



The Superiority Of The Night (Tahajjud) Prayer And Its Effect In Increasing Eemaan¹

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If the Muslim was to reflect upon Surah Muzammil, he would find it contains a great admonition. Allaah the Exalted commands the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) to perform the night prayer and this was during a time which was difficult, when he was most in need of help and assistance. There came in the form of the words of Allaah: **“O you wrapped up in garments! Stand up for prayer at night but not all of the night”**³ a means of developing and nurturing the soul, a refinement of the senses, a consolidation of his (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) heart, and making it firm.

The night prayer used to be obligatory upon the Messenger (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) and also upon his Companions (radiallaahu anhu) as occurs in Saheeh Muslim, in a long hadeeth which is reported by Zaraarah (radiallaahu anhu): ...so she (Aa'ishah) said: Do you not recite⁴: **‘O you wrapped up in garments’?** I said: Of course. She said: Indeed Allaah Azzawajall made the night prayer obligatory in the first part of this surah, so the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) and his companions stood to pray. Allaah then withheld the final portion of the surah for twelve months in the heaven until he finally lessened the burden by revealing it. After this the night prayer become voluntary rather than obligatory.

Therefore, it is essential that the night prayer is given secrecy as it is a means of preparation. It establishes the hearts upon the truth and adds strength to their strength. It is a password to success and makes one distant from sins. It increases ones Eemaan, makes one enter into the ranks of the Saaliheen (the righteous) and makes one reach the level of the Muhsineen (those who do good). A man worships Allaah as if he is seeing Him and although he does not see Him, Allaah certainly sees him.

Abu Hurairah (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: “Shaytaan ties three knots⁵ at the crown of the head of one of you when he

¹ All of the hadeeth in this section have been taken from the book [Saheeh ut-Targheeb wat-Tarheeb], Chapter: Exhortation for the Performance of Night Prayer.

² From the Book, “As-Salaat wa Atharuhaa Fi Ziyaaadat ul-Imaam...” (trans. Abu 'Iyaad as-Salafi, 1995).

³ Surah Muzammil 73:1-2.

⁴ She was addressing Sa'd bin Hishaam as is explained in Saheeh Muslim.

⁵ Shaikh al-Albaanee - may Allaah protect him - said in [Saheeh ut-Targheeb]: “I say: There are a number of sayings regarding ‘(the tying of) knots’. The nearest (to the truth) is that it is a reality in the sense that it is magic which is played upon a person, to prevent him from praying at night. How often does a sorcerer tie knots to effect his sorcery? The Master - Exalted be His remembrance - has informed us about that in His Book: **And from the evil of those who blow upon knots.** [Surah Falaq 113]. So the one who is deserted (unprotected), it is worked upon him and the one who is protected, it is turned away from him. What has been reported by Ibn Maajah from Abu Hurairah is amongst those things which provide evidence that it is a reality.

is sleeping. He says upon every knot: There is a long night ahead of you so rest. If he wakes up and remembers Allaah one of the knots is untied. If he performs wudhoo a second knot is untied and if he then performs prayer all three knots are untied. If he wakes up he will be fresh and his soul will feel good. If not he will wake up ethargic and his soul will feel unclean.”⁶

In another narration⁷ there occurs: “... so he will arise feeling fresh, his soul feeling good and he will have acquired good for himself. If not, then he will arise lazy, his soul feeling unclean and will not have acquired any good.”

Jaabir (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: “There is no male or female except that there is a rope tied around his head when he sleeps by night. If he wakes up, remembers Allaah one knot is untied, if he performs wudhoo and prays all the knots are untied and therefore, he will wake up light, feeling good in his soul and having acquired good for himself.”⁸

Abu Hurairah (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: The most excellent fasting after the month of Ramadan is fasting during the month of Allaah, Muharram, and the most excellent prayer after the obligatory prayers is the night prayer.”⁹

Abdullaah bin Amr (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: “In Paradise there is a home whose outside can be seen from the inside and whose inside can be seen from the outside.” Abu Maalik al-Ash’aree said: Who is this for O Messenger of Allaah? He said: “It is for the one who makes his speech good and decent, who feeds others and spends the night in standing whilst others are sleeping.”¹⁰

Mugheerah ibn Shu’bah (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) stood until his feet became swollen. It was said to him: Has not Allaah forgiven all your sins, those past and those in the future? He (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) replied: “Should I not be a grateful servant?”¹¹

Abdullaah bin Amr ibn al-Aas (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam): “The prayer most loved by Allaah is the prayer of Daawood (alaihis salaam) and the fast most loved by Allaah is the fast of Daawood (as). He used to sleep for half the night, pray during a third of it and then sleep for a sixth of it; and he used to fast on alternate days.”¹²

The Messenger (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: “Upon the crown of the head of one of you is rope which has three knots tied in it...” to the end of the hadeeth.

⁶ Reported by Bukhaaree, Muslim and others.

⁷ From Ibn Maajah.

⁸ Reported by Ibn Khuzaimah in his [Saheeh].

⁹ Reported by Muslim, Abu Daawood, at-Tirmidhee, an-Nasaabee and Ibn Khuzaimah in his [Saheeh].

¹⁰ Reported by at-Tabaraanee in [al-Kabeer] with aHasan isnaad and also by al-Haakim who said: It is Saheeh with the conditions (of Bukhaaree and Muslim).

¹¹ Reported by Bukhaaree, Muslim and others.

¹² Reported by Bukhaaree, Muslim and others.

Jaabir (radiallaahu anhu) said: I heard the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) say: "Indeed, there is an hour during the night, no muslim asks Allaah for any good from among the affairs of the world or the Hereafter during it except that Allaah gives the very same to him, and this is every night."¹³

Abu Amaamah al-Baahilee (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "Upon you is the night prayer as it was the habit of those righteous people before you, is a means of nearness to your Lord, an expiation for sins and a prevention for sins."¹⁴

Abu Hurairah (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "May Allaah show mercy to a man who got up during the night and prayed and then woke his wife and if she refused, sprinkled water over her face and may Allaah show mercy to a woman who got up during the night and prayed and then woke up her husband and if he refused sprinkled water over his face."¹⁵

Abu Hurairah (radiallaahu anhu) and Abu Sa'eed (radiallaahu anhu) both report that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "When a man wakes up his wife during the night and they both pray, or they pray two rakahs together, they are written amongst the men who remember Allaah often and the women who remember Allaah often."¹⁶

Abu Dardaa (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "There are three persons whom Allaah loves, laughs at¹⁷ and is delighted by them: The one who when a small group from an army becomes exposed, fights behind it (to protect it) by himself purely for Allah Azzawajall. Either he is killed or Allaah helps Him and is sufficient for Him. Allaah says: "Look at this servant of mine how he has shown patience to Me by himself." And the one who has a beautiful wife and the bed is good and soft but (instead) stands and prays during the night. Allaah says: "He has left his desire and has remembered Me and if he had willed he could have laid down (with his wife)." And the one who is journeying with an escort and when they stay awake during the night and then sleep peacefully, stands (on guard) during early morning (before daybreak) in both adversity and prosperity."¹⁸

Abdullaah ibn Mas'ood (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "Our Lord is amazed by two men: A man who awakes from his sleep and leaps up from his bedsheet, from his wife and from his love for her towards his prayer, so Allaah Jalla wa Alaa says: "O My angels, look at this servant of Mine. He got up and leapt from his sleep and bedsheet and from his wife and love of her, aspiring for what is with Me and fearing what is with Me." And a man who goes on an expedition in the path of Allaah and

¹³ Reported by Muslim

¹⁴ Reported by Ahmad in his [Musnad], at-Tirmidhee and others.

¹⁵ Reported by Abu Daawood, an-Nasaa'ee, Ibn Khuzaimah and Ibn Hibbaan.

¹⁶ Reported by an-Nasaa'ee, Ibn Maajah and others.

¹⁷ In a manner which suits His Majesty, without asking how or likening it to that of the creation. It is the same for his (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) speech: "Our Lord is amazed..." which appears in the next hadeeth.

¹⁸ Reported by at-Tabaraanee in [al-Kabeer] with aHasan isnaad.

whose companions have been defeated. He knows that he too will be defeated and that he must return (from flight), so he returns (and fights) until his blood is spilt. Allaah says to the angels: "Look at this servant of Mine, he returned (to fight), aspiring for what is with Me and fearing what is with Me until his blood was spilt."¹⁹

And in the narration which stops at Ibn Mas'ood (and is not traced back to the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam)): "Indeed Allaah laughs at two men: A man who stands during the cold night, away from his bed, his bedsheets and his blanket. He performs wudhoo then stands for prayer. So Allaah Azzawajall says to His angels: "What has this servant of Mine carried along with this action of his?" The angels say: "Our Lord, hope for what is with You and fear for what is with You." Then Allaah says: "I have given him what he hoped for and I have secured him from what he fears..."²⁰

Uqbah bin Aamir (radiallaahu anhu) said: I heard the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) say: "A man from my Ummah gets up during the night and troubles himself to perform wudhoo' while there are knots tied upon him. When he washes his hands a knot is undone, when he washes his face, a knot is undone, when he wipes his head, a knot is undone and when he washes his feet another knot is undone. So Allaah Azzawajall says to those who are behind the screen (i.e. the angels): "Look at this servant of Mine, who troubles himself and who asks Me. Whatever this servant of Mine asks from Me is his."²¹

Abdullaah bin Amr (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "There is no jealousy except towards two: A man to whom Allaah has given the Qur'aan, so he stands (in prayer) with it during the night and during the day and a man to whom Allaah has given wealth so he spends it during the night and during the day."²²

Fadaalah bin Ubaid (radiallaahu anhu) and Tameem ad-Daaree (radiallaahu anhu) both report that the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "Whoever recites ten verses during the night (i.e. in prayer) a Qintar²³ of reward is written for him, and a Qintar is better than the world and whatever is in it. When it is the Day of Judgement your Lord Azzawajall will say: "Recite and rise one degree by every verse", until he gets to the last verse that he knows. Then Allaah Azzawajall will say to the servant: "Take possession (i.e. of the reward)", and the servant's hand will say: "Oh my Lord! You know best", Allaah will then say: "With this is (your) eternity and with this is (your) bliss."²⁴

Abdullaah bin Amr ibn al-Aas (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: Whoever performs prayer (at night) with ten verses will not be written amongst the heedless and whoever prays with a hundred verses will be

¹⁹ Reported by Abu Ya'laa, Ahmad and others.

²⁰ See [Saheeh ut-Targheeb], no. 626.

²¹ Reported by Ahmad and Ibn Hibbaan in his [Saheeh] and the wording is that of Ibn Hibbaan.

²² Reported by Muslim and others.

²³ A Qintar is a varying measurement of weight.

²⁴ Reported by at-Tabaraanee in [al-Kabeer] and [al-Awsat] with aHasan isnaad.

written amongst those who stand devoutly in prayer (to Allaah) and whoever prays with a thousand verses will be written amongst the Muqantareen.”²⁵

Abu Hurairah (radiallaahu anhu) said: The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: “Whoever performs prayer at night with a hundred verses will not be written amongst the heedless and whoever performs prayer at night with two hundred verses will be written amongst the devout worshippers and sincere ones.”²⁶

The Benefits That Can Be Derived From The Abovementioned Hadeeth

1. That the prayer participates in undoing the knots which Shaytaan places at the top of ones head.
2. That the night prayer is the most excellent prayer after the obligatory prayers.
3. That the one who prays at night obtains a reward which most of mankind do not.
4. Gratitude is shown to Allaah with the (obligatory) prayer and night prayer.
5. That the prayer most loved by Allaah is the prayer of Daawood (alaihis salaam) which is to pray for a third of the night and to sleep for two thirds of the night.²⁷
6. That has Allaah has bestowed a favour upon His servant by the hour during the night in which the supplication is answered. It is befitting for the muslim that he aspires for it and seeks to find it so that he is given the good of this world and the Hereafter.
7. That the night prayer is an evidence for righteousness and taqwaa and it expiates the sins and prevents one from falling into them.
8. That Allaah Azzawajall covers the husband and wife who help each other in performing the night prayer with His mercy. If one of them refuses the other sprinkles water on his or her face.
9. That two rakahs of prayer at night makes a person amongst the men who remember Allaah often or the women who remember Allaah often.
10. That Allaah is amazed by the man who gets up from his sleep, leaving his bedsheet, his wife and his love for her in order to perform prayer. Allaah laughs at him and informs the angels about him.
11. That there is no jealousy or competition except with regard to two men, one of whom prays at night reciting the Qur’an which Allaah has bestowed upon him.
12. That whoever recited ten verses in the night (in prayer) will not be written amongst the heedless, a Qintaar of reward will be written for him and Allaah the Exalted will say to him: “Recite and rise by one degree with every verse”, until he comes to the last verse he knows. Allaah favours him by giving him eternity.
13. That whoever prays at night with a hundred verses is written amongst the devout worshippers and whoever prays with a thousand verses is written amongst the Muqantareen and whoever prays with two-hundred verses is written amongst the devout worshippers and sincere ones.

²⁵ Reported by Abu Daawood and Ibn Khuzaimah in his [Saheeh]. The meaning of ‘Muqantareen’ is ‘those for whom a Qintaar (a measurement of weight) of reward is written’.

²⁶ From a narration of Ibn Khuzaimah. Al-Haakim said: “It is Saheeh with the conditions of Muslim”.

²⁷ Due to his (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) saying: “...He used to sleep half the night, then prayer for a third and then go to sleep for a sixth of it.” When a half is added to a sixth they give two-thirds.