

### Introduction

#### Lighting the Lantern of Divine Love

On enumerating the characteristics of the servants of the All-Merciful (*Ibād al-Rahmān*), the Holy Quran says:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا﴾

Those who spend the night for their Lord prostrating and standing. (Q 25:64)

This verse, despite its brevity reveals much for us to learn. Firstly, it speaks of a group of people who have made it a habit and a way of life to spend their nights for their Lord. This can be understood from the aorist verb *yabitūna* (they *always* spend their nights).

Secondly, if we understand their habit in light of the well-known sacred tradition in which Allah informs Prophet Mūsā ? that a true lover is not heedless of God to sleep the entire night, we realize that they are true lovers. The phrase *lirabbihim* also reveals that they actually dedicate their night for their Lord. This endorses their love relationship with God.

Thirdly, their habit of being awake at night for prayer and worship reveals that it is a result of their Divine training (*al-tarbiyah al-ilāhiyyah*). This is because the Divine Name *Rabb* signifies the meaning of training (*al-tarbiyah*). God actually trains them to be eager to stay awake and whisper to Him.

Fourthly, the annexation of *Rabb* to them (*Rabbi-him*) shows that they are obedient servants of God, otherwise such annexation would be improper.

Fifthly, their night is spent in prayer and worship. The phrase "*sujjadan wa qiyāman*" alludes to this reality. Note however that the word *sujjadan* precedes the word *qiyāman*, which perhaps is due to the fact that *sujūd* is the highest expression of servanthood. This is how the servants of the All-Beneficent, who are among the role models mentioned in the Holy Quran, spend their nights.

### Numerous benefits

عَلَيْكُمْ بِقِيَامِ اللَّيْلِ، فَإِنَّهُ دَأْبُ الصَّالِحِينَ قَبْلَكُمْ، وَإِنَّ قِيَامَ اللَّيْلِ قُرْبَةٌ إِلَى اللَّهِ، وَمَنْهَاةٌ عَنِ الْإِثْمِ.

I advise you to offer Night Prayers for it is the custom of the virtuous before you. Rising at night brings closeness to Allah, it is a penalty against evil acts, and it forbids the sins.

#### 5. Firm intention of saying before sleeping

مَا مِنْ عَبْدٍ يُحَدِّثُ نَفْسَهُ بِقِيَامِ سَاعَةٍ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ قِيَامًا عَنْهَا إِلَّا كَانَ نَوْمُهُ صَدَقَةً تَصَدَّقَ اللَّهُ بِهَا عَلَيْهِ وَكُتِبَ لَهُ أَجْرَ مَنْوَى

Whoever tells himself that he will wake up for the Night Prayers but sleeps through the time, his sleep will be charity in the way of Allah and the reward of what he intended will be written for him.

#### 6. Why Prophet Ibrahim ? was befriended by Allah?

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ خَلِيلًا إِلَّا لِإِطْعَامِهِ الطَّعَامَ، وَصَلَاتِهِ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسِ نِيَامًا

Allah did not take (Prophet) Ibrahim as a friend except on account of his (practice) of feeding (others) and for saying prayers at night while people are asleep.

#### 7. Tahajjud should be a joint family effort

إِذَا أَيْقَظَ الرَّجُلُ أَهْلَهُ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ وَتَوَضَّأَ وَصَلَّى كُتِبَ مِنَ الذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ

If a person awakens his wife, and then both of them perform *wudu* and say (the Night) prayers, they are included amongst those who remember Allah abundantly.

رَحِمَ اللَّهُ رَجُلًا قَامَ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَصَلَّى وَأَيْقَظَ امْرَأَتَهُ فَصَلَّتْ، فَإِنْ أَبَتْ نَضَحَ فِي وَجْهِهَا الْمَاءَ، رَحِمَ اللَّهُ امْرَأَةً قَامَتْ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَصَلَّتْ وَأَيْقَظَتْ زَوْجَهَا، فَإِنْ أَبِي نَضَحَتْ فِي وَجْهِهِ الْمَاءَ

## Short method of performing Tahajjud

If someone has only about fifteen (15) minutes left before Fajr time begins, he can still perform all eleven raka'at of Tahajjud Salāt by following the shorter method prescribed below. In the event if you have only about 5 to 7 minutes before Fajr then skip items 1 & 2 below and begin from Item No. 3.

1) Say four prayers of two raka'at each as **Nāfila of Night** like the normal morning prayers. Any sūras can be recited after al-Hamd in these eight (2 x 4) raka'at. If you fear that you may not be able to say all eight raka'at before Fajr then limit the recitation to al-Hamd in some or all eight raka'at.

2) Say ten times: *Yā Allah*, (O Allah) after the completion of the fourth prayer.

3) Now say two raka'at of **Shaf'a Prayer**. After al-Hamd you may recite al-Ikhlās in both the raka'at. It is recommended to recite al-Nās in the first rak'ah and al-Falaq in the second rak'ah.

### Sūratun Nās with translation

In the Name of God, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful.	بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
1. Say, 'I seek the protection of the Lord of humans	قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ
2. Sovereign of humans	مَلِكِ النَّاسِ
3. God of humans	إِلَهِ النَّاسِ
4. from the evil of the sneaky tempter	مِن شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ
5. who puts temptations into the chests of humans	الَّذِي يُوسِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ
6. From among the jinn and humans.'	مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ

## 7. Honor for a believer

The Holy Prophet ] said: The most honorable of my nation are the carriers of (i.e. those who study and follow) the Quran and the people of the night.

Today almost every house of a Shi'i Muslim contains the book *Mafatihul Jinān* compiled by Shaykh 'Abbās Qummī. He is popularly known as Muhaddith al-Qummī on account of his contribution in the field of Hadith. Amongst his many qualities is that he never missed Tahajjud salāt. His son, Mirza 'Ali Muhaddith Zadeh narrates, "As far as I can recall, my father never missed his night prayers (Salātul Layl) - even during journeys."

The following story is from the life of a great Quranic exegete Marhūm 'Allāmah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabātabā'i (quddisa sirruh): 'One day I was standing in the madrasah when suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder and heard this sentence: "O son! If you want this world then pray the Night Prayer (*Salātul Layl*), and if you want the Hereafter then pray the Night Prayer.' It was due to these words which had such a profound effect on me, that from that day onwards until I moved to Iran five years later, I spent day and night in his presence. Not for a moment did I withhold from being in his blessed presence, and we kept in touch at all times until the end of his life. Throughout this time he used to give me prescribed instructions (*daštūrāt*). He was none other than the late Āyatullah Hajj Sayyid Mirza Ali Agha Qādhi Tabrizī.

## FAQ on Tahajjud Salāt

**Q.1** How do I perform the *niyyah* of various prayers of the Tahajjud?

**A.1** The first 4 prayers of 2 raka'at each are said with the intention of Nāfila of Night, the fifth 2 raka'at prayer is said with the intention