The Book of Night Prayers - Hadith 5

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Izvor: https://minbarlive.com/videos/en/the-book-of-night-prayers-hadith-5

> The explanation of the fifth hadith from the Book of Night Prayer mentions that Umar ibn al-Khattab r.a. would pray at night as much as he wished, then wake his family at the end of the night, saying to them: 'Prayer, prayer,' and reciting the verse: 'And enjoin your family to prayer and be steadfast in it.' The lesson covers night prayer without a specific limit, waking the family, and consistency, then presents the opinions of the jurisprudential schools regarding the number of rak'ahs for night and day prayers and the witr prayer.

SAŽETAK

The Sheikh continues explaining the book on night prayer and reaches the fifth hadith: the narration of Umar ibn Al-Khattab r.a. that he would pray at night as much as Allah willed. When it was near the end of the night, he would wake his family for prayer, saying: 'Prayer, prayer,' and then recite the verse: And command your family to pray and be steadfast in it. The speaker clarifies that this narration is attributed to Umar and not raised to the Messenger Muhammad . He explains that night prayer did not have a specific limit on the number of rak'ahs; rather, Umar prayed according to his ability and time. He extracts lessons from this narration: that the busy life of the Commander of the Faithful did not prevent him from night prayer, and that a sign of complete faith is the eagerness to awaken one's family and encourage them to worship, rather than just seeking personal benefit. He emphasizes the verse and be steadfast in it, indicating that the call to prayer requires patience and persistence until it becomes a firm habit, mentioning Ibn Abdul Barr's observation that the verse implies discipline and consistency. He then moves to the seventh hadith, narrated by Ibn Umar r.a. that the Messenger Muhammad said: 'Night prayer is two by two, and if one of you fears the dawn, let him pray one rak'ah to conclude what he has prayed.' He explains its meaning and that the witr prayer is a Sunnah, clarifying that neglecting it does not invalidate the prayer but misses the reward of following the Sunnah. He then presents the opinions of the schools of thought regarding night and day prayers: the Malikis, Shafi'is, and Hanbalis agree that night prayer is two by two, while they differ regarding day prayer, and the Hanafis consider four rak'ahs preferable, detailing the evidence for each school along with the hadiths of Aisha and Abu Ayyub. He concludes that there is no limit to the minimum or maximum number of rak'ahs for night prayer by consensus, and that the best is eleven rak'ahs, stressing that the

Sunnah is not just a number but also a quality, manner, time, and contemplation. He encourages gradual progress in performing night prayer and establishing a realistic plan that starts small, emphasizing that night prayer is a long-term project, not a one-time act. He concludes by discussing the ruling on congregational prayer for voluntary prayers and the principle that the default for voluntary prayers is to be performed individually unless there is evidence for congregation, then he makes a supplication for steadfastness and success.

KLJUČNE PORUKE

The fifth hadith in the book is a report attributed to Umar ibn Al-Khattab r.a., not raised to the Messenger Muhammad □. It mentions that he would pray at night as much as he wished, then wake his family at the end, saying: 'Prayer, prayer,' and reciting: 'And command your family to prayer and be steadfast in it.'

The night prayer did not have a specific limit on the number of units; rather, Umar would pray according to his ability and time, indicating that it is open-ended.

Umar's involvement in the affairs of the Muslims did not prevent him from performing night prayers and waking his family. This is an example of not neglecting the rights of Allah regardless of circumstances.

The statement of Allah □ 'and be steadfast in it' indicates the necessity of patience and persistence in calling one's family to prayer and not stopping if they do not respond, until prayer becomes a firm habit.

The hadith of Ibn Umar r.a. states: 'The night prayer is two by two, and if one of you fears the dawn, let him pray one unit as a witr for what he has prayed.' This clarifies that the norm for night prayer is two units at a time, with the witr being one unit.

The schools of thought agree that the number of units for night prayer is open, with no minimum or maximum limit. They differ regarding daytime prayer: the Malikis say two units, the Shafi'is say two is preferable but more is permissible, the Hanbalis allow choice, and the Hanafis say four is preferable.

Night prayer is a long-term project that requires gradual progress and a realistic plan, with waking up being the hardest step. It should be a genuine relationship with Allah, not just performing movements.

The norm for voluntary prayers is to pray individually unless there is a specific mention of congregation. There is no harm for one who prays witr or voluntary prayers in congregation, especially if they find it difficult to pray at home.

ČLANAK

Introduction to the Hadith and Its Chain of Narration

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and peace and blessings be upon the trustworthy Messenger and his family and companions. To proceed.

We continue in the Book of Night Prayer, where we have reached the fifth hadith. Imam Malik, may Allah have mercy on him, narrated: 'Ubaidullah ibn Yahya narrated to me, and Malik narrated from Zaid ibn Aslam, from his father, from Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him: He would pray at night as much as he wished, and when it was near the end of the night, he would wake his family for prayer, saying to them: 'Prayer, prayer, prayer,' then he would recite this verse: ﴿وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا﴾ (wa'mur ahlaka biṣ-ṣalāti waṣṭabir ʿalayhā) — 'And command your family to pray and be steadfast in it.'

He said: And Malik narrated from Zaid ibn Aslam, from his father, that Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, would pray at night as much as he wished, and when it was near the end of the night, he would wake his family for prayer, saying to them: 'Prayer, prayer,' then he would recite this verse: ﴿وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا﴾ (wa'mur ahlaka biṣ-ṣalāti waṣṭabir ʿalayhā) — 'And command your family to pray and be steadfast in it.'

The Significance of the Hadith on Night Prayer Without a Set Limit

This hadith indicates that this narration is not directly connected to the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, but rather narrates the actions of Umar ibn Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, not the actions of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ. When these narrations concerning Umar ibn Al-Khattab come, they usually do not relate to the time of prophethood, nor to his actions while the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ was with them; if it were so, it would refer to the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ. However, when these narrations come, whether they are about him or others, they usually refer to him in his capacity as the Commander of the Believers or as a caliph or leader of the Muslims.

While he was a caliph, he would pray the night prayer or tahajjud as much as he could. There was no specific limit or minimum amount for night prayer. It was not the eleven rak'ahs we know, nor was it two, one, three, or five. There was no set limit. He would pray according to his ability. On some days, if he had more energy and time, he would pray more. On other days or nights, when he had less time, he would pray less according to the opportunity available at that time.

Lessons from the Narration: Worship with Responsibility

This teaches us that being the Commander of the Believers did not prevent him from worshiping Allah, the Exalted, at night, despite how busy he was. By the way, there is no comparison between our busyness today and theirs. There is no comparison. This is what you have. They did not have luxuries or comforts. This is the Commander of the Believers, and this was a time when much was happening in Islam. Nevertheless, the example they left for us, the example that earned them the promise of Paradise while they were alive, the example that earned them that close companionship with the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, and that close connection with the Lord, is an example for the best of humanity. That example is one where the rights of Allah are never neglected, no matter what.

This is the example we should all strive to emulate. The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, as you know, advised following his Sunnah, and after his Sunnah, we should follow the practices and Sunnahs of the rightly guided caliphs who were guided. This is following the guidance. Then he said: 'Hold firmly to the Sunnah with your molar teeth. Hold on to it. Bite down on it. Imagine that you are being pulled away from it. Hold on to the Sunnah as you would cling to it. Hold it with your teeth. Be steadfast in adhering to the Sunnah. That is the advice of our Messenger Muhammad ﷺ. It is the best of advice. It is the advice that leads to — excuse me — the path of the best of creation, the path with the greatest reward, the path with the highest rank with Allah, the path that weighs the heaviest in the balance, the path leading to the greatest success, the path farthest from any deviation, misguidance, or falsehood. That is the trial. That is the best of paths. Whoever turns away from this path to another has exchanged what is lesser for what is better. So we ask Allah to keep us on the path that is most pleasing to Him.

Awakening the Family and Seizing the Last Part of the Night

He would, in addition to his prayers, awaken his family, urging them to pray before the night ended. This—meaning the end of the time, the end of the night—shows that Umar ibn Al-Khattab r.a. seized the best time for worship, which is the last part of the night, the last third or two-thirds according to various narrations. But it is the last part of the night, the time of supplication, the time of the greatest reward, and the time of response from Allah, the Exalted. His faith is not just for his own benefit; it overflows to those around him, encouraging them to follow this path. This is the complete picture of faith. There is no complete faith where you are happy with your progress and indifferent to those around you. This is not how Islam is understood, nor how taqwa is understood. If you are happy for yourself and indifferent, allowing others to go as they please, this is not the example of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, nor the example of the righteous predecessors who followed him.

The Command to Pray and Be Patient with It

Allah says: ﴿وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا﴾ (wa'mur ahlaka biṣ-ṣalāti waṣṭabir ʿalayhā) — 'And command your family to pray and be patient with it.' This aligns with the command. He would say: Command your family to pray, maintain it, encourage them, and be patient with it. Do not make this a one-time invitation. Don't let that invitation be such that if accepted—great, people responded—you are happy, and if not, you stop inviting them. No. This means you need to be patient and continue inviting them, even if they do not respond positively or say: 'I don't want to wake up,' or argue with you about it and resent you for it—may Allah forgive. They might say: 'Why did you wake me at night? Dad, let me sleep. I stayed up late. Is there no consideration?' Things like that. No, ﴿وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا﴾ (waṣṭabir ʿalayhā) — 'And be patient with it.' You must endure any harm or difficulties that may arise from someone whose faith may not be at the level, or who may not appreciate the path of Islam, or your invitation to what benefits them. At this stage of their day, they may not value that.

Consistency Until It Becomes a Habit

Continue and persist in consistency until this prayer becomes a firm habit. Ibn Abd al-Barr mentioned in his commentary and explanation of this verse from this hadith that scholars understood it to involve discipline; you are calling for a discipline aimed at making the act a continuous habit. We are raising our families and children to perform their prayers and to be steadfast and consistent in these actions.

Waking up in the middle of the night is not an easy task; it is not simple. Inviting people to this matter is not easy. If you can cultivate this habit from a young age, you are preparing your family for great success, enabling them to achieve what others who do not wake up at this time cannot. Those who wake up and make the best use of that early time can accomplish much more than those who do not wake up during that period.

The Blessing of Early Rising and the Virtue of Standing in Prayer

The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ indicated that in the early morning and at dawn lies the blessing; there, Allah's favor, mercy, gifts, and rewards are greater than at other times. If you can notice this, it is something that people should not overlook, but rather recognize: if you are praying at this time, you are performing the worship of the righteous, and this is what the righteous do. Whether you pray two rak'ahs, ten rak'ahs, four rak'ahs, or whatever it is during that early period, they know that Allah has blessed you, and you are maintaining the prayer that the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ prayed, and that the companions prayed, and that those before them from the prophets prayed. This is a favor from Allah upon you, granting you a share in that.

And 99.999 percent or so of the rest are asleep; these are a very select few from the people of this world. A very select few are those who do this, and I see they may be less than one percent. If you are among them, know that you are in an elite group, not just the elite of your time or generation, but the elite of all those in this world; you are among the few. So take comfort in that, rejoice in it, and be grateful to Allah for this blessing and gift.

Educating Family and Protecting Them from the Fire

This also aligns with the saying of Allah: ﷻO you who have believedﷻ — "O you who have believed, protect yourselves and your families from the Fire." Teach them how to protect themselves from the Fire, and educate them to develop habits that keep them away from it.

What is the secret behind Islam encouraging this? Why do you see that night prayer is one of the greatest acts of worship one can perform, and among its highest levels? It is indeed one of the greatest, without a doubt, and there is no disagreement among scholars about its status and high rank. It is among the highest ranks. If you can achieve this, everything else becomes easier by comparison; once you master it, everything else becomes simpler. Your five daily prayers will become easier, because you have started and trained yourself on one of the most difficult tasks. If you can perfect it and maintain it, it is like a secret that opens ease in everything else.

The Impact of Consistency on the Individual

You will not be overwhelmed by pressure, nor will anxiety take hold of you, and you will not lose hope, nor will you fall into idleness and laziness with such practice. You will always be productive, your supplications will be of high quality, and your tranquility and connection with Allah will be very close and intimate. Your names will be frequently mentioned among the angels, and you will be recognized in the higher assembly in the heavens. Yes, your name will be known in the heavens.

Don't you know the hadith where Allah descends and asks: Who calls upon Me so that I may respond? When Allah descends, He says to those who know He is there: I am present, I have answered My call. Who seeks forgiveness from Me so that I may forgive him? I know them well. What a great status it is to be among them. So do not let all these teachings pass without recording them in your minds. We will continue, if Allah wills.

Lessons Learned from the Fifth Hadith

This hadith gives rise to multiple issues. We will now discuss the fifth hadith from this book, and there is the seventh hadith that addresses the nature of the Messenger Muhammad's ﷺ night prayers, and we will present it now as it relates to this discussion.

It was narrated by the two Shaykhs from Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ said: "Night prayer is two by two, and if one of you fears the dawn, let him pray one rak'ah to make his prayers odd." The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ states that night prayer is done two by two, meaning two rak'ahs at a time, always in pairs. If the time comes when you fear the dawn and the entrance of the morning prayer time, this indicates that the best night prayer is performed at the end of the night, as the last part of the night ends when the time for dawn enters, so let him pray one rak'ah to make his total prayers odd.

The Odd Prayer and the Number of Rak'ahs

When you pray two units at a time, the total is always even: two, four, six, eight, ten, twelve. But if you add one, it becomes odd, and this is the Sunnah, and this is the best. And why? Allah knows best. Why is the Witr, meaning making the number of night prayers odd, the best? Allah knows that, but it is something the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ taught us to do and encouraged us to follow, because it is pleasing to Allah.

So does that mean if you don't pray Witr or make your prayer odd that you are deficient? It does not mean that. What it means is that you miss out on things; you miss out on the reward of the Sunnah. If you pray an odd number, you receive the reward of the Sunnah first. You also miss out on following the command of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ and his encouragement. As a result, you miss out on the reward and blessings. That's the point: you could have gained more reward if you had seized the opportunity.

Following His Sunnah ﷺ is the goal of a Muslim

And this is the point: when we think about how we behave as Muslims, we should always have in mind: how do I follow my Messenger Muhammad ﷺ? This should always be the goal, and it should always be our priority. Because we know with certainty that his worship is the best, and we know with certainty that his worship is the furthest from deviation.

The meaning of deviation in the heart

Deviation is choosing something contrary to the best or to the truth. That is deviation. Deviation is to lean away, to stray. You stray from the best to something else. Deviation is poison in the heart, and Allah commanded us to beware of it and seek refuge from it: ﴿رَبَّنَا لَا تُزِغْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا﴾ (rabbanā lā tuzigh qulūbanā ba‘da idh hadaytanā) — "Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate after You have guided us." He guided us to what? He guided us to Islam, He guided us to the best. So do not let us present ourselves over what is more pleasing to Allah, for that is the best.

The ruling on night and day prayers according to the schools

This practice is to pray two units at a time. So when you pray at night, how do you pray? You pray two units. In a narration from Ibn Umar, in another version of this hadith, Ibn Umar says: "The prayer at night and during the day is in pairs." He says: Night and day prayers are prayed two units at a time. Based on this, the Maliki position is that all voluntary prayers, whether at night or during the day, are always two units, unless you pray Witr, of course, then you pray an odd number. Always two units. This is their position. This is also the position of the Shafi'is. The Shafi'i school holds that the best Sunnah is two units. The Malikis, Shafi'is, and Hanbalis say that all night prayers are two units. You can pray ten units or twenty units, but always in groups of two. That is, in the second unit, you say: peace be upon you and Allah's mercy, peace be upon you and Allah's mercy. That is the group of two units. This is the position of the three schools based on this hadith.

Ibn Umar's narration and the position of the Shafi'is and Hanbalis

However, Ibn Umar's narration, where he says "the prayer at night and during the day" — this addition "and during the day" — is closer to being a suspended narration, meaning it does not reach the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, but rather reaches only Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him. Based on this, the Shafi'is and Hanbalis say: Yes, we agree on the night, there is no disagreement. But during the day, the Shafi'is say you can pray more, you can pray four as well, two and four, but it is better to always pray two. That is, before Dhuhr two, after Dhuhr two, before Asr two. This is in the Shafi'i school. If you pray four, that is fine. The Hanbalis have a similar view: at night, yes, they agree: pray two units at a time, in groups of two. And during the day, they say: the matter is up to you, if you wish, pray four, and if you wish, pray two. Because the command from the Prophet or the description of the Prophet was at night. As for during the day, we have another hadith, a hadith narrated by Abu Dawood, where the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ prayed four units before Dhuhr. This indicates — and it is a sound hadith — that the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ indeed prayed more than two units, which indicates its permissibility and validity. As a result, the Hanbalis say: you are free, and we do not prefer during the day.

The Hanafi Position and the Hadith of Abu Ayyub

The Hanafis say it's best to pray four units, and not two. Based on a hadith from Abu Dawood, narrated by Abu Ayyub: "Four before Dhuhr with no salutation in between," meaning four before Dhuhr with a salutation at the end, not in pairs of two. The Malikis accepted this hadith too, but they understood it as praying four in pairs of two. In the narration of Abu Ayyub Al-Ansari r.a., the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ prayed four units

before Dhuhr without a salutation in between, meaning four units with a salutation at the end. Is that clear? Is anyone confused? Alright, let's continue.

The Hadith of Aisha and the Position of Abu Hanifa and His Companions

They say it's best to pray four units. Abu Hanifa extends this to the night, saying: pray four at night too, in groups of four. This is based on the hadith of Aisha r.a., narrated by Bukhari and Muslim, where she says: "The Messenger Muhammad ﷺ did not pray more than eleven units in Ramadan or outside of it" — meaning he did not pray more than eleven units. His practice was eleven units. This is true about the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ, but it means that his main practice, the habit he maintained, was eleven units. Then she says: "Do not ask about their beauty and length." He prays four — look at this praise — four, and do not ask about their beauty, perfection, and length. Because the prayer of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ was very long. It was not 'short' as people say: this and that. No. It was about four or five parts of the Quran. His recitation was neither fast nor slow, but moderate. Whenever he came across an ayah requiring refuge, he sought refuge in Allah. So consider that: how long would it be? She says: do not ask, you do not want to know, do not ask. She says: four units, four units.

Based on this, Abu Hanifa says that at night it is best to pray four units. This is the best. However, his companions Abu Yusuf and Muhammad Al-Shaybani say: it is better to pray two units at a time, but you can pray four. They say even within the school: two at a time, but four is fine. This is because they balance between the different narrations that have been reported. One says: two at a time. The other says: four.

The Public Interpretation of Aisha's Hadith

The Malikis provided an interpretation for this. And not just the Malikis, but the public: the Malikis, Shafi'is, and Hanbalis. They say that when Aisha r.a. narrated this, she did not mean four units. This is what they say. They say she meant two at a time.

Reconciling the Narrations and the Number of Night Prayer Units

Because they reconciled between the two narrations: the narration of Ibn Umar and the narration of Aisha, where she says that the Messenger ﷺ did not pray at night except in pairs. Then Aisha says she prayed. So they reconciled them, saying: her statement does not mean that it was a continuous prayer without salutations in between. In order to reconcile the different hadiths present, we understand that it was in pairs. This is the position of the majority, as we mentioned, and among those who said this are Abu Yusuf and Muhammad ibn Al-Hasan Al-Shaybani from the school.

The Number: No Minimum or Maximum by Consensus

As for the number, how many should you pray? This is unanimously open. There is no specific minimum or maximum. This is agreed upon. There is no disagreement about it. Right? There is no disagreement. It is up to you and what you can do. As we saw, Umar ibn al-Khattab r.a. would pray at night as much as he could. But what we know is that the best number, if we are talking about the best, what is it? It is called... eleven. But let me ask you: how do you make eleven? When we say eleven, how do you pray it? Eight are included, and you are right. And ten are also included. How do you pray eleven? How is it if we go two by two? How? No. Four, two, two, one? Or do you say four, four, two, one? No, that is not according to the school of thought. This is it. Two, two, two, two, one. So two, four, six, eight, ten, then one. And the one is? The witr, that is possible. But if you have shaf' and witr, what does that mean? It means to be two and one as the witr. So you pray two with tasleem and one. So it becomes eight, two, four, six, eight, then the shaf' and witr. That is your night prayer. By the way, all of it is night prayer. The witr is part of the tahajjud. The witr is part of the tahajjud. It is the night prayer because it occurs after 'isha, and it is at night. So it is all prayer. It is all tahajjud because it all happens in the middle or the end of the night. But do not mix up the terms. They all mean the same thing. But the witr is something specific. Something specific. Why? Because the Messenger Muhammad always did it, first. And because it is what makes it an odd number, right? This is in the two and the one as it is said. This is what is called... this was the habit of the Messenger Muhammad . So if you want to distinguish, it would be two, two, two, two, eight from the tahajjud, and two and one from the witr. Two and one from the witr, making it eleven rak'ahs. So eleven rak'ahs is the best action.

The Sunnah is not just a number

But when you think of the Sunnah, do not think of the number only. This is not the complete picture of the Sunnah. If someone prays eleven rak'ahs, is this the Sunnah? This is certainly not the Sunnah. Yes, you did eleven, but did you do the Sunnah? You did not do the Sunnah. Yes, you did eleven rak'ahs. Okay. But this is not the totality of the Sunnah. The Sunnah means what the Messenger Muhammad did. Did the Messenger Muhammad pray like this? No. He prayed with long rak'ahs, reading multiple Surahs in one rak'ah, so that each rak'ah takes time. Time is also part of the Sunnah. If you can gather all these qualities, you have fulfilled the totality of his Sunnah. The totality, the complete picture. But the reality is that Aisha said: Do not ask about its perfection, how beautiful it is. What length! Do not ask about that. Why? Because you will not be able to. So when we try to emulate the Messenger Muhammad , we may only get a fraction of that Sunnah, a fraction of it. Perhaps in number first, and we also have to think about that connection.

Prayer is a real relationship, not just movements

The Sunnah, what is called... that time when it is still, do not think: Okay, I just want to perform some prayers. I want to finish my rak'ahs and go back to sleep without developing my relationship with Allah during that time. This is an integral part of what you are trying to do. You are trying to develop your relationship with Allah. So when Allah descends in the hadith and asks, He is asking about the person who asks Allah, who takes time consciously to share their concerns with Allah, seeks desire, hopes for Allah's mercy, and implores Allah for His favor, and helps achieve what they strive for in their life. And this can only happen when you have awareness, when you truly open your heart, mind, and consciousness to Allah. This is a real relationship, not a superficial performance of an exercise and then back to sleep. No. This is a substantive engagement in seeking the mercy of Allah, the Exalted. This is the night prayer. And if you know from the Quran and have read it, you are supposed to reflect on it, and truly contemplate the words that Allah has revealed, which He shared with us, and taught us to guide us. This is the entirety of this time. And why at night? Because the night is still. At night your mind is with you. The distractions are much less. You can focus. This is part of the reason Allah chose this time, because it is best for you and me. The best for us. Not the best for Allah. I think it is the best for everyone. Allah does not need any of it. Right? He does not need any of it. Worship does not benefit Him. Far from it. Worship does not add to Him, nor enrich Him. Far from it. Certainly not. It is all for us. This time is better for us. Prayer is better for us. Our supplications are better for us. Our dependence on Allah is better for us. Just for us. So this time has its secrets. Understanding the purpose and the goal helps us organize how we approach it.

Gradual progression in prayer and reflection

Perhaps, perhaps part of your prayer, as you progress, you might say: Now I do not understand anything I am saying. Perhaps this is it. So perhaps part of your prayer, and you want to grow and develop, you say: Okay, I will pray two rak'ahs, then sit for ten minutes to read the translation of Al-Fatiha and any Surah I read. I just learned the Surah, yes. I just memorized, for example, I memorized Surah Al-Humazah. I memorized anything. Let me read it. Let me think about it. Then I will pray two more rak'ahs and read it again. But this time I will read it anew after having read it. Then after you finish that, you sit there before you make dua, and ask Allah, the Exalted, for more and more. Perhaps in your sujud. Instead of doing your sujud and then getting up, you take time to ask Allah. As the Messenger Muhammad said: 'Strive in supplication, for it is likely to be answered for you at this time.' This is also an integral part of the night prayer.

Waking up is the hardest step

If you are going to wake up at all, know that getting up is the hardest part. Once you get up, it becomes easier than you think. Even if you get up and pray two rak'ahs or four rak'ahs and then go back to sleep, you will not be able to sleep deeply, and you will not doze off easily; because your mind will remain attached to Allah, and your heart will remain connected to Allah. We say that we go back to bed early, not because we need to, but because the devil wants us to cut that connection with Allah, and to lessen our benefit from what is with Allah.

So if you try this and find that the devil has overcome you and brought you back to sleep, ask yourself: Are you really tired? Do not ask others, but ask yourself and look at the reality of these words, then you will realize that you did not go back to sleep because you were tired, but because the devil overcame you, because he does not want good for you.

Night prayer is a lifelong project, not a one-time act.

In any case, night prayer is a long-term project, not something you do once and finish. It's not something you master in a day, week, month, or year; it's something that accompanies you throughout your life. It's a project that takes a long time, which is natural and acceptable, and it's designed to be that way. So if you want to start, don't tell yourself: I want to start night prayer tonight and pray eight rak'ahs or so. No, you should build yourself gradually and have a plan and a system.

You know your long days and your busier days, and you also know the best times, like Thursday night or Friday night before Friday, which are among the best times. So organize your time so that you have at least one day a week. You might not be able to pray seven days a week, so start with one day. And if you're going to start, begin on the day you can. Maybe you can't start on Friday night, and that's okay; you might start on Saturday night because you're freer and don't work on Sunday. But start from somewhere, begin with what is easiest for you, and then build on it, God willing.

In that prayer, ask Allah to help you. This is all an integral part of night prayer.

There is no specific limit to the number of rak'ahs or recitation.

Similarly, there is no specific amount for night prayer; it is open. There is no defined minimum or maximum, neither in the number of rak'ahs nor in what you recite. As we know, it's best to read more if you can. The Messenger was asked about the best deeds, and he said: 'Length of standing,' meaning the length of recitation in prayer, as that is among the best deeds. But we grow in this gradually.

Allah the Exalted said: ﴿مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ﴾ (What is easy from the Quran) — 'So read what is easy from the Quran.' He also said: ﴿عَلِمَ أَن لَّن تُحْصُوهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَاقْرَءُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ﴾ (He knew that you would not be able to count it, so He turned to you; so

read what is easy from the Quran) — 'He knew that you could not count it, so He turned to you; read what is easy from the Quran.' Allah says: I know that you cannot, I know with certainty that you believers are not able to pray all night. Allah loves to see us all standing in prayer all night, but He says: and He knows that you are not capable of that. So read what is easy for you, what is sufficient for you, and what you can bear. Read what you can handle, then move on, and praise be to Allah.

A practical plan: start small.

Do not set a big goal for yourself that you cannot achieve; rather, set a small goal that you can manage, and through it, you will grow. We conclude with this, God willing.

Jurisprudential rulings on night prayer.

We conclude that according to the Malikis, Shafi'is, and Hanbalis, the night prayer is ideally performed in pairs. The witr can be one, three, five, or seven rak'ahs, as long as it is an odd number.

Secondly, the Malikis state that the Sunnah during the day consists of two rak'ahs only. The Shafi'is believe that the Sunnah is best performed as two rak'ahs. The Hanbalis say that the Sunnah at night is two rak'ahs, while during the day it is open. The Hanafis hold that the Sunnah is four rak'ahs, and it is better to pray four rak'ahs at night. Each has its evidence. The matter is up to you, so do not try to compare and say one is better than the other, as each has its proof, God willing. Choose what you believe is the strongest evidence. We ask Allah, the Exalted, to protect us and accept our deeds, and to make us among those who pray at night.

The Ruling on Congregation in Voluntary Prayer

We have a question: What is the ruling on congregation in night prayer? This question applies not only to night prayer but to voluntary prayers in general.

You have what is called a communal obligation, meaning it is obligatory for some people to perform it, and for those who exceed that, it is a Sunnah for them. An example is the funeral prayer, which is a communal obligation. Then there are specific voluntary prayers mentioned in the Sunnah that are prayed in congregation, like the eclipse prayer; it is reported that it was prayed in congregation at its time, and it is a voluntary prayer, not obligatory. You also have the Duha prayer, which is voluntary, but it is not reported that it was prayed in congregation during the time of the Prophet. However, the Taraweeh prayer was not prayed in congregation during the time of the Prophet or during the time of Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq, may Allah be pleased with him, but it was prayed in congregation in the mosque afterward.

Thus, in this regard, there is flexibility; some voluntary prayers were prayed in secret, some publicly, some were reported to be in congregation, and some were not.

Generally, instead of answering each case individually, there is a rule: the default for all voluntary prayers, outside of what was reported about the Prophet praying them in congregation, is that it is better to pray them individually. This is the best option. But is someone who prays in congregation sinful or mistaken? The answer is generally: no, there is room for people. Some people attend night prayers in the mosque at night, and most do so because they do not know much of the Quran, or because if they go home, they become lazy about praying.

The Importance of Night Prayer Despite Weakness

They will not perform their prayers at night if they return home, as they lack that certainty and ability, but they want to do it and want to push themselves not to abandon it, so they put themselves in this situation, which is acceptable. This is something that has been generally observed among the Muslim community. So we will leave the matter at that.

Supplication for Steadfastness in Worship and Success

We ask Allah, the Exalted, to make us among those who pray and worship Allah in any condition, God willing, and to grant us His success, the success by which we can one day follow the footsteps of the Messenger Muhammad ﷺ as much as we can. We ask Allah to bless this gathering.

Closing Dua

O Allah, make us among those who listen to speech and follow the best of it, and make us among those who depart from this gathering in a protected manner. Do not make among us, or with us, anyone who is wretched or deprived. O Allah, guide us and guide through us, and make us a means for those who are guided. And send blessings and peace upon the Messenger of Allah, ﷺ.

Reminder to Transition to Dinner

Please proceed to the lower floor for dinner, and we still have about half an hour left. Quickly, please.

وأمر أهلك بالصلاة واصطبر عليها﴾ (مريم: 55) — كما ورد في الأثر عن عمر بن الخطاب﵁

ربنا لا تزغ قلوبنا بعد إذ هديتنا﴾ (آل عمران: 8)﴿ يا أيها الذين آمنوا قوا أنفسكم وأهليكم نارًا﴾ (التحريم: 6) — أشار إليها المحاضر﵁

﴿ما تيسر من القرآن﴾ (المزمل: 20) — وذكر الآية كاملة: ﴿علم أن لن تحصوه فتاب عليكم فاقرءوا ما تيسر من القرآن﴾

حديث ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما: «صلاة الليل مثنى مثنى، فإذا خشي أحدكم الصبح صلى ركعة واحدة توتر له ما قد صلى» — رواه الشيخان (البخاري ومسلم)

حديث عائشة رضي الله عنها: «ما كان رسول الله ﷺ يزيد في رمضان ولا في غيره على إحدى عشرة ركعة» — رواه البخاري ومسلم

حديث أبي أيوب الأنصاري رضي الله عنه: «أربع قبل الظهر لا تسليم فيهن» — رواه أبو داود

حديث أبي داود عن صلاة النبي ﷺ أربع ركعات قبل الظهر

حديث: «اجتهدوا في الدعاء، فإنه قمن أن يستجاب لكم في هذا الوقت» — ذكره المحاضر

حديث فضل طول القيام: «أفضل الأعمال طول القيام» — ذكره المحاضر

#Night prayer

#Standing in prayer at night

#Waking the family for prayer

#Witr prayer

#Maliki jurisprudence

#Shafi'i jurisprudence

#Hanafi jurisprudence

#Hanbali jurisprudence

#Contemplation

#Encouragement for worship

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