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاسْبِغِ الوُضُوءَ، ثُمَّ اسْتَقْبِلِ الْقِبْلَةَ فَكَبِّرْ، ثُمَّ اقْرَأْ مَا تَيَسَّرَ مَعَكَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ، ثُمَّ ارْكَعْ حَتَّى تَطْمَئِنَّ رَاكِعًا، ثُمَّ ارْفَعْ حَتَّى تَعْتَدِلَ قَائِمًا، ثُمَّ اسْجُدْ حَتَّى تَطْمَئِنَّ سَاجِدًا، ثُمَّ ارْفَعْ حَتَّى تَطْمَئِنَّ جَالِسًا، ثُمَّ افْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فِي صَلَاتِكَ كُلِّهَا.»

‘When you intend to pray, perform *wudu'* in a complete manner; then face the *Qiblah*, say ‘*Allāhu Akbar* (Allāh is the Greatest),’ and recite as much of Qur’ān as is convenient for you; then bow down until you achieve tranquility in bowing; then raise your head until you stand level; then prostrate yourself until you achieve tranquility in prostration; then sit up until you are level in sitting; then prostrate yourself until you achieve tranquility in prostration; then stand up until you are level in your standing; then do the same in the rest of your prayer.’¹

2. Abū Mas‘ūd al-Badrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ)

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (6251), Muslim (397), and others.

said:

«لا تُجْزَى صَلَاةُ الرَّجُلِ حَتَّى يُقِيمَ ظَهْرَهُ فِي الرُّكُوعِ وَالسُّجُودِ.»

(One's prayer is not acceptable unless he makes his back straight during bowing and prostration.)¹

3. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ أَسْوَأَ النَّاسِ سِرْقَةً، الَّذِي يَسْرِقُ صَلَاتَهُ.»

(The worst thief among people is he who steals from his prayer.)

He was asked, "How would one steal from his prayer, O Messenger of Allāh?" He replied, «لا يَتِمُّ رُكُوعُهَا وَسُجُودُهَا.» (By not completing the rukū' and sujūd.)²

4. The Muslim army commanders, 'Amr Ibn al-Āṣ, Khālid Ibn al-Walīd, Sharḥabīl Ibn Ḥasanah, and Yazīd Ibn Abī Sufyān (رضي الله عنه), all reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) saw a man not completing his rukū', and pecking in his sujūd during the prayer. He (ﷺ) said:

«لَوْ مَاتَ هَذَا عَلَى حَالِهِ هَذِهِ مَاتَ عَلَى غَيْرِ مِلَّةِ مُحَمَّدٍ، يَنْقُرُ صَلَاتَهُ كَمَا يَنْقُرُ الْغُرَابُ الدَّمَ، مِثْلَ الَّذِي لَا يَتِمُّ رُكُوعَهُ وَيَنْقُرُ فِي سُجُودِهِ مِثْلَ الْجَائِعِ الَّذِي يَأْكُلُ التَّمْرَةَ وَالتَّمْرَتَيْنِ لَا يُعْنِيَانِ عَنْهُ شَيْئًا.»

(If this man dies upon his current state, he would die upon a religion other than that of Muḥammad — pecking in his prayer like a crow pecking blood! The

1. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, at-Tirmithī, Ibn Mājah, ad-Dārimī, at-Ṭaḥāwī (*al-Mushkal* 1:80), at-Ṭayālīsī, Aḥmad, and ad-Dāraqutnī who said, 'It's *isnād* is confirmed and authentic.'

2. Recorded by al-Ḥākim who considered it authentic; and ath-Thahabī agreed with him. It has a witness recorded by al-Ḥākim from Abū Qatādah (رضي الله عنه), and another witness recorded by Mālik from an-Nu'mān Ibn Murrah, whose *isnād* is authentic, though *mursal*; it also has a third witness recorded by at-Ṭayālīsī from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه), which was verified to be authentic by as-Suyūṭī in *Tanwīr ul-Ḥawālik*.

example of one who does not complete *rukū'* and pecks in his *sujūd* is like that of a hungry person who eats one or two dates that do not satisfy his hunger in the least bit.¹

5. Ṭalq Ibn 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ):

« لا يَنْظُرُ اللهُ إِلَى صَلَاةِ عَبْدٍ لَا يُعَيِّمُ صُلْبَهُ بَيْنَ رُكُوعِهَا وَسُجُودِهَا. »

«Verily, Allāh (ﷻ) does not look at the prayer of the person who does not straighten his spine between *rukū'* and *sujūd*.²»

6. 'Ammār Ibn Yāsir (رضي الله عنه) said that he heard Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) say:

«إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَصَلِّي الصَّلَاةَ مَا يَكْتَبُ لَهُ مِنْهَا إِلَّا عَشْرُهَا، تُسْعُهَا، ثُمْنُهَا، سُبْعُهَا، سُدْسُهَا، خُمُسُهَا، رُبْعُهَا، ثُلُثُهَا نِصْفُهَا.»

«A person would pray a prayer, and nothing recorded for him (of its reward) except one-tenth of it, one-ninth, one-eighth, one-seventh, one-sixth, one-fifth, one-quarter one-third, or one-half.³»

This *ḥadīth* means that, "Peoples' rewards vary in accordance with their *khushū'*, devotion, and other manners that conform with

1. Recorded by al-Ājirī (in *al-Arba'īn*) and al-Bayhaqī. Its *isnād* is *ḥasan*. Also, al-Munthirī said, "Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*) and Abū Ya'lā with a *ḥasan isnād*, as well as Ibn Khuzaymah in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*."
2. Recorded by Aḥmad, aṭ-Ṭabarānī (in *al-Kabīr*), and aḍ-Ḍiyā' ul-Maqdisī (in *al-Mukhtarah*); its *isnād* is authentic. It also has a witness in *al-Musnad* with acceptable narrators, which was judged authentic by al-Ḥāfiẓ al-'Irāqī in *Takhrij ul-Ihyā'*, and al-Munthirī said that its *isnād* is good.
3. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, al-Bayhaqī, and Aḥmad with two different chains, of which one was judged to be authentic by al-Ḥāfiẓ al-'Irāqī. It is also recorded by Ibn Ḥibbān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, as was stated in *at-Targhib*.

perfecting the prayer.”¹

7. ‘Abdullāh Ibn ash-Shikhkhīr (رضي الله عنه) said:

“I came to the Prophet (ﷺ) while he was praying, and his chest was making a whirring sound like that of a boiling pot (from crying).”²

Conclusion

These noble *ḥadīths* apply generally to all prayers, whether *farḍ* or *nafl*, and whether they are day or night prayers. The scholars have noted this in regard to the *tarāwīḥ* prayer in particular. An-Nawawī said:

“The very manner of performing *tarāwīḥ* is similar to what was explained earlier for other prayers; all the preceding *thikrs* apply to it, such as the opening supplication and others, completion of *tashahhud* and the supplication that follows it, and other things that were previously mentioned. Even though this appears to be obvious and well known, I note it here because many people neglect it and omit most of the *thikrs* during *tarāwīḥ*. And the truth is what is mentioned here.”³

1. *Fayḍ ul-Qadīr by al-Manāwī*.

2. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, al-Nasā’ī, al-Bayhaqī, and Aḥmad, with an authentic *isnād* that conforms with the condition of Muslim. It is also recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Ḥibbān in their *Ṣaḥīḥs*, as is mentioned in *at-Tarḡīb*.

3. *Al-Athkār*, chapter on “The *athkār* of the *tarāwīḥ* Prayer”.

Meaning of *Qunūt*

Qunūt derives from the Arabic verb *qanata*. According to Ibn Manzūr:

“*Qunūt* means ceasing from speech, supplication during prayer, devotion, submission, performing pure acts of obedience, and standing. Tha‘lab claims that the latter is the original meaning. According to others, it means long standing ...

Abū ‘Ubayd said, ‘*Qunūt* refers to many things, among which is standing. This is the meaning intended in *ḥadīths* regarding *qunūt* during the prayer, because the one who performs it supplicates while standing. More clear than that is Jābir’s *ḥadīth* where he asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about the best form of prayer, and he replied, «طُولُ الْقُنُوتِ.» (The one with long *qunūt*,) meaning long standing.’

The praying person is described as *qānit* (one who performs *qunūt*); and in the *ḥadīth*:

«مَثَلُ الْمُجَاهِدِ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ الصَّائِمِ الْقَائِمِ الدَّائِمِ.»

(The example of a *mujāhid* is like that of a person performing *qunūt* and fasting.)¹

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2787), Muslim (1878), and others from Abū Hurayrah

'Performing *qunūt*' here means 'praying' ...

Qunūt has been mentioned repeatedly in *hadīths*. It has various meanings, such as obedience, submission, prayer, supplication, worship, standing, long standing, and ceasing from speech. It is then related to any particular one of these meanings in accordance with the context of the *ḥadīth* in which it appears.

Ibn ul-Anbārī said, 'Qunūt is four types: prayer, long standing, consistency in obedience, and silence.' And Ibn Sīdah said, 'Qunūt means obedience. This is the original meaning, and in accordance with it Allāh says, ﴿وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالْقَائِمَاتِ﴾ «Those who are obedient to Allāh — males and females.»¹ From this, standing in the prayer was called *qunūt*, as well as the *qunūt* in the *witr* prayer.'

'*Qanata* for Allāh' means '(he has) obeyed Him' ... *Qānit* means obedient; and it means one who continuously remembers Allāh; and some say that it means 'worshipper' ... It is famous in the language that *qunūt* means supplication.

The correct meaning for *qānit* is one who stands (i.e., abides) by Allāh's commands. When one supplicates while standing, he is specifically described as being *qānit* because he mentions Allāh (ﷻ) while standing on his feet.

Therefore, the correct meaning of *qunūt* is worship and supplication to Allāh (ﷻ) in the standing posture. It could also apply to other acts of obedience because, even if they did not involve actual standing on the feet, they still involve (spiritual) standing by intention."²

(ﷻ).

1. *Al-Aḥzāb* 33:35.

2. *Lisān ul-'Arab*.

The meaning of *qunūt* that especially interests us in this chapter is: “making supplication during the prayer while in the standing posture”.

Correct Reasons for Qunūt

True adherence to the Sunnah dictates following Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) in what he did, as well as staying away from what he avoided. This is a general rule that applies to *qunūt* as well. Thus, it is not left open for the people to decide when and in which prayers they can perform *qunūt*. This is already regulated by the Sunnah, and recorded in the books of *Ḥadīth* — from the actions of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions. In this section, we present the correct situations in which one may perform this *du‘ā’*.

OCCURRENCE OF DISASTERS

It is ordained in the Sunnah to perform *qunūt* when a great hardship or disaster befalls the Muslims, such as wars, earthquakes, floods, famines, etc. The evidence for this is the *hadīth* of Anas (رضي الله عنه):

بَعَثَ النَّبِيُّ سَبْعِينَ رَجُلًا لِحَاجَةٍ، يُقَالُ لَهُمُ الْقُرَاءُ، فَعَرَضَ لَهُمْ حَيَّانٌ مِنْ بَنِي سُلَيْمٍ، رِعْلٌ، وَذِكْوَانٌ، عِنْدَ بئرٍ يُقَالُ لَهَا بئرُ مَعُونَةَ، فَقَالَ الْقَوْمُ: وَاللَّهِ مَا إِيَّاكُمْ أَرَدْنَا، إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُجْتَازُونَ فِي حَاجَةٍ لِلنَّبِيِّ ﷺ، فَقَتَلُوهُمْ فَدَعَا النَّبِيُّ ﷺ عَلَيْهِمْ شَهْرًا فِي صَلَاةِ الْعَدَاةِ، وَذَلِكَ بَدَأُ الْقُتُوتِ، وَمَا كُنَّا نَقْنُتُ..

“The Prophet (ﷺ) sent seventy men, who used to be known as *al-Qurra’* (the reciters), on a mission. Two branches from the tribe of Sulaym, called Ri‘l and Thakwān, stopped them by the Well of Ma‘ūnah. They told them, ‘By Allāh, we are not out to fight with you; we are only on a mission of the Prophet (ﷺ). Yet, they killed

them. And the Prophet (ﷺ) made *du'ā'* for a full month during the morning prayer. This is how *qunūt* started, because we did not do it prior to that.”¹

The mission of those reciters was explained in another narration by Anas (رضي الله عنه):

جاء ناسٌ إلى النبيِّ فقالوا: أنِ ابعثْ مَعَنَا رَجَالًا يُعَلِّمُونَا الْقُرْآنَ وَالسُّنَّةَ، فَبَعَثَ إِلَيْهِمْ سَبْعِينَ رَجُلًا مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ، يُقَالُ لَهُمْ: الْقُرَاءُ، فِيهِمْ خَالِي حَرَامٌ، يَقْرَأُونَ الْقُرْآنَ، وَيَتَدَارَسُونَ بِاللَّيْلِ يَتَعَلَّمُونَ، وَكَانُوا بِالنَّهَارِ يَجِيئُونَ بِالْمَاءِ فَيَضَعُونَهُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ، وَيَحْتَطِبُونَ فَيَبِيعُونَهُ، وَيَشْتَرُونَ بِهِ الطَّعَامَ لِأَهْلِ الصُّفَّةِ وَالْفُقَرَاءِ، فَبَعَثَهُمُ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ إِلَيْهِمْ، فَعَرَضُوا لَهُمْ، فَفَتَلَوْهُمْ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَتَلَّغُوا الْمَكَانَ.

“Some people came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and requested him to send men to them who could teach them Qur’ān and Sunnah. He sent to them seventy men from the *Anṣār* known as ‘the reciters’. Among them was my maternal uncle Ḥarām. Those men used to recite Qur’ān, study, and learn during the night. During the day, they would bring water to the *Masjid*, gather firewood, sell it, and buy with that food for themselves and the poor people of the *Masjid*. So the Prophet (ﷺ) sent these men to them, but they attacked them and killed them before they reached their destination ...”²

Killing those righteous *ṣaḥābah* made the Prophet (ﷺ) very sad, as Anas reported:

“The Prophet (ﷺ) performed *qunūt* for one month, when the reciters were killed; and I never saw Allāh’s

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (4088) and Muslim (677).

2. Recorded by Muslim (1511).

Messenger (ﷺ) more sad.”¹

An-Nawawī said:

“The correct and well-known practice is that when a disaster occurs, such as enemies, famine, plague, drought, obvious affliction for the Muslims, and so on, they perform *qunūt* in all of the (*fard*) prayers.”²

IMPORTANT EVENTS THAT AFFECT THE MUSLIMS

Qunūt is also ordained in extremely urgent situations where the Muslims are in dire need for Allāh (ﷻ)’s help and protection in a specific matter. Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) and Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) made *qunūt* for one month, after *rukū‘*, saying:

«اللَّهُمَّ أَنْجِ عِيَّاشَ بْنِ أَبِي رَبِيعَةَ، اللَّهُمَّ أَنْجِ سَلَمَةَ بْنَ هِشَامٍ، اللَّهُمَّ أَنْجِ الْوَلِيدَ بْنَ الْوَلِيدِ، اللَّهُمَّ أَنْجِ الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ، اللَّهُمَّ اشْدُدْ وَطْأَتَكَ عَلَى مُضَرَ، اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلْهَا سِنِينَ كَسَنِي يُوسُفَ.»

‘O Allāh! Save al-Walīd Ibn al-Walīd.

O Allāh! Save ‘Ayyāsh Ibn Abī Rabī‘ah.

O Allāh! Save the oppressed Believers.

O Allāh! Tighten your grip on (the tribe of) Muḍar.

O Allāh! Give them years of famine, like those of Yūsuf.³

This *ḥadīth* was also recorded by Ibn Ḥibbān, who commented:

“This report clearly indicates that *qunūt* during the prayers is only ordained for the occurrence of an important event, such as a victory by Allāh’s enemies

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (3170) and Muslim (677).

2. *Sharḥu Ṣaḥīhi Muslim*.

3. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1006) and Muslim (765).

against the Muslims, the oppression of an oppressor, transgression against a person, people who need supplication, Muslims who are captives in the hands of *mushriks*, or other similar situations.”¹

Abū Hurayrah also reported:

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَانَ إِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَدْعُوَ عَلَى أَحَدٍ أَوْ يَدْعُوَ لِأَحَدٍ، فَتَبَعَهُ الرُّكُوعَ.

“When the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to make *du‘ā* for someone, or curse someone, he would perform *qunūt* after *rukū‘*.”²

And Abū Salamah reported that Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said:

(لَأُقْرَبَنَّ صَلَاةَ النَّبِيِّ).

“By Allāh, I will pray in front of you a prayer similar to the Prophet’s (ﷺ).”

In his demonstration, Abū Hurayrah performed *qunūt* during *zuhr*, *‘ishā*, and *fajr* prayers, supplication for the believers, and cursing the disbelievers.³

QIYĀM AND WITR

This will be discussed in detail below.

Which Obligatory Prayers?

ALL PRAYERS

The first two types of *qunūt* in the previous section should be performed in the obligatory prayers. This is confirmed by some

1. *Ṣaḥīḥ* Ibn Ḥibbān no. 1986.

2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (4560), Aḥmad, and others.

3. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (797) and Muslim (676).

of the above reports, as well as the following report by Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه):

“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) performed *qunūt* consecutively for one full month, during *zuhr*, ‘*aṣr*, *maghrib*, ‘*ishā*, and *fajr*. He did it at the end of the prayer, on the last *rak‘ah*, after saying *sami‘allāhu liman ḥamidah*. He cursed branches from the tribe of Sulaym: Ri‘l, Thakwān, and ‘Uṣayyah; and those praying behind him said *āmin*.”¹

A DESERTED SUNNAH

From other authentic reports, some of which were cited above, the Prophet (ﷺ) did not always perform *qunūt* in all of the daily prayers. Sometimes he performed it in *zuhr*, ‘*ishā*, and *fajr*; sometimes in *maghrib* and *fajr*²; and sometimes in *fajr* alone. This seems to depend on the magnitude and urgency of the situation calling for this *qunūt*.

This *sunnah* has mostly disappeared from among the Muslims. Many of them never perform *qunūt* during the obligatory prayers, whether in disasters or otherwise. Others perform it consistently during the *fajr* prayer. Both of these approaches are wrong, as has been explained above, and will be discussed below for the *fajr* prayer.

At the present time, the Muslims are in continuous problems of wars, disasters, etc. But this does not warrant establishing *qunūt* on a regular basis, in all prayers.

Qunūt for exceptional events would only apply to situations where the disasters are sudden and unusual, causing sadness or anger in an exceptional manner. Under such circumstances, it is recommended to perform *qunūt* in all or some of the daily prayers — depending on the severity of the situation.

1. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*al-Mishkāt* no. 1290).

2. Recorded by Muslim (678) and others from al-Barā‘ (رضي الله عنه).

When the circumstances change, or the matter becomes a usual matter, the Muslims should gradually or totally cease to perform *qunūt* in the obligatory prayers.

DURING THE FAJR PRAYER?

The Prophet (ﷺ) did not make *qunūt* regularly during *fajr* or other obligatory prayers. The above reports clearly indicate that he did it for one or more one-month periods. Other reports indicate that he cursed the disbelievers in *qunūt* after the battle of Uḥud, or on other occasions, until Allāh commanded him to stop (Āl-ʿImrān 3:128).¹

Thus, it is not recommended to perform *qunūt* specifically in *fajr*, nor regularly and consistently in any of the other obligatory prayers. Ibn ul-Qayyim said:

“It is quite obvious that, had Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) been consistent in performing *qunūt* every morning, with the *ṣaḥābah* saying *āmīn* behind him, this would have been transmitted by the whole *Ummah* — as they transmitted the information about reciting Qur’ān loud during it, the number of its *rak’āt*, and its time. If they were to neglect reporting the *qunūt*, they could have neglected some of the other information as well ... His (ﷺ) practice was to perform *qunūt* specifically at the occurrence of unusual events, and to drop it otherwise.”²

In fact, there are clear authentic reports from the *ṣaḥābah* (including Ibn ‘Umar, Ibn Mas‘ūd, Ibn ‘Abbās, Anas, and Abū Hurayrah) expressing that they did not perform *qunūt* during *fajr*, and others in which they declare it to be a *bid’ah*. For example, Abū Mālik al-Ashja‘ī (رضي الله عنه) reported that he asked his father:

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (4560) and Muslim (675) from Abū Hurayrah and Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه).

2. *Zād ul-Ma’ād* 1:272.

“O father! You have prayed behind Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ), Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, and ‘Alī. Did they perform *qunūt*?”

And his father replied, “My son, it is an innovation!”¹

As for the report, “Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) continued to perform *qunūt* during the *fajr* prayer until he departed from the world,”² it is weak, and may not be used to refute the above authentic reports.

Before or After *Rukū’*?

If one wishes to perform *qunūt*, he should do it in the last *rak‘ah* of the prayer, before or after *rukū’*. Both options are permissible according to most scholars.

AFTER *RUKŪ’*

For the *qunūt* of the obligatory prayers, most reports support performing it after *rukū’*. Some of these reports have preceded. In addition, Ibn Sīrīn reported that Anas Ibn Mālik was asked, “Did the Prophet (ﷺ) perform *qunūt* in *fajr*?” He replied, “Yes.” He was asked, “Was it before or after *rukū’*?” He replied, “After *rukū’*, for a short while.”³

BEFORE *RUKŪ’*

‘Āṣim Ibn al-Aḥwal reported that he asked Anas (رضي الله عنه) whether *qunūt* should be performed before or after *rukū’*. Anas replied, “Before it.” He said, “But such and such person told me that you said, ‘After it.’” He replied, “He is wrong. The Prophet (ﷺ)

1. Recorded by Aḥmad, an-Nasā’ī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*al-Mishkāt* no. 1292).
2. Recorded from Anas by Aḥmad, ad-Dāraqutnī, and others. This report is weak because of one of the narrators in its chain, Abū Ja‘far ar-Rāzī, who is considered weak by the scholars of *Ḥadīth*.
3. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1001) and Muslim (677).

performed *qunūt* after *rukū'* for one month only ..."¹

In another report, Anas (رضي الله عنه) said:

"*Qunūt* may be performed before or after *rukū'*."²

Al-Albānī reconciles between the various reports by saying that those reports that mention *qunūt* after *rukū'* refer to the *qunūt* of events and disasters (which is done in the obligatory prayers), whereas the reports that mention *qunūt* before *rukū'* refer to the other case, namely, the *qunūt* in *witr*.³

However, there are authentic reports recorded by Ibn Abī Shaybah⁴ and aṭ-Ṭahāwī⁵ from 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, and others, that they performed *qunūt* in *fajr* before *rukū'*.⁶

QUNŪT IN WITR

Ubayy Ibn Ka'b (رضي الله عنه) reported that:

"Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) used to perform *qunūt* in *witr* before *rukū'*."⁷

Ibn ul-Qayyim said:

"Nothing is recorded from the Prophet (ﷺ) that he performed *qunūt* in *witr* except this *ḥadīth* (of Ubayy)."

In addition, there are reports from the *ṣaḥābah* concerning this. 'Alqamah reported, "Ibn Mas'ūd and other companions used to

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (1002) and Muslim (677). The rest of this *ḥadīth* has been cited earlier in this chapter.
2. Recorded by Ibn Mājah. Al-Ḥāfiẓ said in *Faṭḥ ul-Bārī* that its *isnād* is strong. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*al-Mishkāt* no. 1294).
3. *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* 2:168.
4. *Al-Muṣannaḥ*, starting from no. 7012.
5. *Al-Mushkal* 1:147.
6. See 'Ar'ūr's *Aḥkām ul-Qunūt* p. 45.
7. Recorded by an-Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, and others. It is verified to be authentic by al-Albānī in *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 426.

perform *qunūt* in *witr* before *rukūʿ*.¹

CONCLUSION

From the above, we conclude that *qunūt* may be performed before or after *rukūʿ*. However, it is preferable to perform it after *rukūʿ* for the obligatory prayers and before it for *witr*.

Miscellaneous Issues

MAKING QUNŪT ALOUD

It is clear from the previous reports that the Sunnah is to say the *qunūt* supplication aloud. This enables the congregation to hear the *imām*'s supplication and take part with their hearts, and with their tongues, by saying *āmin*. Al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar said:

“It appears to me that the wisdom behind making *qunūt* (of disasters) in the standing posture instead of *sujūd*, even though supplications are more likely to be answered in *sujūd*, is that it requires participation from those praying behind the *imām*, at least by saying *āmin*. Because of this, the scholars agree that it should be said aloud.”²

SAYING ĀMIN

It is recommended for those praying behind the *imām* to say *āmin* during the *qunūt* supplication. In this regard, we have cited earlier Ibn ‘Abbās’s *ḥadīth* (p. 74).

RAISING THE HANDS

In one of the reports of Anas’s narration, he said:

“... I never saw Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) as sorrowful.

1. Recorded by Ibn Abi Shaybah (no. 6911) with an authentic *isnād*. See *Aḥkām ul-Qunūt*.

2. *Fath ul-Bārī* 2:570.

So during the morning prayer, he raised his hands and cursed them ...”¹

Al-Bayhaqī mentioned various reports, some of which are authentic, about the companions’ raising their hands. An-Nawawī confirmed the authenticity of other reports from the companions mentioned by al-Bukhārī.

This applies to the *qunūt* of *witr* as well. It is confirmed that ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) raised his hands in this *qunūt*.²

Also, it is recommended for those praying behind the *imām* to raise their hands when he does so during *qunūt*, because of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) general instruction:

«إِنَّمَا جُعِلَ الْإِمَامُ لِيُؤْتَمَّ بِهِ..»

«An *imām* has been appointed to be followed.»³

What to Say During the *Qunūt* of *Witr*

After finishing Qur’ānic recitation in the last *rak‘ah* of *witr*, and before *rukū‘*, one should sometimes supplicate with what the Prophet (ﷺ) taught to his grandson al-Ḥasan Ibn ‘Alī (رضي الله عنه):

«اللَّهُمَّ اهْدِنِي فِيْمَنْ هَدَيْتَ، وَعَافِنِي فِيْمَنْ عَافَيْتَ، وَتَوَلَّنِي فِيْمَنْ تَوَلَّيْتَ،
وَبَارِكْ لِي فِيْمَا أُعْطَيْتَ، وَقِنِي شَرَّ مَا قَضَيْتَ، فَإِنَّكَ تَقْضِي وَلَا يُقْضَى
عَلَيْكَ، إِنَّهُ لَا يَذِلُّ مَنْ وَالَيْتَ، وَلَا يَعِزُّ مَنْ عَادَيْتَ، تَبَارَكْتَ رَبَّنَا وَتَعَالَيْتَ،
لَا مَنجَا مِنْكَ إِلَّا إِلَيْكَ..»

Allāhumma ‘hdinī fīman hadayt; wa-‘āfinī fīman ‘āfayt; wa-tawallanī fīman tawallayt; wabārikli fīmā a‘ṭayt; wa-qinī sharra mā qaḍayt; fa-innaka taqḍī walā yuqḍā ‘alayk.

1. Recorded by Aḥmad, al-Bayhaqī, and others, with an authentic *isnād*. See *Aḥkām ul-Qunūt*.
2. Mentioned by al-Albānī in *Irwa‘ ul-Ghalīl* (2:181).
3. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (378).

*Innahū lā yaḍillu man wālayt; walā ya'izzu man 'ādayt;
tabārakta rabbanā wa-ta'ālayt; lā manjā minka illā ilayk*

O Allāh! Guide me with those whom You have guided; protect me with those whom You have protected; befriend me with those whom You have befriended; bless for me what You have bestowed (on me); shelter me from the evil of what You have decreed. Indeed, You decree, and none can dominate You; he whom You befriend will never be humiliated, nor will Your enemy ever be honored. Blessed are You, Our Lord, and exalted; there is no refuge from You except toward You.¹

One may occasionally add to this the *ṣalāh* (prayer) upon the Prophet (ﷺ). Also, during the second half of *Ramaḍān*, one may further curse the disbelievers, say the *ṣalāh* upon the Prophet (ﷺ), and supplicate for the Muslims. This was practiced by the *imāms* during the time of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), as 'Abd ur-Raḥmān Ibn 'Abd al-Qārī reported:

"And they cursed the *kuffār* in the (second) half (of *Ramaḍān*):

«اللَّهُمَّ قَاتِلِ الْكُفْرَةَ الَّذِينَ يَصُدُّونَ عَنْ سَبِيلِكَ وَيُكَذِّبُونَ رُسُلَكَ، وَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ
بِوَعْدِكَ، وَخَالَفَ بَيْنَ كَلِمَتِهِمْ، وَأَلْقَى فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ، وَأَلْقَى عَلَيْهِمْ رِجْزَكَ
وَعَذَابَكَ، إِلَهَ الْحَقِّ.»

'Allāhumma qātili 'lkafarata 'llathīna yaṣuddūna 'an sabīlik, wayukath-thībūna rusulak, walā yu'minūna biwa'dik, wakhālif bayna kalimatahum, wa-'alqi 'alayhim rijzaka wa-'athābak, ilāha 'lhaqq —

1. Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, and others. It is verified to be authentic by al-Albānī in *Ṣifat uṣ-Ṣalāh*.

O Allāh, fight the disbelievers who obstruct the people from Your way, reject Your messengers, and do not believe in Your promises. Cause them to be divided, cast terror into their hearts, and launch Your punishment and chastisement upon them. You are the God of Truth.'

Then they said the *ṣalāh* upon the Prophet (ﷺ), prayed for the *Muslims* with what they wished of good, and sought forgiveness for the believers. Following this, they said:

«اللَّهُمَّ يَاكَ نَعْبُدُ، وَلَكَ نُصَلِّي وَنَسْجُدُ، وَإِلَيْكَ نَسْعَى وَنَحْفِدُ، وَنَرْجُو رَحْمَتَكَ رَبَّنَا، وَنَحَافُ عَذَابَكَ الْجِدِّ، إِنَّ عَذَابَكَ لِمَنْ عَادَيْتَ مُلْحِقٌ.»

'*Allāhumma iyyaka na'bud, walaka nuṣallī wanasjud, wailayka nas'ā wanaḥfid, wanarjū raḥmatāka rabbanā, wanakhāfu 'athābka 'ljadd, inna 'athābaka liman 'ādayta mulḥaq —*

O Allāh, it is You that we worship, to You we pray and prostrate ourselves, and unto You we run and rush. We hope in Your Mercy our Lord, and we fear Your severe chastisement — surely, Your severe chastisement is to reach those whom You oppose.'

Then they said *takbīr* and went to *sujūd*.¹

Mistakes of Qunūt

The *imāms* and congregation must adhere to the manners of *du'ā'*, as instructed by the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمَعْتَدِينَ﴾

«Call upon your Lord in humility and privately.

1. Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Qiyāmu Ramadān* p. 32).

Indeed, He does not like transgressors.»¹

Sa'd Bin Abī Waqqāṣ heard his son making *du'ā'*, saying: "Oh Allāh, I ask You for Paradise, its blessings, its pleasure and such-and-such. And I seek refuge in You from Hell, from its chains, from its collars, and from such-and-such." Sa'd told him: "I heard the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) say: «سَيَكُونُ قَوْمٌ يَعْتَدُونَ فِي الدُّعَاءِ» (There will be people who transgress in supplication), so do not be of them. If you are granted Paradise, you will be granted it and all what is good is in it; if you are protected from Hell, you will be protected from it and what evil is in it."²

COMMON MISTAKES

- Making lengthy *qunūt*, especially in the second half of *Ramaḍān*. This does not have a basis in the practice of the Prophet (ﷺ) or his companions, whose *qunūt* was concise and to the point, as presented in the previous section.
- Consistently repeating specific *du'ā'*. In matters of worship one should only be consistent with actions the Prophet (ﷺ) was consistent with. This also will cause many of the congregation to believe that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to make that *du'ā'* during *qunūt*.
- Including unusual phrases in the *du'ā'*, sometimes done to stand out and bring something new. These phrases often carry meanings that conflict with the Qur'ān and Sunnah, either directly or implicitly.
- Exerting oneself to make *du'ā'* that rhymes. Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said: "Avoid the use of rhymed prose in invocation, for I saw Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) and his companions always avoided it."³

1. *Al-A'raf* 7:55.

2. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Saḥīḥ Abī Dāwūd* no. 1480).

3. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (6337).

- Making *Qunūt* in a loud, dramatic voice, sometimes even reaching the point of wailing.
- Crying loudly, or making *du‘ā* in a crying, sobbing voice. Being moved by the Qur’ān is a sign of a believer, but if that overcomes them they should strive that it does not affect their voice, and that their cry is not audible. This was the way of the Prophet (ﷺ), his companions, and the *salaf*. Ibn Mas‘ūd, when reciting Qur’ān to the Prophet (ﷺ), did not notice that he began to cry until he looked up and saw the tears falling¹. As for the *salaf*, they would remember Allāh (ﷻ) while lying in bed and weep on their pillows, and their wife would not notice.

Some of the above may occur unintentionally or coincidentally, and there is no sin for that *in shā’-Allāh*, however the *imām* should not intend it.

Ibn Bāz (ﷺ) was asked in regard to the practice of weeping loudly during *tarāwīḥ*. He replied:

“I have advised many of those who contacted me to beware of this. They should avoid it because it harms the praying people and disturbs them as well as the *imām*. A believer should strive not to make his voice audible when he cries. He should beware of Satan who may drag him into showoff ... But if crying overwhelms him without intending that, then there is no blame upon him.”²

WIPING THE FACE

There are no authentic reports confirming that the Prophet (ﷺ) ever wiped his face with his hands after supplicating in general, or after *qunūt* in particular. Because of this, an-Nawawī (ﷺ) said:

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (4582).

2. *Al-Jawāb us-Sahīḥ* p. 19-20.

“This is not recommended, in accordance with what al-‘Izz Ibn ‘Abd us-Salām said ... No one does this but an ignorant person.”¹

And al-Bayhaqī (رحمته الله) said:

“As for wiping the face with the hands after concluding the supplication, I do not know that any of the *salaf* did it.”²

PRECEDING QUNŪT WITH TAKBĪR

There are no authentic reports supporting raising the hands with *takbīr* before starting *qunūt*. Thus, doing it is an innovation that must be avoided.

1. *Al-Majmū‘*.

2. *As-Sunan* 1:212.

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Definition

In the Arabic language, the abstract noun *i'tikāf* means confinement. It derives from the verb *'akafa*, which means to dwell in a particular place. From this also derives the word *ma'kūf* meaning imprisoned.¹

In the Islāmic *shar'*, *i'tikāf* means to dwell or retreat in a *masjid* for a specific period of time, seeking by that Allāh's pleasure². The person who performs *i'tikāf* is called *mu'takif* or *'akif*.

Ruling

I'tikāf is a recommended act of worship during *Ramaḍān*, as well as other times of the year. This is confirmed by the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, the practice of the *salaf*, and *ijmā'*. In the Qur'ān, Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَلَا تَبْشُرُوهُنَّ وَأَنْتُمْ عَاكِفُونَ فِي الْمَسَاجِدِ﴾

«And have no contact (intercourse) with them (your wives) while you are performing *i'tikāf* in the *masjids*»³

In the Sunnah, a number of authentic *ḥadīths* describe the *i'tikāf*

1. From *Hulyat ul-Fuqahā'* by Ibn Fāris (110), *Jāmi' ul-Uṣūl* (1:337), and *al-Miṣbāḥ ul-Munīr* (2:424).
2. From *Ṭarḥ ut-Tathrīb* by Ibn ul-'Irāqī (4:166) and *al-Mufradāt* by ar-Rāghib (343).
3. *Al-Baqarah* 2:187.

of the Prophet (ﷺ), some of which will be cited below. There are also numerous reports describing the *i'tikāf* of the *salaf*¹. For example, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said to the Prophet (ﷺ), "I made a vow during *Jāhiliyyah* to perform *i'tikāf* for one day in *al-Masjid ul-Harām* (the Sacred Mosque of Makkah)." The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«فَأَوْفِ بِتَذْرِكَ.»

(Fulfill your vow then.)

Thus 'Umar performed *i'tikāf* for one day.²

As for *ijmā'*, it was declared by Ibn ul-Munthir³, and approved by Ibn Qudāmah⁴.

Weak Reports

Some unauthentic reports are usually cited to further encourage people to perform *i'tikāf*. We mention them here in order to warn against using them.

1. From al-Ḥusayn Ibn 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever performs *i'tikāf* for ten days of *Ramaḍān*, it counts for him as having performed *hajj* and *'umrah*⁵ twice." This *ḥadīth* is fabricated.⁶
2. From 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "Whoever performs *i'tikāf* with belief, and looking forward to Allāh's reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven." This *ḥadīth* is

1. Many of these reports are recorded by Ibn Abī Shaybah and 'Abd ur-Razzāq in their *Muṣannafs*.
 2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2032), Muslim (1656), and Ibn Khuzaymah. Some of the reports have mentioned "night" instead of "day". Together, the various reports mean a full day and night, which is the minimum duration of *i'tikāf* as is established below.
 3. In *al-Ijmā'* (47).
 4. In *al-Mughnī* (3:183).
 5. Partial pilgrimage performed during *hajj* and at other times of the year.
 6. Recorded by al-Bayhaqī in *Shu'ab ul-Īmān*. Review *aḍ-Ḍa'īfah* (no. 518) and *Ḍa'īf ul-Jāmi'* (5451) by al-Albānī.

weak.¹

3. "Whoever performs *i'tikāf* for one day, seeking Allāh's Face, Allāh will make three trenches between him and the fire, each trench wider than the distance from east to west." This *ḥadīth* is weak.²

Wisdom and Manners of *I'tikāf*

WISDOM

I'tikāf is an opportunity for a Muslim to turn to Allāh (ﷻ), in one of His houses of worship, with submission and devotion, without being preoccupied or distracted by the worldly concerns. Ibn ul-Qayyim (رحمته) said:

"The righteousness and steadiness of the heart in its journey toward Allāh (ﷻ) depends on its devotion to Him; its confusion is expelled by turning fully toward Him ...

Because of this, Allāh (ﷻ) has ordained *i'tikāf*. Its purpose and spirit is for the heart to turn fully and solely toward Allāh (ﷻ), living in privacy with Him, ceasing to be involved with the created things, and getting involved with Him alone instead. With this, His remembrance, love, and devotion replace the worries and thoughts of the heart, overtaking their place in it, and becoming its only concern. Then the thoughts become busy with remembering Him and contemplating on that which pleases Him and brings one closer to Him. One's pleasure is then attained by His company rather than that of the creatures, thereby preparing himself for the day of solitude in the graves,

1. Recorded by ad-Daylamī. Review *Da'if ul-Jāmi'* (5452) by al-Albānī.

2. Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarānī and others. It has an obscure problem, which is detailed in *ad-Da'ifah* (no. 5347) by al-Albānī.

when he will have no company or delight except Him. This is the greatest purpose of *i'tikāf*.¹

And Ibn Rajab (رحمته) said:

“The meaning and reality of *i'tikāf* is that one severs all ties with the created things in order to be dedicated to serving the Creator. As one's knowledge about Allāh, love for Him, and pleasure in His company increase, he gains full and complete devotion to Allāh (ﷻ) in all situations.”²

MANNERS DURING I'TIKĀF

A *mu'takif* should not forget the great wisdom and purpose of *i'tikāf* outlined above. He should pass the days of *i'tikāf* in tranquility and devotion, dedicating his time to Allāh (ﷻ), and spending it in performing acts of pure worship, such as prayer, reading *Qur'ān*, making *thikr*, seeking Islāmic knowledge in areas of *tafsīr*, *Ḥadīth*, etc. He should speak in a low voice, avoid quarrelling, and abstain from futile talks and arguments.

Thus, the person performing *i'tikāf* should strive to benefit from his dwelling in the *masjid* to excel in worship and devotion, without involving himself in any of the worldly distractions.

Time of Year

I'tikāf may be performed at any time of the year. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) performed *i'tikāf* for ten days in *Shawwāl*.³

However, it is most recommended to perform *i'tikāf* during *Ramaḍān*. This follows from the *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayrah:

“Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) used to perform *i'tikāf* for ten

1. *Zād ul-Ma'ād* (2:86-87).

2. *Latā'if ul-Ma'ārif* (p. 203).

3. Recorded by al-Bukhāri (2033), Muslim (1173), and Ibn Khuzaymah.

days during each *Ramaḍān*. On the year in which he passed, he performed *i'tikāf* for twenty days.¹

The best days to perform *i'tikāf* are the last ten days of *Ramaḍān*, because these are the days on which *Laylat-ul-Qadr* falls. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported:

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ كَانَ يَعْتَكِفُ الْعَشْرَ الْأَوَّخِرَ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ حَتَّى تَوَفَّاهُ اللَّهُ.

“The Prophet (ﷺ) used to perform *i'tikāf* during the last ten days of *Ramaḍān* until Allāh (ﷻ) took his life.”²

Place for *I'tikāf*

A MOSQUE OF *JUMU'AH*

I'tikāf may only be performed in a *masjid*, as is indicated in the above *āyah* from *al-Baqarah* (2:187). Also, 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said:

“It is recommended for a person who is performing *i'tikāf* not to leave (the *masjid*) except for an essential need, not to visit a sick person, and not to touch or sleep with his wife. *I'tikāf* may only be performed in a *masjid* where the *jamā'ah* (or *Jumu'ah*) prayers are established. And it is recommended for the one performing *i'tikāf* to fast.”³

Thus, *i'tikāf* must be performed in a *masjid* where the *Jumu'ah* is held. This ensures that one would not need to exit from it to attend the *Jumu'ah* prayer, which is an obligation on him.

THE THREE SACRED MOSQUES

A clear authentic *ḥadīth* further restricts the *masjids* in the above

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2044) and Ibn Khuzaymah.
2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2026), Muslim (1172), and Ibn Khuzaymah.
3. Recorded by al-Bayhaqī with an authentic chain of narrators, and Abū Dāwūd with a good chain. The part between brackets is from the latter.

āyāh (2:187) to only three: *al-Masjid ul-Harām* (the Sacred Mosque of Makkah), *al-Masjid un-Nabawī* (the Prophet's Mosque at al-Madīnah), and *al-Masjid ul-Aqṣā* (the Furthest Mosque at Jerusalem).

A group of people performed *i'tikāf* in a *masjid* between the houses of 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd and Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī in al-Kūfah. So, Ḥuṭhayfah (رضي الله عنه) asked Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه):

“Do you hold the opinion that it is permissible to perform *i'tikāf* (at the *masjid*) between your house and Abū Mūsā's? You know that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

« لا إعتكاف إلا في المساجد الثلاثة. »

(*I'tikāf* should not be performed except in the Three Masjids.)

Ibn Mas'ūd replied:

“You may have forgotten (the meaning), and they (who are performing *i'tikāf* at the other *masjid*) remembered. Or you may be mistaken, and they be right!”¹

Ibn Mas'ūd's response indicates that he does not deny the authenticity of this *ḥadīth*, but is only uncertain as to its correct interpretation. The best in this case is to adhere to the apparent meaning of this *ḥadīth*.

A number of scholars among the *salaf* have adhered to the text of this *ḥadīth*; among them are Ḥuṭhayfah Ibn al-Yamān (رضي الله عنه), Sa'īd Ibn al-Musayyib, and 'Aṭā' (although 'Aṭā' did not mention *al-Aqṣā*). Others among the *salaf* hold the opinion that *i'tikāf* may be performed at any *masjid* of *Jumu'ah*.

1. Recorded by aṭ-Ṭaḥāwī in *Mushkal ul-Āthār* (4:20), ath-Thahabī in *Siyaru A'lām in-Nubalā'* (15:81), al-Ismā'īlī, and al-Bayhaqī in *as-Sunan* (4:316), with an authentic chain from Ḥuṭhayfah Ibn al-Yamān (رضي الله عنه); it is proven authentic by ath-Thahabī and al-Albānī in *Silsilat-ul-Aḥādīth-iṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* (No. 2786).

AT HOME?

Some scholars say that one may even perform *i'tikāf* at the part of one's home which is designated as a prayer-place.

It is obvious that one should follow the opinion that agrees best with the authentic *ḥadīth*. And Allāh (ﷻ) knows best.

Requirements of I'tikāf

STAYING WITHIN THE MASJID

As indicated above in the definition of *i'tikāf* as well as the *ḥadīth* of 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها), a *mu'takif* may not leave the boundaries of the *masjid*, except for a human need, such as eating or going to the toilet.

FASTING

It is commendable for the one performing *i'tikāf* to fast, as was stated earlier from 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها). Many scholars consider fasting a condition for *i'tikāf*, without which it is invalid. Ibn ul-Qayyim (رحمته الله) said:

“There is no report that the Prophet (ﷺ) performed *i'tikāf* without fasting; rather, 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said:

'*I'tikāf* may not be performed without fasting.'

Also, Allāh (ﷻ) only mentioned *i'tikāf* with fasting; and Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) did not perform *i'tikāf* except while fasting. So the soundest opinion, which is held by the majority of the *salaf*, is that fasting is a condition for *i'tikāf*. This is the opinion that *Shaykh ul-Islām* Abū al-'Abbās Ibn Taymiyyah favored.”¹

STARTING AND ENDING TIMES

It is recommended to start *i'tikāf* in the morning, immediately

1. *Zād ul-Ma'ād*.

after *fajr* prayer. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported:

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ إِذَا أَرَادَ أَنْ يَتَكَبَّفَ صَلَّى الْفَجْرَ، ثُمَّ دَخَلَ مُتَكَبِّفَةً.

“When Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) intended *i'tikāf*, he would pray *fajr* then enter into his *i'tikāf* place.”¹

It is recommended to end *i'tikāf* in the morning as well. Al-Bukhārī headed one of the chapters in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* by the title, “Chapter concerning departing from *i'tikāf* in the morning.” He then narrated the *ḥadīth* of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه):

اعْتَكَفْنَا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ الْعَشْرَ الْأَوْسَطَ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ، قَالَ: فَخَرَجْنَا صَبِيحَةَ عِشْرِينَ.

“We performed *i'tikāf* with Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) over the middle ten days (of *Ramaḍān*). Then we left the morning of the twentieth.”²

MINIMUM STAY

From the above, it is clear that one should stay in *i'tikāf* for a minimum of one day and night. Thus, as declared by Ibn Taymiyyah³, it is not permissible for one entering a *masjid* just for a prayer to intend performing *i'tikāf* during the time of his stay in it.

Permitted Acts During *I'tikāf*

LEAVING THE MASJID FOR A NEED

It is permissible for the one performing *i'tikāf* to leave the *masjid* to fulfill a need, like going to the toilet or taking a required bath. One may also bring his head or a part of his body out of the

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2033) and Muslim (1172).
2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2036) and Muslim (1167).
3. In *al-Ikhtiyārāt*.

masjid's boundaries without invalidating his *i'tikāf*. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said:

"While Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) was in the *Masjid* performing *i'tikāf*, he would bring his head (out of the *Masjid*) into my apartment (next to the *Masjid*), so that I would comb [and wash] his hair. Between us was only the threshold of the door, and I was menstruating. During his *i'tikāf*, he would not enter the house (completely) except for a human need."¹

PERFORMING WUDŪ' WITHIN THE MASJID

It is permissible for one in *i'tikāf* to perform *wudū'* in the *masjid*². A man who served the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

"The Prophet (ﷺ) performed a light ablution in the *Masjid*."³

ERECTING A TENT INSIDE THE MASJID

It is permissible for one in *i'tikāf* to pitch a small tent in the rear of the *masjid* to retire to and perform his worship in seclusion⁴. Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) requested 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) to erect a skin tent for him while he was in *i'tikāf*. He (ﷺ) also performed *i'tikāf* under a small canopy with a straw mat covering its door.⁶

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2030), Muslim (297), Ibn Abū Shaybah, and Aḥmad.
2. Note that this is not possible in most contemporary *masjids*, because the floors are tiled or carpeted, contrary to the Prophet's (ﷺ) *Masjid* whose floor was stone and earth.
3. Recorded by al-Bayhaqī with a good *isnād*, and by Aḥmad with an authentic *isnād*.
4. As in the above note, this is also not possible in most of today's *masjids*, because of the way they are structured. However, one may reserve for himself a specific corner of the mosque where he spends most of his time during *i'tikāf*.
5. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2033) and Muslim (1172).
6. Recorded by Muslim (1167) and Ibn Khuzaymah.

USING A MATTRESS

A *mu'takif* may lay down a mattress or mat in a corner of the *masjid* for his sleep. Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that when Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) performed *i'tikāf*, a mattress or bed would be laid down for him behind the pillar of at-Tawbah.¹

Disapproved Acts During I'tikāf

LEAVING WITHOUT NEED

As indicated above, leaving the *masjid* without need contradicts the basic definition of *i'tikāf*, and the way the Prophet (ﷺ) performed it. It therefore invalidates it. Ibn Ḥazm said:

“The scholars agree that any *mu'takif* who departs from the *masjid* without a need, necessity, or obligatory act of righteousness, then his *i'tikāf* is invalidated.”²

INTERCOURSE

I'tikāf is nullified by intercourse, as Allāh (ﷻ) said:

﴿وَلَا تُبَشِّرُوهُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ عَلَفُونَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ﴾

«And have no contact with them while performing *i'tikāf* in the *masjids*.»³

Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said:

“If a *mu'takif* performs intercourse, he invalidates his *i'tikāf*, and would have to start over.”⁴

Yet there is no authentic text requiring a specific *kaffārah*

1. Recorded by Ibn Mājah and al-Bayhaqī. Its isnād is *ḥasan* (*Sifatu Ṣawm in-Nabi*).

2. *Marātib ul-Ijmā'* (p.48).

3. *Al-Baqarah* 2:187.

4. Recorded by Ibn Abī Shaybah and 'Abd ur-Razzāq with an authentic chain of narrators.

(expiation) for the person who invalidates his *i'tikāf* like that.

WORLDLY INVOLVEMENT

Getting involved in worldly matters contradicts the spirit and meaning of *i'tikāf*, where one is supposed to retreat in seclusion for the mere purpose of worshipping Allāh (ﷻ) without distractions.

A *mu'takif* who wastes his time in futile talks and arguments, revilement and cursing, or other similar acts, reduces and spoils the reward and value of his *i'tikāf*. Ibn ul-Qayyim says:

“The goal of this (good conduct) is to fulfill the purpose and spirit of *i'tikāf*. This is contrary to the practice of those ignorant ones, who make their place of *i'tikāf* a meeting place for visiting, chatting, and gossip. This is indeed contrary to the Prophetic *i'tikāf*!”¹

Women's *I'tikāf*

It is permissible for a woman to visit her husband while he is performing *i'tikāf*, and for him to walk with her to the *masjid*'s door. Ṣafiyah (رضي الله عنها) said:

“The Prophet (ﷺ) was performing *i'tikāf* in the Masjid during the last ten days of Ramaḍān. I went to visit him one night. Some of his wives were with him, and left soon after. I talked with him for a while, then stood up to return home; he said, « لا تعجلي حتى أنصرف معك. » (Wait, let me escort you.) And he walked with me (toward my dwelling in the house of Usāmah Ibn Zayd). When we reached the door of the Masjid closest to the door of Umm Salamah's house, two men from the Anṣār passed by; when they saw the Prophet (ﷺ) they hurried; and he (ﷺ) called out to them, « على رسلكم، إنها صفيّة بنت حبي. »

1. *Zād ul-Ma'ād*.

«Slow down! This is my wife Ṣafiyyah Bint Ḥuyayy.»
They said, 'Subḥānallāh (exalted is Allāh)! O Messenger of Allāh!' So he (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَجْرِي مِنَ الْإِنْسَانِ مَجْرَى الدَّمِ، وَإِنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ يَقْدِفَ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ شَرًّا.»

«Satan flows in the human being the way blood flows in veins. I feared that he may have suggested some evil to your hearts.»²

It is even permissible for a woman to perform *i'tikāf* with her husband, or by herself. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said:

«اعْتَكَفْتُ مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ امْرَأَةً مِنْ أَزْوَاجِهِ مُسْتَحَاضَةً، فَكَانَتْ تَرَى الْحُمْرَةَ، وَالصُّفْرَةَ، فَرَبَّمَا وَضَعْنَا الطُّسْتَ تَحْتَهَا وَهِيَ تُصَلِّي.»

“One of the wives of Allāh’s Messenger [in one narration: Umm Salamah] performed *i'tikāf* with him while she had post menstrual bleeding in which she saw red or yellowish traces; and sometimes we put a tray beneath her while she prayed.”³

She also said:

«أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ، كَانَ يَعْتَكِفُ الْعَشْرَ الْأَوَاخِرَ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ حَتَّى تَوَفَّاهُ اللَّهُ، ثُمَّ اعْتَكَفَ أَزْوَاجُهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ.»

“The Prophet (ﷺ) performed *i'tikāf* for the last ten days of *Ramaḍān* until Allāh took his life; then his wives performed the *i'tikāf* after him.”⁴

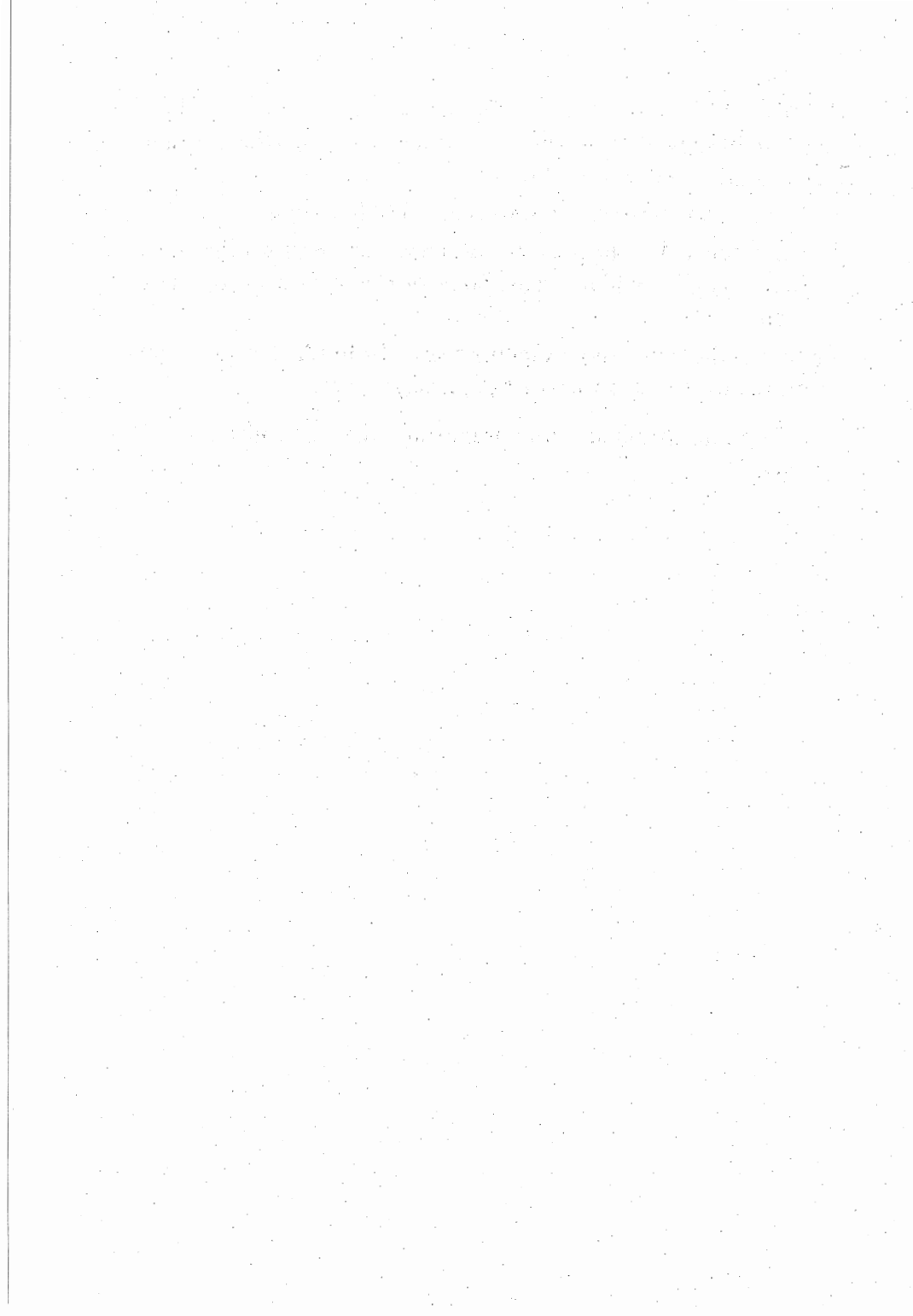
1. They expressed surprise that the Prophet (ﷺ) would expect them to entertain any suspicious thoughts about him.
2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2038), Muslim (2175), Abū Dāwūd.
3. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2037) and Sa'īd Ibn Manṣūr.
4. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2026), Muslim (1172) and others.

This establishes that women are allowed to perform *i'tikāf*. However, this has two conditions:

1. Prior permission from the woman's *walī* (guardian).
2. Confidence that the presence of the woman performing *i'tikāf* in the *masjid* would not cause *fitnah* or *khulwah* (seclusion) with men.

If either of these two requirements cannot be fulfilled, *i'tikāf* is not permitted for a woman, as the *fiqh* principle indicates:

“Avoiding harm is more important than establishing good.”



Meaning

The words *qadr* and *qadar* mean decree; *qadr* also means majesty or high esteem.¹ Thus, *Laylat-ul-Qadr*, or the Night of *Qadr*, means the Night of Decree, or the Night of Majesty.

MERITS

Laylat-ul-Qadr is a very blessed night. It is the best night of *Ramaḍān*, rather, the whole year. Rewards for acts of worship during it are multiplied so as to equal the worship of one thousand months. It is the night that Allāh (ﷻ) chose to send the Qur'ān down to the lowest heaven, from where it was revealed in small portions to Muḥammad (ﷺ).

It is the night on which Allāh (ﷻ) decrees His wise ordainments, appointing matters of life, death, sustenance, disasters, etc; and the angels descend with these decrees. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ ﴿۱﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿۲﴾ لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ ﴿۳﴾ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ ﴿۴﴾ نَزَّلَ الْمَلَكُتِكُ وَالرُّوحُ فِيهَا بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِمْ مِنْ كُلِّ أَمْرٍ ﴿۵﴾ سَلَامٌ هِيَ حَتَّىٰ مَطَلَعِ الْفَجْرِ ﴿۶﴾ ﴾

«Verily! We have sent this (the Qur'ān) down in the Night of *al-Qadr*. And what will make you know what

1. *Lisān ul-'Arab*.

the Night of *al-Qadr* is? The Night of *al-Qadr* is better than one thousand months. In it the angels and the Spirit (Jibril) descend, by Allāh's permission, with all decrees. Peace it is, until the appearance of dawn.»¹

And He (ﷺ) says:

﴿ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَاهُ فِي لَيْلَةِ مُبْرَكَةٍ ۚ إِنَّا كُنَّا مُنذِرِينَ ۗ فِيهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ أَمْرٍ
حَكِيمٍ ۖ أَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِينَ ۗ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَبِّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ
السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ۖ ﴾

«Indeed, We sent it (the Qur'an) down on a blessed night, and We are ever-Warners. A night when every matter of wisdom is decreed — by Our command. Indeed, We always send (messengers for guidance) as mercy from your Lord; He is indeed the Hearing, the Knowing.»²

It should be noted here that sending down the Qur'an on *Laylat-ul-Qadr* does not mean that it was revealed all at once to Muḥammad (ﷺ). According to the scholars, it was sent down on that night from *al-Lawḥ-ul-Mahfūz* (the Preserved Tablet) to the lowest heaven. It was then revealed in small segments, as necessary, over a period of twenty-three years of the Messenger's (ﷺ) life.³

The same applies to Allāh's decrees. They are not formulated on this specific night every year. Rather, Allāh (ﷻ), with His encompassing knowledge, knows all what will happen, and has recorded it all in *al-Lawḥ-ul-Mahfūz*. On *Laylat-ul-Qadr*, Allāh (ﷻ) issues to the angels His decrees pertaining to the following year

1. *Al-Qadr* 97:1-5.

2. *Ad-Dukhān* 44:3-6.

3. This is recorded in the books of *Tafsir* from Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, Ibn Zayd, and others. Review, for example, Ibn Kathīr's and al-Qurtubī's.

(life, death, sustenance, etc) — which had already been recorded in *al-Lawh-ul-Mahfūz*.¹

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ، لَيْلَةٌ سَابِعَةٌ - أَوْ تَاسِعَةٌ - وَعِشْرِينَ، إِنَّ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تِلْكَ اللَّيْلَةَ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَكْثَرُ مِنْ عَدَدِ الْحَصَى.»

Laylat-ul-Qadr is the night of the twenty-seventh or twenty-ninth (of *Ramaḍān*). Indeed, during that night, the angels on earth are more than the number of pebbles.²

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«أَتَاكُمْ شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ، شَهْرٌ مُبَارَكٌ، فَرَضَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمْ صِيَامَهُ، تَفْتَحُ فِيهِ أَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ، وَتُغْلَقُ فِيهِ أَبْوَابُ الْجَحِيمِ، وَتُغْلَقُ فِيهِ مَرَدَّةُ الشَّيَاطِينِ، فِيهِ لَيْلَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ، مَنْ حَرَمَ خَيْرَهَا فَقَدْ حَرَمَ.»

Ramaḍān has come to you, a blessed month that Allāh has ordained upon you to fast it. During it, the gates of *Jannah* are opened, the gates of Hell are closed, and the rebellious devils are chained down. There is in it one night that is better than one thousand months. He who is denied its goodness is truly deprived (of goodness).³

Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّ هَذَا الشَّهْرَ قَدْ حَضَرَكُمْ، وَفِيهِ لَيْلَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِنْ أَلْفِ شَهْرٍ، مَنْ حَرَمَهَا فَقَدْ حَرَمَ الْخَيْرَ كُلَّهُ، وَلَا يُحْرَمُ خَيْرَهَا إِلَّا مَحْرُومٌ.»

1. This meaning is recorded in the books of *Tafsīr* (such as Ibn Kathīr's and al-Qurtūbī's) from Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, Mujāhid, al-Ḥasan, and others.

2. Recorded by Aḥmad, Ibn Khuzaymah, and others. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*aṣ-Ṣaḥīḥah* no. 2205).

3. Recorded by Aḥmad, an-Nasaʿī, and al-Bayhaqī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 55).

(This month (*Ramaḍān*) has come to you. There is in it one night that is better than one thousand months. He who is deprived of it is truly deprived of all good. And no one is deprived of its goodness but a deprived person.)¹

Which Night?

VARYING REPORTS AND OPINIONS

There are various authentic *ḥadīths* in which the Prophet (ﷺ) indicates that *Laylat-ul-Qadr* falls on the night² of the twenty-first, twenty-third, twenty-fifth, twenty-seventh, twenty-ninth, or last night of *Ramaḍān*. Because of this, the scholars have differed widely as to which night it actually falls on³. Imām ash-Shāfi‘ī (رحمته الله) said:

“It seems to me that the Prophet (ﷺ) would answer in accordance with the question. So if one asked him, ‘Should we seek it on such and such night?’ He would reply, ‘Yes, seek it on such and such night.’”⁴

THE LAST TEN NIGHTS OF RAMAḌĀN

The various reports indicate that *Laylat-ul-Qadr* definitely falls on the last ten nights of *Ramaḍān*, and most frequently on the last seven nights, as in Ibn ‘Umar’s report that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«الْتَمِسُوهَا فِي الْعَشْرِ الْأَوَاخِرِ، وَإِنْ ضَعُفَ أَحَدُكُمْ أَوْ عَجَزَ فَلَا يُغَلِّبَنَّ عَنِ السَّبْعِ الْبِوَاقِي.»

1. Recorded by Ibn Mājah. Verified to be *ḥasan* by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ-ut-Tarḡīb wat-Tarḥīb* 986).
2. “The night of the twenty-first” means the night preceding the twenty-first day of *Ramaḍān*.
3. Al-Ḥāfiẓ al-‘Irāqī wrote a booklet on this subject, titled “*Sharḥ uṣ-Ṣadr bi-Ṭḥikri Laylat il-Qadr*”, in which he covered all of the scholars’ opinions in this regard.
4. Reported by al-Baghawī in *Sharḥ us-Sunnah* (6:388).

Seek it on the last ten nights. If one of you becomes weak or unable, let him not miss (at least) the last seven nights.¹

The knowledge of the exact night on which it falls is hidden from the Muslims. 'Ubadah Ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) entered his *Masjid* and found two men arguing. He said:

«خَرَجْتُ لِأُخْبِرْكُمْ بَلَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ، فَتَلَا حَى فُلَانٌ وَفُلَانٌ فَرَفَعْتُ، وَعَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ خَيْرًا لَكُمْ، فَالْتَمِسُوهَا فِي التَّاسِعَةِ، وَالسَّابِعَةِ، وَالخَامِسَةِ.»

I was coming to tell you about (the time of) *Laylat ul-Qadr*; when so and so disputed, the knowledge of this was raised (taken); and this may be better for you. So seek it on the ninth, seventh, and fifth nights (of the last ten nights).²

THE NIGHT OF THE TWENTY-FIRST

In another report, Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) narrates that a number of the *ṣaḥābah* performed *i'tikāf* with Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) during the middle ten days of *Ramaḍān*. On the morning of the twentieth of *Ramaḍān*, they were preparing to leave when the Prophet (ﷺ) addressed them saying:

«مَنْ كَانَ اعْتَكَفَ مَعِي فَلْيَعْتَكِفِ الْعَشْرَ الْأَوَاخِرَ، فَقَدْ أُرِيْتُ هَذِهِ اللَّيْلَةَ ثُمَّ أَنْسَيْتُهَا، وَقَدْ رَأَيْتُنِي أَسْجُدُ فِي مَاءٍ وَطِينٍ مِنْ صَبِيحَتِهَا، فَالْتَمِسُوهَا فِي الْعَشْرِ الْأَوَاخِرِ، وَالْتَمِسُوهَا فِي كُلِّ وَتْرٍ.»

Whoever was performing *i'tikāf* with me should perform *i'tikāf* the last ten nights. I was informed (by Allāh) about when that night (i.e., *Laylat ul-Qadr*) is but

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (49) and Muslim (1165).

2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2023).

I was then made to forget it. I was also informed that I will make *sujūd* (for the morning prayer that follows it) in water and mud. So seek it on the last ten, on an odd night.)

Abū Sa'īd then continues:

“The people went back to the *Masjid* (to resume *i'tikāf*). We could not see even a thin cloud in the sky. But then, a large cloud came; and it rained that night. The roof of the *Masjid*, which was made of palm reeds, leaked in the Messenger's prayer place on the night of the twenty-first. The (morning) prayer was performed; and Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) made *sujūd* in mud and water, until I saw the mud on his nose and forehead.”¹

THE NIGHT OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH

Other *ḥadīths* indicate that *Laylat-ul-Qadr* falls on the twenty-seventh night of *Ramaḍān*. For example, Zirr Ibn Ḥubaysh reported that Ubayy Ibn Ka'b was informed that Ibn Mas'ūd said, “Whoever stands the whole year (in prayer), he will certainly encounter *Laylat ul-Qadr*.” Upon hearing this, Ubayy (رضي الله عنه) said:

“May Allāh have mercy on him, he did not want the people to become lazy (if they knew more precisely when it is). By the One whom there is no deity but Him, it is surely in *Ramaḍān*. I swear by Allāh I know which night it is: It is the night in which Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) commanded us to stand (in prayer); it is the night preceding the morning of the twenty-seventh (of *Ramaḍān*). Its sign is that the sun rises the following morning white and without rays.”²

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2027).

2. Recorded by Muslim (762) and others.

SUMMARY

Therefore, *Laylat-ul-Qadr* falls on an odd night of the last ten nights of *Ramaḍān*; it is more likely to be on the last seven, and most likely on the middle one of those, which is the night of the twenty-seventh.

The scholars differ as to whether it always comes on a fixed night, namely, the twenty-seventh¹, as in Zirr's *ḥadīth*, or moves from year to year between these nights². The safest approach is to follow the *ḥadīths* instructing one to seek it at least on the odd nights of the last ten. At the same time, special care should be given to the night of the twenty-seventh, because it is the night on which the Prophet (ﷺ) gathered all of his family, and passed it in prayer and worship, as in the forthcoming *ḥadīth* of Abū Tharr (p. 121).

LAYLAT-UL-QADR

‘Abdullāh Ibn Anīs (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«أُرِيتُ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ، ثُمَّ أُنْسِيْتُهَا، وَأَرَانِي صُبْحَهَا أَسْجُدُ فِي مَاءٍ وَطِينٍ.»

I was shown (in a dream) which night *Laylat-ul-Qadr* is, but was then made to forget it. And I also saw myself (in that dream) making *sujūd* on the following morning in muddy water.³

Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«أُرِيتُ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ، ثُمَّ أُيْقِظُنِي بَعْضُ أَهْلِي، فَنَسِيْتُهَا فَالْتَمِسُوهَا فِي الْعَشْرِ الْعَوَايِرِ.»

I was shown (in a dream) which night *Laylat-ul-Qadr* is, but then some of my family members woke me up,

1. This is the opinion expressed by al-Albānī in *Qiyāmu Ramaḍān*.

2. This is ash-Shawkānī's opinion in *Nayl ul-Awṭār*.

3. Recorded by Muslim (1168).

which made me forget it. Seek it, however, during the last ten nights (of *Ramaḍān*).¹

Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to his companions:

«إِنِّي اعْتَكَفْتُ الْعَشَرَ الْأَوَّلَ، أَلْتَمِسُ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ، ثُمَّ اعْتَكَفْتُ الْعَشَرَ الْأَوْسَطَ، ثُمَّ أُتَيْتُ، فَقِيلَ لِي: ”إِنَّهَا فِي الْعَشْرِ الْأَخِيرِ.“ فَمَنْ أَحَبَّ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَعْتَكِفَ فَلْيَعْتَكِفْ. وَإِنَّهَا كَانَتْ أُبَيِّنْتُ لِي وَإِنِّي خَرَجْتُ لِأَخِيرِكُمْ بِهَا، فَجَاءَ رَجُلَانِ يَحْتَقَانِ مَعَهُمَا الشَّيْطَانُ، فَنَسِيَتْهَا، فَالْتَمِسُوهَا فِي الْعَشْرِ الْأَخِيرِ مِنْ رَمَضَانَ. وَإِنِّي أُورِثُهَا وَأَنَا أَسْجُدُ صَبِيحَتَهَا فِي طِينٍ وَمَاءٍ.»

I performed *itikāf* (remained in the *Masjid* for worship) during the first ten nights (of *Ramaḍān*) seeking *Laylat ul-Qadr*, then I performed *itikāf* during the middle ten nights. Then I was approached (by an angel) and was told, “Indeed, it is on one of the last ten nights.”

And indeed, it was indicated to me (in a dream, on which exact night it fell); and indeed, I came out (into the *Masjid*) to tell you this, but I found two men arguing, and Satan was with them, so I was made to forget it. Seek it, then, during the last ten nights. I also saw (in a dream) that I was performing *sujūd* the following morning in muddy water.²

We learn from these *ḥadīth*s the following:

1. *Laylat-ul-Qadr* is a night that is worthy of being eagerly sought by the Muslims.
2. *Laylat-ul-Qadr* falls on the last ten nights of *Ramaḍān*.

1. Recorded by Muslim (1166) and Aḥmad.

2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (813, 2016, 2018, 2027, 2036, 2040), Muslim (1167), and others.

3. *Laylat-ul-Qadr* is followed by a humid or rainy morning.
4. Argument and fighting among the Muslims always cause a loss for the *Ummah*. In this case, it made the Prophet (ﷺ) forget the exact night for *Laylat-ul-Qadr*.

THE NIGHT OF DECREE

‘Abdullāh Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to his companions:

«أرى رؤياكم قد تواطأت في السبع الأواخر، فمن كان متحريها فليتحريها في السبع الأواخر.»

I see that your dreams agree that it (*Laylat ul-Qadr*) is on the last seven nights (of *Ramaḍān*). So, whoever wishes to seek it (*Laylat ul-Qadr*) should do so over the last seven nights.¹

This is another example of a truthful dream that was simultaneously seen by a number of *ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم). This supplements our earlier discussion about the determination of *Laylat ul-Qadr*, narrowing it down from the last ten to the last seven nights of *Ramaḍān*.

Signs of *Laylat-ul-Qadr*

AUTHENTIC SIGNS

There are signs, mentioned in the authentic reports, by which one might be able to tell whether a specific night was *Laylat-ul-Qadr* or not. It is interesting to note that these signs occur after the night ends. Some scholars have indicated that the wisdom behind this is that one would not rely on definite knowledge in order to limit his worship to just one night of the whole year. This understanding is supported by the Prophet's (ﷺ) statement in the

1. Recorded by al-Bukhāri (1156, 2015) and Muslim (1165).

preceding *ḥadīth* of ‘Ubādah, «وَعَسَى أَنْ يَكُونَ خَيْرًا لَكُمْ.» «And this may be better for you.»

In the preceding *ḥadīth* of Ubayy, he (رضي الله عنه) said, “Its sign is that the sun rises on the following morning white, and without rays.” In another report, Ubayy (رضي الله عنه) explicitly attributed that meaning to the Prophet (ﷺ):

«صَبِيحَةَ لَيْلَةِ الْقَدْرِ تَطْلُعُ الشَّمْسُ لَا شُعَاعَ لَهَا، كَأَنَّهَا طَسَتْ حَتَّى تَرْتَفِعَ.»

«On the morning following *Laylat ul-Qadr*, the sun rises without rays, resembling a dish, until it becomes high.»¹

Abū Sa‘īd’s preceding *ḥadīth* indicates that it is a humid or rainy night.

A *ḥadīth* reported by Ibn ‘Abbās (رضي الله عنه) indicates that it is a mild night, neither hot nor cold. He said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«لَيْلَةُ الْقَدْرِ، لَيْلَةٌ سَمْحَةٌ طَلْقَةٌ، لَا حَارَّةٌ وَلَا بَارِدَةٌ، تُصْبِحُ الشَّمْسُ صَبِيحَتَهَا ضَعِيفَةً حَمْرَاءَ.»

«*Laylat-ul-Qadr* is an easy and moderate night. It is neither hot nor cold. On the morning following it, the sun rises weak (in light) and reddish.»²

According to some scholars, the last descriptions apply to the particular years when the Prophet (ﷺ) made his statements.

How to Seek *Laylat-ul-Qadr*

Laylat-ul-Qadr is the most blessed night. Allāh has placed in every second endless bounties and good. Every believer should strive

1. Recorded by Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ-ul-Jāmi‘* 3754).
2. Recorded by Ibn Khuzaymah, al-Bayhaqī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi‘* no. 5475).

their utmost to encounter this night and spend it in worship to their Lord (ﷻ).

PRAYING QIYĀM

It is recommended to make a long *Qiyām* prayer during the nights on which *Laylat-ul-Qadr* could fall. This is indicated in many *ḥadīths*, such as the forthcoming one by Abū Tharr (p. 121). Furthermore, Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ، وَمَنْ قَامَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.»

«Whoever fasts *Ramaḍān* with *īmān* and *iḥtisāb*¹, his previous sins will be forgiven. And whoever stands (in *qiyām*) in *Laylat-ul-Qadr* with *īmān* and *iḥtisāb*, his previous sins will be forgiven.»²

In one of the reports of this *ḥadīth*, Abū Hurayrah and ‘Ubādah Ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit said that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ قَامَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ ثُمَّ وَفَّقَتْ لَهُ، إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ.»

«Whoever stands (in *qiyām*) in *Laylat-ul-Qadr*, and it is facilitated for him³, with *īmān* and *iḥtisāb*, all of his previous sins will be forgiven.»⁴

1. This means: with true belief and expectation of Allāh’s reward.

2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2014), Muslim (760), and others.

3. This addition is recorded by Aḥmad from the report of ‘Ubādah Ibn aṣ-Ṣāmit; it means that he is permitted to be among the sincere worshippers during that blessed night.

4. Recorded by Muslim (760) and Aḥmad.

MAKING SUPPLICATIONS

It is also recommended to make extensive supplication on this night. ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that she asked Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ), “O Messenger of Allāh! If I knew which night is *Laylat ul-Qadr*, what should I say during it?” And he instructed her to say:

«اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ عَفُوفٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّي.»

Allāhumma innaka ‘afuwun tuhibb ul-‘afwa fa’fu ‘anni
— O Allāh! You are forgiving and You love forgiveness:
forgive me.¹

ABANDONING WORLDLY PLEASURES FOR THE SAKE OF WORSHIP

It is further recommended to spend more time in worship during the nights on which *Laylat-ul-Qadr* is likely to be. This calls for abandoning many worldly pleasures in order to secure the time and thoughts solely for worshipping Allāh. ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported:

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ إِذَا دَخَلَ الْعَشْرُ شَدَّ مِزْرَهُ، وَأَحْيَا لَيْلَهُ، وَأَبْقَطَ أَهْلَهُ.

“When the (last) ten started, the Prophet (ﷺ) would tighten his *izār*², spend the whole night awake (in prayer), and wake up his family.”³

And she said:

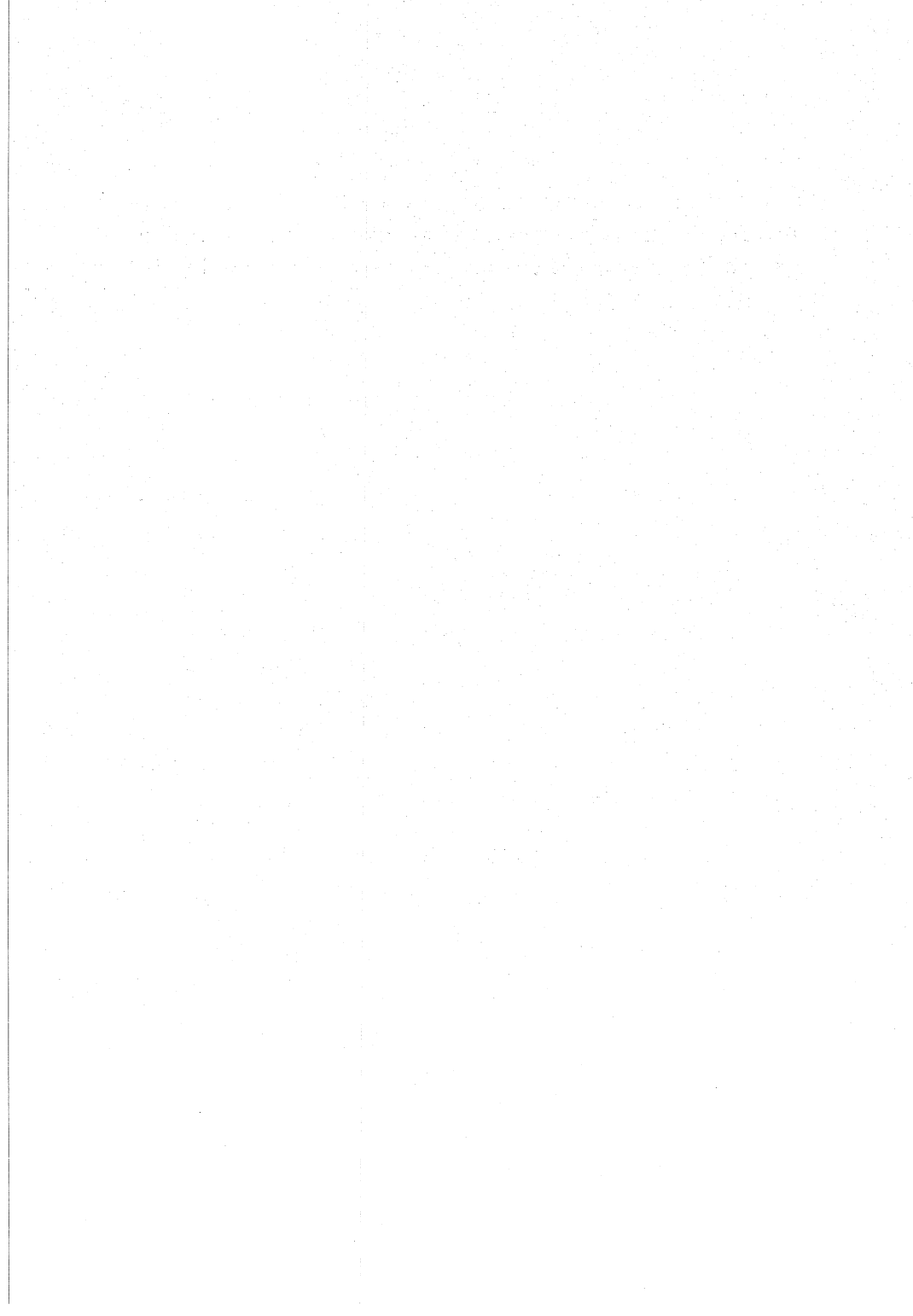
كَانَ يَجْتَهِدُ فِي الْعَشْرِ الْآخِرِ، مَا لَا يَجْتَهِدُ فِي غَيْرِهِ.

“Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to strive more (in worship) on the last ten than on other nights.”⁴

1. Recorded by Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah, and at-Tirmithī. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*al-Mishkāt* no. 2091).
2. *Izār* is the lower garment that the men used to wrap around themselves, and they still do in some areas, as well as during *Hajj*. This means that he stayed away from his wives in order to have more time for worship.
3. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2024) and Muslim (1174).
4. Recorded by Muslim (1175).

• • •

We ask Allāh to help us make full use of *Laylat-ul-Qadr*, and spend it in worship that is pleasing to Him, and to make us of those whose sins are forgiven, and who are decreed to be of the dwellers of *Jannah*. *Āmīn*.



PRAYING TARĀWĪḤ IN JAMĀ'AH

9

The Prophet's *Sunnah*

It is recommended to pray the *qiyām* of *Ramaḍān* in *jamā'ah*. That is better than praying it individually. The Prophet (ﷺ) himself established this *sunnah*; he (ﷺ) approved it for the *ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم), did it himself, and emphasized its merits.

THE PROPHET'S APPROVAL

This approval is indicated in the *ḥadīth* of Tha'labah Ibn Abū Mālik al-Quraẓī, who said:

“Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) went out (to the Masjid) one night during Ramaḍān; he saw some people in the corner of the Masjid praying. He asked, «ما يَصْنَعُ هَؤُلَاءِ؟» (What are they doing?) Someone replied, 'O Allāh's Messenger, these people do not know much Qur'ān; Ubayy Ibn Ka'b is reciting; and they are behind him following his prayer.' To which he (ﷺ) replied, «قَدْ أَحْسَنُوا، أَوْ، قَدْ أَصَابُوا» (They did well (or right)), and did not object to their action.”¹

1. Recorded by al-Bayhaqī (2:495). It is *mursal* (no *ṣaḥābī*'s name is present in the *isnād*), Tha'labah being a *tābī'ī*. But it is recorded with another *isnād*, from Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), by Ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī (in *Qiyām ul-Layl*), Abū Dāwūd, and al-Bayhaqī. The latter is acceptable as a supportive report.

THE PROPHET'S ACTION

There are various *ḥadīths* indicating that the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed *tarāwīh* in jamā'ah.

1. An-Nu'mān Ibn Bashīr (رضي الله عنه) reported:

“We stood (in prayer) with Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) on the twenty-third night of *Ramaḍān* up to the first third of the night; then we stood with him on the twenty-fifth night up to the middle of the night; then he led us on the twenty-seventh night (for so long) that we feared missing the *falāḥ* (success) ... We used to call *saḥūr*¹: *falāḥ*.”²

Commenting on this *ḥadīth*, al-Ḥākim said:

“This carries a clear proof that praying *tarāwīh* in the *masjids* of Muslims is an established *sunnah*; ‘Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه) continued to urge ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) to revive it, until he finally did.”³

2. Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) was once praying in *Ramaḍān* (in the *Masjid*). He went and stood next to him (in prayer); another man joined them, then another — until there was a small gathering. When Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) sensed that they were all praying behind him, he made his prayer short, concluded, then entered his house where he resumed praying a much longer prayer than that he prayed with them. In the morning, they asked him, “O Allāh’s Messenger, did you notice our presence last night?” He (ﷺ) replied:

«نعم، وذَلِكَ الَّذِي حَمَلَنِي عَلَى مَا صَنَعْتُ.»

1. A light meal eaten by the fasting person just before dawn.

2. Recorded by Ibn Abī Shaybah (in *al-Muṣannaḥ*), Ibn Naṣr, an-Nasā’ī, Aḥmad, al-Faryābī (in *Kitāb uṣ-Ṣiyām*), and al-Ḥākim; its *isnād* is *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

3. *Al-Mustadrak* 1:440.

‘Yes, and this is the reason for what I did.’¹

3. ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the people used to pray during *Ramaḍān*’s nights in the Messenger’s *Masjid* in separate groups. Thus, a man who knew some Qur’ān would have five or six people praying behind him.

On one such night, the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) instructed her to lay down a mat for him (in the *Masjid*) by the door of her apartment; so she did. After praying ‘*ishā*’, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) went to that mat (to pray). All those who were in the *Masjid* gathered behind him; and he (ﷺ) led them in prayer for a long portion of the night; then he (ﷺ) departed and entered (her apartment), leaving the mat where it was.

In the morning, the people described that Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) led some men in prayer on the previous night. So that night, more people gathered, until the *Masjid* was full. Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) went out the second night and prayed; and they followed him in the prayer.

The next morning, the people talked about it. So, on the third night, the number of people increased in the *Masjid* until it became overcrowded. Again, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) went out and prayed, and they followed him in the prayer.

On the fourth night the *Masjid* was overrun with people. Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) prayed ‘*ishā*’ with them, then went inside his house. The people waited; so Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) asked her, «ما شأن الناس يا عائشة؟» (What do they want, ‘Ā’ishah?) She said, ‘O Allāh’s Messenger! The people have heard of your prayer yesterday, and have gathered to pray with you.’ He (ﷺ) said, «اطو» (Fold away your mat,) which she did.

That night, Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) was aware of the people in their places, waiting for him. Some men among them were calling out, ‘The Prayer!’

1. Recorded by Aḥmad, Ibn Naṣr with two authentic chains, and at-Ṭabarānī in *al-Āwsaf*.

In the morning, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) went out to the *fajr* prayer. After he finished praying, he turned to the people, pronounced the *Shahādah*¹, and then said:

«أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ، أَمَا وَاللَّهِ مَا بَيْتٌ وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ لَيْلَتِي هَذِهِ غَافِلًا، وَمَا خَفِيَ عَلَيَّ مَكَانُكُمْ، وَلَكِنِّي تَخَوَّفْتُ أَنْ يُفْتَرَضَ عَلَيْكُمْ صَلَاةُ اللَّيْلِ فَتَعَجِزُوا عَنْهَا، فَكَلَّفُوا مِنَ الْأَعْمَالِ مَا تُطِيقُونَ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَمَلُّ حَتَّى تَمَلُّوا.»

(O people, by Allāh, and all praise is due to Him, I was not unaware of your presence last night, but I only feared that the night prayer (*qiyām*) would become an obligation for you, which you would be incapable of fulfilling. So commit only to the deed that you would be capable of performing, because Allāh would not tire (from a deed of yours) until you tire.)

In one of the narrations of this *ḥadīth*, az-Zuhri² said:

“Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) died while the people continued praying according to this (in separate groups). This also continued during the *khilāfah* of Abū Bakr and a portion of the *khilāfah* of 'Umar.”³

According to al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar:

“The statement ‘the people continued according to this’ refers to not praying *tarāwīh* in *jamā'ah*.”

However, it is better to interpret the statement as, “They continued to pray *tarāwīh* in separate groups,” as the beginning of

1. The Prophet's (ﷺ) *sunnah* was to start his speeches with *tashahhud* (saying the *Shahādah*).
2. A student of the foremost *tābi'ī* Sa'īd Ibn al-Musayyib. He was a great scholar and trustworthy narrator of *Ḥadīth*. He died in 123 H.
3. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (294), Muslim (761), Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, al-Faryābī, Ibn Naṣr, and Aḥmad. The above text agrees most with the reports of the latter two.

this *ḥadīth* indicates. Thus, they continued to pray behind various *imāms*, as will be confirmed further in the reports from 'Umar (رضي الله عنه).

These *ḥadīths* provide clear evidence for praying *tarāwīḥ* in *jamā'ah*, since the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed it on those nights. This conclusion does not conflict with his stopping on the fourth night, because he stated the reason for his action, (I feared that it would become obligatory for you.)

And there is no doubt that this apprehension dissipated with his (ﷺ) passing after Allāh (ﷻ) had completed the religion. Thus, the reason for not praying *tarāwīḥ* in congregation was gone, restoring the earlier ruling that it is recommended to pray it in *jamā'ah*. This is why 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) revived it, as is the opinion of the majority of the scholars.

4. Ḥuṭhayfah Ibn al-Yamān (رضي الله عنه) reported that one night during *Ramaḍān*, Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ) stood in a cabin made of palm reeds. He poured a pail of water on himself, then said:

«اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ (ثَلَاثًا) ذُو الْمَلَكُوتِ وَالْجَبْرُوتِ، وَالْكَبْرِيَاءِ وَالْعَظَمَةِ.»

Allāhu Akbar (three times). *Thal malakūti, wal jabarūti, wal kibriyā'i, wal 'azamah* —

Allāh is the Greatest (three times). You are the Possessor of dominion, might, pride, and greatness.)

Then he recited *al-Baqarah*, then he bowed a bowing similar (in duration) to his standing. During his bowing he said:

«سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ، سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ.»

Subhāna rabbiyal 'azīm, subhāna rabbiyal 'azīm —

Exalted is my Lord the Great; exalted is my Lord the Great.)

Then he raised his head from bowing, and stood (a duration)

similar to his bowing, saying:

«لِرَبِّي الْحَمْدُ.»

Li-rabbiyal-ḥamd — To my Lord belongs all praise.)

Then he prostrated, and his prostration was similar (in duration) to his (last) standing. He said in his prostration:

«سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى.»

Subḥāna rabbiyal-a'la — Exalted is my Lord the Highest.)

Then he raised his head from prostration and sat; and he said between the two prostrations:

«رَبِّي اغْفِرْ لِي، رَبِّي اغْفِرْ لِي.»

Rabbi ghfir li, rabbi ghfir li — My Lord, forgive me; my Lord, forgive me.)

And he sat a duration similar to that of his prostration. Then he prostrated (a second time) similar (in duration) to his sitting and said:

«سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى.»

Subḥāna rabbiyal-a'la — Exalted is my Lord the Highest.)

Thus he prayed four *rak'āt*, reciting in them *al-Baqarah*, *Āl-'Imrān*, *an-Nisā'*, *al-Mā'idah*, and *al-An'ām* — until Bilāl came announcing the time for the (*fajr*) prayer.¹

1. Recorded (in various parts and with some variations) by Muslim (772), Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, an-Nasā'ī, at-Tirmithī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Abī Shaybah, Ibn Naṣr, al-Ḥākim, at-Taḥāwī in (*al-Mushkal*), at-Ṭayālīsī, al-Bayhaqī, and al-Baghawī.

THE PROPHET'S ENCOURAGEMENT

The Prophet (ﷺ) indicated the merits of praying *tarāwīh* in *jamā'ah*. For example, Abū Tharr (رضي الله عنه) reported the following:

“We fasted with Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) in *Ramaḍān*. He did not lead us (in *qiyām*) at all until there were seven (nights of *Ramaḍān*) left. Then he stood with us (that night — in prayer) until one third of the night had passed. He did not pray with us on the sixth. On the fifth night, he prayed with us until half of the night had passed. So we said, ‘Allāh’s Messenger! Wouldn’t you pray with us the whole night?’ He replied:

«إِنَّهُ مَنْ قَامَ مَعَ الْإِمَامِ حَتَّى يَنْصَرِفَ كُتِبَ لَهُ قِيَامُ لَيْلَةٍ.»

⊂Whoever stands in prayer with the *imām* until he (the *imām*) concludes the prayer, it is recorded for him that he prayed the whole night.⊃

He (ﷺ) did not lead us in prayer on the fourth (of the remaining nights). On the third night¹, he gathered his family, his wives and the people. He led us in prayer (for a long time) — until we feared missing the *falāh*. He (ﷺ) did not pray with us for the rest of the month.” Abū Tharr was asked, “What is *falāh*?” He replied, “*Saḥūr*.”²

The evidence from this *ḥadīth* is his (ﷺ) statement, ⊂Whoever stands with the *imām* ...⊃ which is an obvious indication that it is better to pray the *qiyām* of *Ramaḍān* with the *imām*. This is confirmed by what Abū Dāwūd mentioned:

1. Meaning the twenty-seventh night, which is *Laylat-ul-Qadr* according to most sayings. This is why the Prophet (ﷺ) gathered all of his family and women, which makes it recommended that women attend on this night.
2. Recorded by Ibn Abī Shaybah, Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī (who authenticated it), an-Nisā’ī, Ibn Mājah, at-Ṭaḥawī (in *Sharḥu Ma’ān il-Āthār*, Ibn Naṣr, al-Faryābī, and al-Bayhaqī. Their *isnād* is authentic (*Irwa’ ul-Ghalīl* no. 447).

“I heard Aḥmad being asked, ‘Do you like for a man to pray with the people or by himself during *Ramaḍān*?’ He replied, ‘Pray with the people.’ I also heard him say, ‘I would prefer for one to pray (*qiyām*) with the *imām* and to pray *witr* with him as well, for the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِنَّهُ مَنْ قَامَ مَعَ الْإِمَامِ حَتَّى يَنْصَرِفَ كُتِبَ لَهُ قِيَامُ لَيْلَةٍ.»

‘Whoever stands in prayer with the *imām* until he (the *imām*) concludes the prayer, it is recorded for him that he prayed the whole night.’¹

Ibn Naṣr reported similarly from Aḥmad. Abū Dāwūd also said:

“Aḥmad was asked, while I was listening, ‘Should one delay *qiyām*, meaning *tarāwīḥ*, to the last part of the night?’ He said, ‘No, the Muslims’ *Sunnah* is more beloved to me.’”²

By this he meant that praying *tarāwīḥ* in *jamā'ah*, early in the night, is better than praying it alone later in the night. Even though delaying it has a special merit, yet praying it in *jamā'ah* is better because the Prophet (ﷺ) established it on those nights when he prayed with the people, as in the preceding *ḥadīths* of ‘Ā’ishah and others. That is why the Muslims continued to do it from ‘Umar’s time until now.

REASON FOR DISCONTINUING QIYĀM IN JAMĀ‘AH

As indicated in the preceding *ḥadīth* of ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* and others, the Prophet (ﷺ) did not pray with the *ṣaḥābah* for the remainder of the month, fearing that the *qiyām* prayer in *Ramaḍān* would become obligatory for them, an obligation that they would not be able to fulfill.

This apprehension dissolved with his (ﷺ) passing after Allāh

1. *Al-Masā'il*.

2. *Al-Masā'il*.

(ﷺ) had completed the religion. Thus, the reason for not praying the *qiyām* of *Ramaḍān* in congregation was gone, though the earlier ruling of its merit remained intact.

The practice of praying it in *jamā'ah* was then revived by 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), as is described below.

'Umar Revives the *Sunnah*

'UMAR'S ACTION

As mentioned above, after the Prophet's (ﷺ) death, people prayed *tarāwīḥ* in the *Masjid* in separate groups, behind various *imāms*. That was during the *Khilāfah* of Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and a portion of 'Umar's (رضي الله عنه). Later on, 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) gathered the people behind one *imām*. Abd ur-Raḥmān Ibn Abd al-Qārī reported:

"I went out with 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) one night in *Ramaḍān* to the *Masjid*; we found the people praying in separate groups: a man praying by himself, or a man leading a group of people in the prayer. So he (رضي الله عنه) said, 'By Allāh (ﷻ), I believe that it would be better if I gather all of these people behind one reciter only.' Later on, he resolved to do it, and gathered them behind Ubayy Ibn Ka'b.

I went out with him on another night while the people were praying behind one reciter. 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) said, "This is indeed a good new practice, even though the part of night that they sleep through is better (for prayer) than the part in which they are praying.' By that, he meant the later part of the night, because the people used to pray early in the night."¹

This has another report in which 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) says:

1. This is recorded by Mālik (in *al-Muwṭṭa'*) and, from him, al-Bukhārī (2010) and al-Faryābī. It is also recorded by Ibn Abī Shaybah without his saying, "This is a good new matter."

“If this thing is innovated, then it is indeed a good innovation.”¹

‘UMAR’S UNDERSTANDING

Thus, as indicated earlier, the Prophet (ﷺ) led the *ṣaḥābah* in *tarāwīḥ* for three nights; then he stopped for fear that this prayer would become an obligation on the Muslims. The people then continued to pray in small groups, as they did before, until ‘Umar gathered them, may Allāh (ﷻ) be pleased with him and reward him for his great efforts for Islām. Ibn ut-Tīn and other scholars concluded:

“‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) deduced that he should do this from the Prophet’s (ﷺ) approval during those nights. When he (رضي الله عنه) later disliked it, it was only because he feared that it would become obligatory for the people. It is probably for this reason that al-Bukhārī, after mentioning ‘Umar’s action, cited ‘Ā’ishah’s *ḥadīth* (which preceded). After the Prophet (ﷺ) passed away, such fear was gone, and ‘Umar realized the importance of gathering the people, because praying separately gives the appearance of disunity, and because praying behind one *imām* helps the people endure the length of the prayer. This action of ‘Umar was adopted by the majority of the scholars (as being the truth).”²

In regard to ‘Umar’s (رضي الله عنه) statement, “The part of night that they sleep through is better,” al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar said:

“This is a declaration from him that praying during the later part of the night is better than praying early.

1. Recorded by Ibn Sa’d and al-Faryābī. The narrators of this report are all trustworthy, except Nawfal Ibn Iyās, about whom al-Ḥāfiẓ said (in *at-Taqrīb*), “Acceptable,” meaning when he is backed by other narrators; otherwise he is weak, as al-Ḥāfiẓ himself stated in the introduction.

2. *Fath ul-Bārī* 4:203-204.

However, it does not imply that praying the night prayer (*tarāwīh*) individually is better than in *jamā'ah*."

In fact, praying in *jamā'ah* at the earlier time is surely better than praying individually at the later time, as has been clarified earlier.

WRONG CONCLUSIONS FROM 'UMAR'S ACTION

A common practice among people of the later generations is to misinterpret 'Umar's (رضي الله عنه) statement, "Ni'mat il-bid'atu hāthih — This is indeed a good new matter." Many use it as basis for two misconceptions:

First Misconception:

"Praying *tarāwīh* in *jamā'ah* is a *bid'ah* that was not known during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ)."

The error of this misconception is obvious, as is demonstrated in the *ḥadīths* that we cited earlier. The Prophet (ﷺ) prayed with the people in *jamā'ah* for three nights in *Ramaḍān*, and he only stopped for fear that it would become an obligation.

Second Misconception:

"Some *bid'ahs* (innovations) are praiseworthy; and general statements by the Prophet (ﷺ), such as, «كُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ» (Every *bid'ah* is an act of misguidance,) should be restricted by this statement of 'Umar."

This is also invalid. The general meaning of this and similar *ḥadīths* holds without restriction.

In his statement, 'Umar did not intend the *shar'ī* meaning of *bid'ah*, which is to innovate in the *Dīn* something without a precedent. It is clear that he did not innovate anything, but has rather revived several of the Prophet's (ﷺ) *sunnahs*.

He only meant *bid'ah* according to one of its linguistic meanings, which is a new or novel thing that was not commonly

known prior to its initiation. There is no doubt that praying *tarāwīḥ* in *jamā'ah* behind one *imām* was not a commonly known practice during the *Khilāfah* of Abū Bakr (ﷺ) and a portion of 'Umar's (ﷺ), as preceded. With this understanding, it is a new matter. But since it is in accordance with the Prophet's (ﷺ) action, it is a *sunnah* and not *bid'ah*. Describing it as being good is only because of this; and this is the understanding of the great scholars in explanation of this statement by 'Umar. For example, Abd ul-Wahhāb as-Subkī said:

"Ibn 'Abd ul-Barr said, "Umar did not legislate except what Allāh's Messenger legislated, and what he loved and accepted. Nothing prevented him (ﷺ) from continuing (with *tarāwīḥ* in *jamā'ah*) except fearing that it would become an obligation for his *Ummah*, because he was kind and merciful toward the believers. 'Umar (ﷺ) learned that from Allāh's Messenger (ﷺ), and understood that one may not add to the obligations or take away from them after his (ﷺ) death. He therefore re-established it for the people, revived it, and commanded it; he did this on the year fourteen of *Hijrah*. That was a (good) thing that Allāh reserved for him particularly to do; He (ﷺ) did not inspire Abū Bakr (ﷺ) to do it, even though he was better than him, and generally faster in performing all that is good. Each of these two possessed virtues that his companion did not.'

Had *tarāwīḥ* not been an ordained *sunnah*, it would be a rejected innovation, as is the case for *ar-Raghā'ib* prayer on the middle night of *Sha'bān* and on the first Friday of *Rajab*. If this was the case, it would be incumbent to forbid it; but that was never done, as is obviously known in the *Dīn*."¹

1. *Ishrāq ul-Maṣābiḥ fī Ṣalāt it-Tarāwīḥ* (1:168).

The great scholar Ibn Ḥajar al-Haythamī said:

“Driving the Jews and Christians out of the Arabian peninsula, and fighting the Turks are not *bid'ahs* — since these were done by the command of the Prophet (ﷺ), even though they were not done during his lifetime. And in 'Umar's saying regarding the *tarāwīḥ* prayers, 'This is indeed a good *bid'ah*,' he meant the linguistic meaning of *bid'ah*, which is to do something that was not being done, similar to what Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدْعًا مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ﴾

«I did not bring something unprecedented among the messengers.»¹

This does not indicate a *bid'ah* in the *shar'ī* sense, because such a *bid'ah* would be an act of misguidance, as was indicated by the Messenger (ﷺ).

Scholars who classify the *bid'ahs* into good and bad only intend the linguistic meaning of *bid'ahs*; and those who say that every *bid'ah* is a misguidance mean the *bid'ah* in the *shar'ī* sense.

Just look at how the *ṣaḥābah* (رضي الله عنهم), as well as those who followed them in a good way, have objected to giving *athān* for prayers other than the five daily prayers, such as the 'Īd prayers, even though there is no explicit prohibition in that regard. Also, they disliked people holding onto the two *Shāmī*² corners of the *Ka'bah*, as well as praying after *sa'ī*³ in analogy to praying after *tawāf* (circulation around al-Ka'bah).

1. *Al-Aḥqāf* 46:9.

2. These are the two corners on the north side of the *Ka'bah*, which is the direction of the land of ash-Shām (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine).

3. Running between *aṣ-Ṣafā* and *al-Marwah* during *ḥajj*.

Furthermore, there are things that the Prophet (ﷺ) avoided despite the need and ability to do them during his lifetime. Avoiding such things is then a *sunnah*, and doing them is a blameworthy innovation. By our saying, 'Despite the need and ability to do them,' we exclude driving out the Jews, compiling the *Muṣḥaf*, and other things that he (ﷺ) did not do because of reasons that prevented doing them.

Thus, there was a need to pray *tarāwīḥ* in *jamā'ah*, but there was also a reason that prevented the Prophet (ﷺ) from continuing to pray it in *jamā'ah*.¹

Women Joining the *Jamā'ah*

Women are permitted to attend the *qiyām* prayer, as is indicated in the preceding *ḥadīth* of Abū Tharr. It is also permitted to appoint an *imām* specifically for them. It is confirmed that 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) gathered the people for *qiyām*, appointing Ubayy Ibn Ka'b to lead the men, and Sulaymān Ibn Abī Ḥaṭmah to lead the women. Also, 'Arfajah ath-Thaqafī said:

"Alī Ibn Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه) commanded the people to pray *qiyām* during the month of *Ramaḍān*; he appointed one *imām* for the men and one for the women. I was the women's *imām*."²

This is recommended when the *masjid* is large enough that the two *imāms* would not distract each other (by their recitation).

1. *Al-Ibdā' fī Maḍārr il-Ibtidā'*.

2. These two reports were recorded by al-Bayhaqī, 'Abd ur-Razāq (in *al-Muṣannaḥ*), and Ibn Naṣr (in *Qiyām ul-Layl*).

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APPENDIX A: A WARNING AGAINST *BID'AH*¹

THE *FITNAH* OF IGNORANCE

Tribulations are clearly rampant in our time and, indeed, among the worst of them is the *fitnah* of ignorance in regard to matters of the religion. 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه) said:

كَيْفَ أَنْتُمْ إِذَا لَبَسْتُمْ فِتْنَةً يَهْرَمُ فِيهَا الْكَبِيرُ، وَيَرْتَوِي فِيهَا الصَّغِيرُ،
وَيَتَّخِذُهَا النَّاسُ سُنَّةً، إِذَا تَرَكَ مِنْهَا شَيْءٌ قِيلَ: "تَرَكْتَ السُّنَّةَ". إِذَا
ذَهَبَتْ عُلَمَاؤُكُمْ، وَكَثُرَتْ قُرَاؤُكُمْ، وَقَلَّتْ فُقُهَاءُكُمْ، وَكَثُرَتْ أُمَرَاؤُكُمْ، وَقَلَّتْ
أَمْنَاؤُكُمْ، وَالتَّمَسَّتِ الدُّنْيَا بِعَمَلِ الْآخِرَةِ، وَتَفَقَّهَ لِغَيْرِ الدِّينِ، وَالتَّمَسَّتِ الدُّنْيَا
بِعَمَلِ الْآخِرَةِ.

“What would be your situation when a *fitnah* (of ignorance and deviation) will prevail over you? (It will last for so long that) children will grow to adulthood, and adults will live to reach old age. People will come to adopt it as part of the Sunnah; and should a person drop any element of it, he will be told, ‘You violated the Sunnah.’

This will happen when your learned men are gone. You will have numerous Qur'an reciters but few individuals with understanding (of Islām), and numerous commanders but few trustworthy individuals. Understanding (Islām) will be sought for other than the sake of (advancing) the Religion, and worldly gains will

1. The following brief discussion of *bid'ah* is detailed in other books by the Author, such as, “Festivals and Celebrations in Islām”.

be sought through (religious) deeds of the hereafter.”¹

Commenting on this *ḥadīth*, al-Albānī (رحمته) said:

“We can see in this signs of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) prophethood and truthfulness of his message. All parts of this *ḥadīth* have come to pass: *bid’ahs* are prevalent, and people are so enchanted by them that they adopt them as approved and necessary parts of the religion. When the true followers of the Sunnah reject those *bid’ahs*, they are labled as ‘neglectors of the Sunnah!’”

GUIDANCE AND SUCCESS ARE ONLY BY ADHERING TO SUNNAH

Allāh (ﷻ) revealed His Book and Sunnah to guide us to the best of our affairs. There is no other guidance to match or approach Allāh’s great guidance. Jābir Ibn ‘Abdillāh (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say in the beginning of his speeches:

«فَإِنَّ خَيْرَ الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابُ اللَّهِ، وَخَيْرُ الْهُدَى هُدَى مُحَمَّدٍ، وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحَدَّثَاتُهَا، وَكُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ.»

Indeed, the best speech is Allāh’s (ﷻ) Book and the best guidance is Muḥammad’s (ﷺ) guidance. The worst affairs (of religion) are those innovated (by people), for every such innovation is an act of misguidance leading to the Fire.²

Part of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) Sunnah is the way he acted and behaved. Allāh (ﷻ) set him as an example for us to follow. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

1. Recorded by ad-Dārimī, al-Ḥākim, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Qiyām Ramaḍān* p. 4 and *Ṣaḥīḥ ut-Tarḡīb wat-Tarḥīb* no. 111). This report takes the status of being a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet (ﷺ), because it mentions matters of *ghayb* that Ibn Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) must have learnt from the Prophet (ﷺ).
2. Recorded by Muslim (867), and others. The last statement is recorded only by an-Nasā’ī, and is verified to be authentic by al-Albānī (*Hidāyat ur-Ruwāh* no. 137).

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ
وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا﴾¹

«Indeed, in the Messenger of Allāh is a beautiful pattern of conduct to be followed by anyone who believes in Allāh and the Last Day and remembers Allāh abundantly.»¹

The Sunnah is the only way for solving our problems. Al-'Irbād Ibn Sariyah (رضي الله عنه) reported that one of the Prophet's (ﷺ) last admonishments to his companions (رضي الله عنهم) was:

«أوصيكم بتقوى الله والسمع والطاعة، وإن عبداً حبشياً، فإنه من يعش منكم بعدي فسيرى اختلافاً كثيراً، فعليكم بسنتي وسنة الخلفاء المهديين الراشدين، تمسكوا بها وعضوا عليها بالتواجيد، وإياكم ومحدثات الأمور، فإن كل محدثة بدعة، وكل بدعة ضلالة.»

I command you to maintain *taqwā* (fear and reverence) of Allāh, and to listen (to your ruler) and obey (him) — even if he was an Abyssinian slave. Indeed, those of you who will outlive me will witness great dissension. So, adhere to my Sunnah, and the *sunnah* of the rightly guided successors after me: hold fast to it and bite upon it with your molar teeth. And beware of newly innovated matters (in the religion), because every innovated matter is a *bid'ah* (prohibited innovation), and every *bid'ah* is an act of misguidance.²

This shows that the *ṣaḥābah*'s guidance is part of the Sunnah. Allāh (ﷻ) chose them for the company of His final Messenger (ﷺ), and

1. *Al-Aḥzāb* 33:21.

2. Recorded by Abū Dāwūd, at-Tirmithī, and others. Verified to be authentic by al-
Albānī (*Ṣaḥīḥ ul-Jāmi'* no. 2549 and *Irwā' ul-Ghalīl* no. 2455).

they learnt Islām first-hand from this great teacher. Because of this, their understanding and implementation of Islām is superior to that of later generations.

MEANING OF *BID'AH*

Linguistically, *bid'ah* is an original thing that is done according to no previous pattern. In this meaning, Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدْعًا مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ﴾

«Say (O Muḥammad), “I am not *bid'an* (bringing something unprecedented) among the messengers (in my claims or teachings).”»¹

‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) applied this linguistic meaning of *bid'ah* when he gathered the people to pray the *tarāwīḥ* prayer in *jamā'ah*, saying:

(نَعَمَ الْبِدْعَةُ هَذِهِ.)

“What a favorable *bid'ah* this is!”²

He could not have meant that this was an innovation in Allāh’s religion, nor that he accepted or approved innovations in the religion. Both of these meanings would clearly be in defiance of Allāh’s very message, and ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) would be the farthest person from intending them. Rather, ‘Umar meant that gathering the people was a novel thing during his rule — even though it was previously practiced and recommended by the Prophet (ﷺ).

In the religious sense, on the other hand, a *bid'ah* is an item of belief or a religious practice that has no support from the Sunnah. This is the most common meaning for *bid'ah*, and we will be intending it whenever we use this term — unless we explicitly note the contrary.

This type of *bid'ah* is not permissible because it stands in clear

1. *Al-Aḥqāf* 46:9.

2. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2010), Mālik, and others (*Ṣalāt ut-Tarāwīḥ* p. 49).

opposition to the Sunnah. The Sunnah consists of what Allāh (ﷻ) wants from us, while a *bid'ah* comes with what is supposed to replace or amend Allāh's teachings! This is not acceptable because Allāh (ﷻ) completed His *Dīn*, and He gave permission to no one after the Prophet (ﷺ) to add anything to this perfect *Dīn*. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا﴾

«This day I have perfected your religion for you, have completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islām as your religion.»¹

DEFINITION OF *BID'AH* IN *DIN*

As we stated above, a *bid'ah* is a religious act that has no evidence from the Sunnah. To be more specific, we include the following elements in our definition of *bid'ah*:²

① It pertains to the *Dīn*. This includes innovated acts of worship, such as celibacy, consecutive voluntary fasting, etc. It also includes practices that support acts of worship, such as adorned prayer rugs, *thikr* beads and counters, etc. It does not include worldly innovated acts, such as means of transportation, computers, etc.

② It is innovated. This means that there is no evidence, whether specific or general, under which it can be classified. For example, worshiping Allāh by standing in the sun is a *bid'ah*. On the other hand, the *ṣaḥābah*'s compilation of the Qur'ān is not a *bid'ah*, because, though it has no specific evidence, it comes under general texts requiring the preservation of the *Dīn*.

③ It resembles correct acts of worship. This is an important reason why it is accepted by the common people. For example,

1. *Al-Mā'idah* 5:3.

2. Largely based on *al-F'tīṣām*, pp. 41-55, by ash-Shāṭibi.

making a vow to abstain from certain permissible foods or clothing resembles permissible vows of fasting, or of living a simple life. To the contrary, vowing to eat soil is quickly rejected by everyone because of its lack of resemblance.

④ It is meant to enhance worshiping Allāh. This is usually the declared or implicit reason behind initiating a *bid'ah*, and this is what encourages the common people to practice it. This reason was evident in the case (cited next subsection) of the individuals who tried to outdo the Prophet (ﷺ) in some acts of worship.

To the contrary, if a person vows to abstain from meat, not for the sake of worship, but for medical reasons, his vow would not count as a *bid'ah*.

EVILS OF *BID'AHS*

There are countless evils that emanate from *bid'ahs* or are associated with them. In what follows, we summarize only a few of them.

① Loss of guidance and purification. We mentioned earlier that Allāh (ﷻ) sent down His revelation to guide and purify us. Since a *bid'ah* replaces some of Allāh's superior instructions with inferior ones, it clearly results in a loss of guidance and purification for those who practice it.

② Rejection of the perfect Religion. A person who knowingly practices a *bid'ah* would be, in effect, rejecting that our *Dīn* is complete and perfect. Why else would he want to supplement that which is already complete?

The completeness of Islām means that it cannot be completed any further. Believing otherwise would amount to accusing Allāh (ﷻ) or His Messenger (ﷺ) of being untruthful or negligent in delivering to us some matters needed to complete the *Dīn*. Such beliefs would, obviously, reflect clear disbelief in Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) — may Allāh (ﷻ) protect us from that.

③ Opposing the Messenger. Allāh (ﷻ) sent His Messenger (ﷺ) to guide us to what is best for us in both of our lives. A

person who knowingly practices a *bid'ah* would be opposing the Messenger's status of leadership and guidance. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾¹

«Let those who oppose his (i.e., the Messenger's) command beware lest a *fitnah* or a painful punishment strike them.»¹

④ Declaring other legislators besides Allāh. Allāh (ﷻ) is the sole Legislator in Islām — either directly in His book, or via the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ). A person who knowingly initiates or practices a *bid'ah* would be, in effect, declaring himself or his teachers legislators alongside Allāh. Allāh (ﷻ) says:

﴿أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنْ بِهِ اللَّهُ﴾

«Or, do they have partners who legislate for them in religion that which Allāh does not permit?»²

⑤ Loss of the deeds' rewards. Regardless of how hard a person exerts in his *bid'ah*, Allāh (ﷻ) would not accept it from him. 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«مَنْ أَحَدَّثَ فِي أَمْرِنَا هَذَا مَا لَيْسَ فِيهِ، فَهُوَ رَدٌّ.»

«Whoever innovates in this affair (i.e., *Dīn*) of ours that which does not belong to it, it is rejected from him.»³

⑥ Deprivation of the Prophet's approval. A person who introduces *bid'ahs* knowingly would exhibit a dislike for some parts of the Sunnah, which means that he is not a true follower of the Prophet

1. *An-Nūr* 24:63.

2. *Ash-Shūrā* 42:21.

3. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (2697), Muslim (1718) and others.

(ﷺ).

Anas (رضي الله عنه) reported that a few young men once asked the Prophet's wives (رضي الله عنهن) about the Prophet's (ﷺ) manner of worship. The answer they received made them think that he (ﷺ) did too little, and that he did not need to exert much because all of his previous and later sins were already forgiven. So one of them pledged, "I will stay up in prayer every night without sleeping." Another one said, "I will fast every single day." A third one said, "I will abstain from women and never marry." Another one said, "I will never sleep on a mattress." And another one said, "I will never eat meat." When the Prophet (ﷺ) heard of this, he gathered the Muslims and gave a speech in which he said:

«أما والله إنني لأخشاكم لله وأتقاكم له، لكني أصوم وأفطر، وأصلي وأرقد،
وأتزوج النساء، فمن رغب عن سنتي فليس مني.»

(Indeed, by Allāh, I fear Allāh and revere Him better than any of you; yet, I fast (some days) and break my fast (on others), I pray (part of the night) and sleep (the other part), and I marry women. So, anyone who dislikes my Sunnah is not (a follower) of me.)¹

⑦ Belittling the Prophet and his companions. An important part of belief in Islām is that the Prophet (ﷺ) is the best person of this *Ummah* — indeed, of humanity, and that his companions (رضي الله عنهم) are the best of this *Ummah* after him.

This superiority of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions means that, compared to all those who succeeded them, they were more aware and knowledgeable about the *Dīn*, and they had a greater inclination to do good deeds. Therefore, any act of worship not adopted by them is impermissible.

Those who knowingly commit a *bid'ah* would be challenging the above and would be, in essence, belittling the Prophet's (ﷺ)

1. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (5063), Muslim (1401), and others.

and his companions' superiority over the rest of the *Ummah*.

⑧ Threat of the Fire. Because of the above and many other woes of *bid'ah*, we have seen that the Prophet (ﷺ) frequently warned that it leads to the Fire.

ALL BID'AHS ARE BAD

Some people misinterpret 'Umar's (رضي الله عنه) earlier statement (p. 136) or other texts so as to claim that some *bid'ahs* are permissible or praiseworthy.

In addition to the fact that no text they use can clearly support their claim, nothing can withstand the Prophet's (ﷺ) clear and unequivocal statement that he was keen to repeat in his speeches:

«وَشَرُّ الْأُمُورِ مُحَدَّثَاتُهَا، وَكُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَكُلُّ ضَلَالَةٍ فِي النَّارِ.»

(Indeed, the worst affairs (of religion) are those innovated (by people), for every such innovation is an act of misguidance leading to the Fire.)¹

In this regard, 'Abdullāh Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنهما) said:

«كُلُّ بَدْعَةٍ ضَلَالَةٌ، وَإِنْ رَأَاهَا النَّاسُ حَسَنَةً.»

“Every *bid'ah* is an act of misguidance, even if the people see it good.”²

Many people permit and propagate *bid'ahs* by arguing that they are acts of worship and, therefore, must be good! Such a reasoning would lead to many erroneous conclusions, such as saying that it is good to pray the whole night without sleep, to add an unlimited number of *rak'āt* to any prayer, and so on, because all of these are good acts of worship.

If an innovated practice was to be considered good for the

1. Recorded by Muslim (867), an-Nasā'ī, and others.

2. Recorded by al-Lālkā'ī, Ibn Naṣr (*As-Sunnah* p. 24), and al-Bayhaqī (*Al-Kubrā* no. 194). Verified to be authentic by Mashhūr Ḥasan (*Al-Amru bil-Ittibā'* p. 64).

mere reason that it is an act of worship, there would not then exist any bad *bid'ahs* in worship, and there would be no reason for the Prophet (ﷺ) or the 'ulamā' to warn against innovated acts of worship.

Indeed, good acts are only those whose goodness has been confirmed by the *shar'*, and not by people's desires and inclinations.

EXCUSES GIVEN BY SOME PEOPLE

People who like to practice *bid'ahs* try all possible arguments to justify this. Most of their arguments are obviously wrong and can be easily refuted. But a few are more common and, therefore, require a special warning:

① Absence of a prohibiting text. A common excuse is that there is no authentic text proving that a certain practice is *bid'ah*, therefore it is permissible.

The answer to this doubt is that acts of worship may not be established without specific evidence from the Qur'an or Sunnah. Neglecting this important rule would lead to altering well-founded acts of worship, producing a religion totally different from Islām.

② Reliance on general texts. Some people rely on a general text that encourages performing an act of worship, without constraining this by the practice of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions (رضي الله عنهم).

Based on this reasoning, one may, for example, pray *zuhr* as five *rak'āt*, and give *athān* for the 'id and *tarāwīh* prayers, because there are general texts describing the merits of praying and giving *athān*.

It is wrong to follow general texts, without referring to the Messenger's (ﷺ) clarification through his actions or abstinence. By doing this, we would be letting loose innovations in the *Dīn* without limit.

③ Reliance on Numbers. Some people justify a *bid'ah* with

the excuse that numerous people do it. This is not an acceptable excuse, because what really matters regarding a certain act of worship is whether the Prophet (ﷺ) and his true followers did it or not. Allāh (ﷻ) tells us that numbers are not important — rather, they may be an indication of deviation. He (ﷻ) says:

﴿وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا أَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيضِلُّوكُمْ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾﴾

«If you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from Allāh's path, (because) they only follow doubts and falsify (the truth).»¹

④ Differences among the 'ulamā'. Another common excuse is that the 'ulamā' differ about a particular practice. While some of them condemn it as a *bid'ah*, others recommend it. Thus, they argue, we should respect all 'ulamā' and accept their conclusions without objection.

The answer to this doubt is as follows:

1. When there is a clear text from the Qur'an or Sunnah, our obligation is to raise it above the opinion of any 'ālim — regardless of how much we love and respect him.
2. There are many causes that could have led to differences among the 'ulamā', such as that an authentic text may not have reached some of them, or it reached them through an unacceptable *isnād*, or they differed in interpreting it, etc. Our obligation is to eliminate (rather than confirm) these differences by referring to the authentic texts, as Allāh (ﷻ) commanded:

﴿فَإِنْ تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ
الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٥٩﴾﴾

1. Al-An'am 6:116.

«If you disagree over anything, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger — if you (truly) believe in Allāh and the Last Day. That is the best (way) and best in result.»¹

3. When we adhere to the Sunnah in regard to a certain practice, this does not mean that we belittle the 'ulamā' who held a different view in regard to it. Rather, we believe that they based their conclusions on true scholarship and patient striving to reach the truth. They are rewardable in all situations, as 'Amr Ibn al-'Āṣ reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«إِذَا حَكَمَ الْحَاكِمُ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أَصَابَ فَلَهُ أَجْرَانِ، وَإِذَا حَكَمَ فَاجْتَهَدَ ثُمَّ أخطأَ فَلَهُ أَجْرٌ.»

«When a *ḥākim*² strives to make a correct judgment and then arrives at the truth, he receives two rewards. And if he strives to make it but misses the truth, he receives a single reward.»³

1. *An-Nisā'* 4:59.

2. *Ḥākim* is one who has the ability and authority to make *ḥukm* (ruling or judgment) in one or more matters. This normally applies to a ruler, a judge, or a scholar.

3. Recorded by al-Bukhārī (7352), Muslim (1716), and others.

APPENDIX B: ARABIC TERMINOLOGY

Introduction

TRANSLATING AND REFERENCING QUR'ĀN AND ḤADĪTH

The Qur'ān is Allāh's exact words, so any translation will fall short and fail to capture the complete meaning. Yet, we attempt to come as close as possible, and base what we say on what our scholars of *tafsīr* have said, as well as credible translations.

The Qur'ānic *āyahs* include the Arabic text, the English meaning in **«boldface»**, and a footnote specifying the location of the cited *āyah(s)*.

Likewise, our *ḥadīth* quotes (as well as some quotes from the sayings of the *Salaf*) include the Arabic text, the English meaning in **«boldface»**, and a footnote briefly specifying its location in *ḥadīth* compilations and its level of authenticity. If the quote contains a supplication or exaltation, we include a phonetic transcription of that portion.

RELEVANT TABLES

Near the end of this appendix, we present two important tables. The first defines the phonetic transcription characters used in this book, while the second covers the veneration phrases uttered at the mention of Allāh, His Messenger Muḥammad, or another righteous Muslim.

ARABIC TERMS

The following glossary contains definitions of Arabic terms that are commonly used in Islāmic discussions. These terms constitute a basic vocabulary for readers of Islāmic material. The glossary is

followed with the tables of the Arabic weekdays, the Islāmic *Hijrī* calendar, and key Islāmic locations.

Glossary of Common Terms

‘Abd

Slave, servant, or worshiper. Pl.: *‘ibād* or *‘abīd*.

Adab

Good characters or manners; etiquette. Pl.: *ādāb*.

Ākhirah

The last life (or hereafter).

Al-Fātihah

The first chapter of the Qur’ān.

‘Ālim

Scholar; learned man.

‘Allāmah

Augmented form of “*‘ālim*”.

Āmin

“O Allāh, grant my request,” said in concluding a *du‘ā’*.

Anṣār

Residents of Madīnah who supported the Prophet (ﷺ).

‘Aṣr

Afternoon; the third daily obligatory prayer.

Athān

Announcement; call to the prayer.

‘Awrah

Weakness that requires protection; body-parts that should be concealed from others.

Āyah

Miracle; sign; a portion of the Qur’ānic text that is usually one sentence in length. Pl.: *āyāt*.

Bid‘ah

Innovation; unjustified change in the Islāmic teachings.

Da‘wah

Call; mission.

Dīn

Religion — often used in reference to Islām.

Dīnār

Old currency \approx 4.25 g of 22k gold in today’s standards.

Dirham

Old currency \approx 3.0 g of pure silver in today’s standards.

- Du'ā'**
Invocation; supplication; prayer.
- Dunyā**
The lower (i.e., worldly) life.
- Fajr**
Dawn; the first daily obligatory prayer.
- Fard**
Obligation.
- Fard Kifāyah**
A communal obligation that must be performed by at least a few Muslims.
- Fard 'Ayn**
An obligation upon every Muslim.
- Fatwā**
Religious verdict. Pl.: *fatāwā* or *fatāwī*.
- Fiqh**
Understanding; Islāmic jurisprudence — a subject dealing with practical regulations in Islām.
- Fitnah**
Trial; test; temptation; affliction.
- Fiṭrah**
The pure nature upon which Allāh (ﷻ) created people.
- Ghayb**
All knowledge beyond the reach of human perception.
- Ghusl**
Bath; ritual bath required after intercourse, ejaculation, and after a woman completes her menses.
- Hadīth**
Talk; speech; reports of the Prophet's (ﷺ) sayings, actions, and tacit approvals.
- Hajj**
Major pilgrimage to Makkah.
- Halāl**
Permissible.
- Halqah**
Circle or ring; study circle.
- Harām**
Prohibited.
- Hasan**
Good; acceptable.
- Hilāl**
Crescent.

Hijāb

Cover; curtain; the Muslim woman's proper attire.

Hijrah

Migration; the early Muslims' migration to al-Madīnah.

Īd

Festival. Pl.: *a'yād*.

Ḥrām

Prohibition; a state assumed by pilgrims, prohibiting for them specific acts, such as hunting, perfume, marriage.

Ijmā'

Consensus of Muslim scholars.

Ijtihād

Ability to reach correct conclusions from the available evidence.

Imām

Leader (of a nation, prayer, etc.); distinguished Islāmic scholar.

Īmān

Faith; belief.

Iqāmah

Establishment; call for starting the prayer.

'Ishā'

Night time; the fifth daily obligatory prayer.

Isnād

Chain of narrators of a *ḥadīth*.

Jahannam

Hell.

Jāhiliyyah

The era of ignorance (*jahl*) and disbelief prior to Islām.

Jamā'ah

Muslim community; congregation of prayer.

Janābah

A form of impurity arising from ejaculation or intercourse. *Janābah* is lifted upon performing ghusl.

Janāzah

Funeral.

Jannah

Garden; the gardens of paradise.

Jihād

Striving (or fighting) for Allāh's cause.

Jinn

Creation that Allāh (ﷻ) made from fire, sometimes translated as "demon". Satan is one of the *jinn*s.

Jumu'ah

Friday; the Friday mid-day prayer.

Junub

Person in a state of *janābah*.

Kāfir

Person who practices *kufr*. Pl.: *kuffār*.

Khalīfah

Successor. A Muslim ruler who succeeded the Prophet (ﷺ). Pl.: *khulafā'*.

Khamr

Alcoholic beverage.

Khilāfah

Succession; caliphate — a *khalīfah*'s rule.

Kufr

Ingratitude; disbelief; rejection of the faith of Islām.

Khuṭbah

Speech; sermon.

Maghrib

Sunset; the fourth daily obligatory prayer.

Mahram

A man closely related to a woman and permanently prohibited from marrying her; examples: father, son, brother, uncle, nephew, father-in-law, son-in-law, son through nursing. Non-*mahrams* include: cousin, stepbrother, brother-in-law.

Makrūh

Disliked; act that is disapproved but not prohibited in Islām.

Masjid

Place designated for *sujūd*; mosque.

Mathhab

Way or approach. It often refers to one of the four schools of *fiqh*: the Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfi'ī, or Ḥanbalī.

Minbar

Raised platform in a *masjid* for delivering a *khuṭbah*.

Mufti

A 'ālim who gives *fatwā*.

Muhājir

Migrant; immigrant; person who undertakes *hijrah*. Pl.: *muhājirū(i)n*.

Mujāhid

Person who performs *jihād*. Pl.: *mujāhidū(i)n*.

Munkar

Disapproved or rejected act. Pl.: *munkarāt*.

Muṣallā

Place designated for *ṣalāh* (or prayer).

Muṣḥaf

Collection of "ṣuḥuf" or sheets; book of the Qur'ānic text.

Mushrik

Person who practices *shirk*. Pl.: *mushrikū(i)n*.

Nafl

Extra; voluntary; supererogatory deeds.

Qaḍā'

Allāh's decree and measure.

Qadar

Allāh's predestination; often used as synonym of *qaḍā'*.

Qiblah

Direction of al-Ka'bah in Makkah.

Qiyām

Standing; the night prayer.

Qudsi

Holy. A *qudsī ḥadīth* is a statement that the Prophet (ﷺ) attributes to Allāh (ﷻ), though it is not from the Qur'an.

Rak'ah

Full prayer unit, containing one *rukū'*. Pl.: *rak'at*.

Ribā

Usury; interest.

Rukū'

Bowing; bowing in the prayer.

Ṣadaqah

Charity.

Ṣaḥābah

Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). Singular: *ṣaḥābī*.

Ṣaḥīḥ

True; authentic.

Salaf

The early righteous pioneers and scholars of Islām.

Ṣalāh

Prayer; supplicating for the Prophet (ﷺ).

Salām

Peace; greeting with peace: *as-salāmu 'alaykum*.

Sanad

Same as *isnād*.

Shahādah

Testimony; the Testimony of Islām: "There is no true god but Allāh, and Muḥammad is Allāh's Messenger"; martyrdom for Allāh's (ﷻ) cause.

Shahīd

Witness; person martyred for Allāh's cause. Fem.: *shahīdah*, Pl.: *shuhada'*.

Shām

The Levant; an area consisting of Palestine, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

Sharʿ (or Sharīʿah)

The Islāmic Law. *Sharʿī*: legislated or permissible matter. *Ash-Shāriʿ*: the Legislator (Allāh SWT).

Shaykh

Elderly man; title of respect for a man with an above-average level of Islāmic knowledge.

Shayṭān

Satan; devil.

Shirk

Polytheism; paganism; joining partners with Allāh (ﷻ).

Sīrah

Biography; the Prophet's (ﷺ) biography.

Siwāk

Stick from a desert tree, used for brushing the teeth.

Ṣiyām

Fasting.

Sujūd

Prostration; prostration in the prayer.

Sunnah

Way; guidance; teachings; the Prophet's (ﷺ) way and guidance.

Sūrah

Qurʾānic chapter.

Tābiʿī

Follower; student of the *ṣaḥābah*. Pl.: *tābiʿū(i)n*.

Tafsīr

Explanation; Qurʾānic interpretations and commentaries.

Takbīr

Saying, “*Allāhu Akbar* — Allāh is the greatest.”

Tahlīl

Saying, “*Lā ilāha illallāh* — There is no (true) god except Allāh.”

Taḥmīd

(Also, *ḥamd*): praise; saying, “*Al-ḥamdu lillāh* — Praise be to Allāh.”

Taqīd

Imitation, especially without knowledge.

Taqwā

Fearing and revering Allāh.

Tarbiyah

Cultivation or education.

Tasbīḥ

Saying, “*Subḥān-Allāh* — Exalted be Allāh.”

Taṣfiyah

Filtration or cleansing.

Tashahhud

Pronouncing the *Shahādah*; the last part of prayer that includes pronouncing the *Shahādah*.

Taslīm

Saying *salām*; concluding the prayer with *salām*.

Tawāf

Circling the Ka'bah. *Tawāf* is pillar of *hajj* and 'umrah.

Tawhīd

Belief that Allāh is the only Lord and God to be worshipped, and that He possesses the most sublime attributes.

Tayammum

Symbolic ablution, in the absence of water, performed by wiping clean dust over the face and hands (to the wrists).

Thiḳr

Remembrance and extolment of Allāh (تذکر). Pl.: *athkār*.

'Ulamā'

Plural of "ālim".

Ummah

Community; nation; followers.

'Umrah

Minor form of pilgrimage to Makkah that may be performed at any time of the year.

Wahy

Revelation; inspiration.

Wājib

Obligatory or required; obligation.

Wali

Friend; ally; guardian.

Witr

Odd number; last part of the night prayer (consisting of an odd number of *rak'āt*).

Wuḍū'

Ritual ablution for the prayer; it includes washing the face and forearms, wiping over the head, and washing the feet.

Zakāh

Obligatory charity. *Zakāt-ul-fiṭr*: charity in the form of food given to the needy at the end of *Ramaḍān*.

Zinā

Adultery or fornication.

Zuhr

Noon; the second daily obligatory prayer.

Arabic Weekdays

1	Sunday	<i>Al-Aḥad</i>	الأَحَد
2	Monday	<i>Al-Ithnayn</i>	الإِثْنَيْنِ
3	Tuesday	<i>Ath-Thulāthā'</i>	الثَّلَاثَاءِ
4	Wednesday	<i>Al-Arbi'ā'</i>	الأَرْبَعَاءِ
5	Thursday	<i>Al-Khamīs</i>	الخَمِيسِ
6	Friday	<i>Al-Jumu'ah</i>	الجُمُعَةِ
7	Saturday	<i>As-Sabt</i>	السَّبْتِ

Islāmic Hijrī Months

1	<i>Al-Muḥarram</i>	المُحَرَّم
2	<i>Ṣafar</i>	صَفَر
3	<i>Rabi' ul-Awwal</i>	رَبِيعُ الأَوَّلِ
4	<i>Rabi' uth-Thānī (or ul-Ākhir)</i>	رَبِيعُ الثَّانِي
5	<i>Jumāda al-Ūlā</i>	جُمَادَى الأُولَى
6	<i>Jumāda al-Ākhirah (or ath-Thāniyah)</i>	جُمَادَى الآخِرَةِ
7	<i>Rajab</i>	رَجَب
8	<i>Sha'bān</i>	شَعْبَانَ
9	<i>Ramaḍān</i>	رَمَضَانَ
10	<i>Shawwāl</i>	شَوَّال
11	<i>Thul-Qa'dah</i>	ذو القَعْدَةِ
12	<i>Thul-Ḥijjah</i>	ذو الحِجَّةِ

Key Islāmic Locations

Makkah

The Prophet's (ﷺ) birthplace and the holiest town in Islām. It is located in western central Arabia.

Al-Madīnah

The town in Arabia which the Prophet (ﷺ) migrated to, built his *masjid* in, and lived the last ten years of his life. Its old name was Yathrib, but he changed it to Ṭaybah.

Al-Quds

The holy town of Jerusalem. It contains the third most sacred *masjid* in Islām.

Al-Ka'bah

The house of worship in Makkah that all Muslims face in their prayers.

Al-Masjid-ul-Ḥarām

The Sanctified Mosque; the grand *masjid* in Makkah that contains al-Ka'bah at its center.

Phonetic Transcription

When using an Arabic term or mentioning an Arabic name, we transcribe the word using the English alphabet and in accordance with standard English pronunciation rules.

However, for some Arabic letters, we were required to use a special character to avoid ambiguity or to indicate sounds unique to Arabic. The table below lists those Arabic letters, along with the characters used and the sounds they make.






Arabic Letter	Character Used	Description; English Equivalent
ا	<i>Alif</i>	ā, Ā Long vowel "a". Usually: <u>Ma</u> d, <u>sa</u> d. Occasionally: <u>Fa</u> ther, <u>ha</u> rd, <u>go</u> d.
و	<i>Wāw</i>	ū, Ū Long vowel "u". <u>Ro</u> ot, <u>so</u> up, <u>flu</u> te.
ي	<i>Yā'</i>	ī, Ī Long vowel "i". <u>Se</u> ed, <u>lea</u> n, <u>pie</u> ce, <u>recei</u> ve.
ء	<i>Hamzah</i>	The first consonant vocal sound uttered when saying: <u>a</u> t, <u>i</u> t, <u>o</u> h.

Arabic Letter	Character Used	Description; English Equivalent
ث	<i>Thā'</i>	th, Th <u>Th</u> ree, ba <u>th</u> .
ح	<i>Ḥā'</i>	h, Ḥ A deep, throaty "h".
خ	<i>Khā'</i>	kh, Kh A raspy <i>ḥā'</i> .
ذ	<i>Thāl</i>	<u>th</u> , <u>Th</u> <u>Th</u> ere, mo <u>th</u> er.
ص	<i>Ṣād</i>	s, Ṣ A deeper "s" sound. Somewhat close to the "sc" in "mus <u>cl</u> e".
ض	<i>Dād</i>	ḍ, Ḍ A deep "d"; produced by touching the tongue to the mouth's roof, with the sides of the tongue pressed against the top molars.
ط	<i>Tah</i>	t, Ṭ A deep "t".
ظ	<i>Zah</i>	z, Ṣ No equivalent — sounds similar to the <i>thāl</i> but deeper, and is produced in the same manner while slightly inflating the cheeks.
ع	<i>'Ayn</i>	‘ No equivalent. Produced in the bottom of the throat, underneath the <i>ḥā'</i> .
غ	<i>Ghayn</i>	gh, Gh No equivalent. A gurgling sound produced in the back of the mouth, just above the <i>khā'</i> . Similar to the French <i>r</i> .
ق	<i>Qāf</i>	q, Q A deep, throaty "c".

Honorific phrases

Out of respect, love, and appreciation, a Muslim is urged to utter specific phrases at the mention of Allāh, His messengers, or other righteous individuals.

We placed these phrases as ligatures between parentheses after the mention of one of the names.

	Transcription	Meaning	Uttered with
	<i>Subhānahū wa ta'ālā;</i> <i>Jalla jalāluh;</i> <i>'Azza wajal</i>	The Exalted and High. Exalted is His glory. He is great and glorified.	Allāh
	<i>Sallallāhu 'alayhi wasallam</i>	May Allāh's peace and praise be on him.	Muḥammad or other prophets
	<i>'Alayhi-ssalām;</i> <i>'Alayha-ssalām;</i> <i>'Alayhima-ssalām;</i> <i>'Alayhimu-ssalām</i>	Peace be on him, her, both of them, or all of them.	Remarkably righteous individuals (prophets, angels, etc.)
	<i>Raḍiy-allāhu 'anhu;</i> <i>Raḍiy-allāhu 'anhā;</i> <i>Raḍiy-allāhu 'anhumā;</i> <i>Raḍiy-allāhu 'anhum</i>	May Allāh be pleased with him, her, both of them, or all of them.	<i>Ṣaḥābah</i>
	<i>Raḥimahullā</i> <i>Raḥimahallāh</i> <i>Raḥimahumallāh</i> <i>Raḥimahumullāh</i>	May Allāh have mercy on him, her, both of them, or all of them.	Past ' <i>ulamā</i> ' or righteous Muslims

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