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Daily Devotional Acts

Daily Prayers, Supererogatory Prayers and Details

According to the code of Islamic law, the performance of the daily ritual prayer is obligatory five times a day amounting to seventeen units of prayer (i.e. *rak'ah*); two at dawn (before sunrise), four just after midday, four in the afternoon, three at dusk (immediately after sunset), and four in the earlier hours of night. This is an object of agreement among all Muslims. On journeys, the four-unit prayers become two units; however, jurists of the various Muslim sects disagree regarding some details and certain conditions.

Along with its particularities, the ritual prayer is one of the most significant pillars on which Islam has been founded. It also represents the best example of the unity of the Muslim nation, since all agree upon it.

It is also the best of all devotional acts after the recognition of Almighty Allah, as is maintained by some traditions because it expresses the relationship and connection between man and the Almighty—a relationship that must be constant and never cut off. For this reason, prayer must not lapse under any circumstance; rather, it must be performed in all states, including health and sickness, security and fear and, when no other means is possible it must even be performed through gestures.¹

One of the highly recommended acts is to offer a number of units of prayer before and after these ritual obligatory prayers. Such supererogatory prayers are *nawafil* (sing. *naflah*) or *rawatib*.

In the traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), the number of the units of these daily supererogatory prayers is twice the number of units of obligatory prayers. They are thirty-four units in all; four units before dawn, eight before afternoon, eight before evening, four after sunset, two in the sitting position after the early night prayer (regarded as one unit only), eight for the night prayer, whose time is between midnight and dawn, two after the night prayer (called *al-Shaf'*), and one after that (called *al-Witr*).²

Shaykh al-Kulayni has reported through an authentic chain of authority that Hannan that ‘Amr ibn Hurayth asked Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) to inform him about the prayers the Holy Prophet (S) used to offer.

The Imam (‘a) thus answered:

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ يُصَلِّي ثَمَانِي رَكَعَاتِ الزَّوَالِ وَأَرْبَعًا الْأُولَى، وَثَمَانِيًا بَعْدَهَا، وَأَرْبَعًا الْعَصْرَ، وَثَلَاثًا الْمَغْرِبَ، وَأَرْبَعًا بَعْدَ الْمَغْرِبِ، وَالْعِشَاءَ الْآخِرَةَ أَرْبَعًا، وَثَمَانِي صَلَاةَ اللَّيْلِ، وَثَلَاثًا الْوَتْرَ، وَرَكَعَتِي الْفَجْرِ وَصَلَاةَ الْغَدَاةِ رَكَعَتَيْنِ.

*The Holy Prophet (S) offered eight units before the four units of the obligatory afternoon prayer. He offered four units of the obligatory afternoon prayer; then three units of the obligatory sunset prayer with four units after that; four units of the obligatory early night prayer; eight units of the night prayer with three units of the Witr prayer; two units of the obligatory dawn prayer with two units after that.*³

Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have said:

شَبِعْتُنَا أَهْلُ الْوَرَعِ وَأَهْلُ الْوَفَاءِ وَالْأَمَانَةِ وَأَهْلُ الزُّهْدِ وَالْعِبَادَةِ، أَصْحَابُ إِحْدَى وَخَمْسِينَ رَكَعَةً فِي الْيَوْمِ وَاللَّيْلَةِ، الْقَائِمُونَ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالصَّائِمُونَ بِالنَّهَارِ، يُزَكُّونَ أَمْوَالَهُمْ، وَيَحْجُونَ الْبَيْتَ وَيَجْتَنِبُونَ كُلَّ مُحَرَّمٍ.

*Our Shi’ah are the people of piety, faithfulness, and honesty. They are the people of asceticism and worship. They perform fifty-one units of prayer in a single day and night. They pass their nights in devotional acts and their days fasting. They purify their wealth, go on pilgrimage to the House of God, and refrain from committing any forbidden act.*⁴

In the book entitled *Misbah al-Mutahajjid*, Shaykh al-Tusi reports Imam al-Askari (‘a) as saying:

عَلَامَاتُ الْمُؤْمِنِ خَمْسٌ: صَلَاةُ الْخَمْسِينَ، وَزِيَارَةُ الْأَرْبَعِينَ، وَالتَّخْتُمُ فِي الْيَمِينِ، وَتَعْفِيرُ الْجَبِينِ، وَالْجَهْرُ بِبِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ.

The signs of true faithful believers are five: Offering the fifty prayers, visitation (of holy shrines) on the Day of Arba’in, wearing a ring on the right hand, pressing the forehead, and raising the voice with bismillah-rahmanir-rahim.^{5,6}

More Privileges

The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) School has had a number of advantages over the other Muslim sects with regard to prayer and its details. These advantages may be cited as follows:

First: Unlike the other Muslim jurisprudential schools, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) School abides by reciting

Surah al-Fatihah and one other entire *Surah* in the first two units of all prayers.[7](#)

The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) School also recites the *basmalah* (*bismi-llahir-rahmanir-rahim*) in *Surah al-Fatihah* and in all other *Surahs*, because it is an inseparable part of all *Surahs* of the Holy Qur'an as believed by all Shi'ite jurists, and maintained by many traditions and historical practice. Besides, the fact that all calligraphies of the Holy Qur'an, which Muslims have honestly transmitted since the time of the Holy Prophet (S) and up to the present day, entail that the *basmalah* is an inseparable part of the *Surahs*.

Second: According to the jurisprudence of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) School, the *basmalah* should be recited audibly even in the prayers where the recitations of the Qur'anic texts must be uttered inaudibly, such as the obligatory afternoon and evening prayers. This matter was turned into a political issue during the reign of Mu'awiyah when the true righteous Muslims were distinguished from the pro-Umayyad groups through this in particular, especially after Mu'awiyah decided to cancel out reciting the *basmalah* audibly in the prayers—an event to which some historical texts have referred.

Third: The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) School abides by the ruling that prostration must be done on earth directly or on whatever plants the earth produces except plants that are edible and plants used to make cloth. In this ruling, jurists of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) School depend upon traditions reported from the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and Imam al-Sadiq's verdict that reads:

لَا يَجُوزُ السُّجُودُ إِلَّا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ أَوْ مَا أَنْبَتَتْهُ إِلَّا مَا أَكَلُ أَوْ لُبِسَ

Prostration is impermissible unless made on earth or on plants produced by the earth, except those eaten or converted into cloth.[8](#)

Likewise, Shi'ite scholars are reported to have forbidden prostration on cotton and linen, because Imam al-Baqir ('a) is reported as saying:

لَا يُسْجَدُ عَلَى الثُّوبِ الْكَرْسَفِ وَلَا عَلَى الصُّوفِ وَلَا عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِنَ الْحَيَوَانِ وَلَا عَلَى حُطَامٍ وَلَا عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِنَ الثَّمَارِ وَلَا عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِنَ الرِّيشِ

It is not permissible to prostrate on cotton cloth, nor on wool, nor on a part of an animal, or any food, or any part of fruits, or any part of furniture.[9](#)

This ruling is supported by the following Prophetic tradition that is reported by al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah, al-Darimi, and Ahmad ibn Hanbal:

جُعِلَتْ لِي الْأَرْضُ مَسْجِداً وَطَهُوراً

The earth has been made for me a prostration place and pure.

Likewise, al-Bukhari, Muslim, and al-Nasa'i have reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

الْأَرْضُ لَكَ مَسْجِدٌ.

The earth is a place of prostration for you. [10](#)

Sunni master Hadithists have also reported the Holy Prophet (S) as saying:

لَا تَتِمُّ صَلَاةٌ أَحَدِكُمْ حَتَّى يَتَوَضَّأَ كَمَا أَمَرَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى ثُمَّ يَسْجُدُ مُمَكِّنًا جَبْهَتَهُ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ.

The prayer of any of you is imperfect unless you perform the ritual ablution (wudhu') exactly as Almighty Allah has ordered and then prostrate yourselves on the earth by making your foreheads touch the earth. [11](#)

These Hadithists also report Khabbab to have said that they (i.e. the Muslims) complained to the Holy Prophet (S) about the heat of the earth that scorched their foreheads and noses when they prostrated in prayers on the earth directly, but he refused to accommodate their complaints. [12](#)

In spite of the existence of so many traditions, all Sunni jurisprudents have disobeyed this ruling and deemed it permissible to prostrate on all things.

In view of these points, the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) comply with this ruling and sometimes carry with them a cake of dry clay or clean stone to prostrate on when they cannot find ground on which they can prostrate in prayer.

Attempting to confuse the Shi'ah and arouse spurious arguments and false accusations against them, the enemies of the Shi'ah have falsely claimed that the Shi'ah worship these stones although they are in fact prostrating ON these materials, not TO them. We seek Allah's protection against such false accusations. [13](#)

Fourth: Adherents of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) School recite the phrase *hayya 'ala khayr al-'amal* (Come to the best deed) twice in the *adhan* (the ritual call to prayer) and *iqamah* (the prefatory part of the ritual prayers) after the phrase *hayya 'ala al-falah* (Come to prosperity). The Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) confirmed it to be an inseparable part of the ritual *adhan* and *iqamah*.

Unlike the other schools of jurisprudence, the Zaydiyyah, [14](#) in addition to the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) School, abide by this ruling which has become one of the distinctive features of the Shi'ah.

As for the third *shahadah* (creed) [15](#) that the Shi'ah include in the *adhan* and *iqamah*, all jurisprudents of

the virtuous community unanimously agree that this phrase is not part of the ritual *adhan* and *iqamah*. It is, therefore, incorrect to say it with the intention of its being part of the *adhan*, as it would then become a forbidden innovation.

However, the followers of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) say it in the middle of the ritual *adhan* and *iqamah* making it one of the distinctive features and mottos that distinguish them from the other Muslims. There are two main reasons for this action:

1. This statement by the Shi'ah only intends to expressly declare their loyalty to Imam 'Ali ('a), because he suffered immense injustice and harm. The harshest injustice was practiced by the Umayyads and the Nawasib (the anti-Shi'ah) who adopted the course of cursing him from the pulpits of mosques (i.e. *minbar*: a set of steps in mosques from which sermons are delivered) and in the Friday Prayer sermons (i.e. *khutbah*). Reacting to these wicked attempts to deform the perfect picture of this divine personality, the Shi'ah emphasize their loyalty to Imam 'Ali ('a) whenever they have an opportunity to do so.

2. In various stages of their history, the Shi'ah suffered immense persecution because of false accusations and charges. One of these accusations was the charge of exaggeration about Imam 'Ali ('a) and his descendants. As a result, they raise this motto with the aim of confirming that their belief in Imam 'Ali ('a) is no more than showing loyalty to him, believing in his Imamate, divinely designated leadership, and religious authority, and being the proof of Almighty Allah for His creatures. All this originated from the instruction of the Holy Prophet (S) who declared on the day at Khumm Spring (i.e. Ghadir):

مَنْ كُنْتُ مَوْلَاهُ فَهَذَا عَلِيٌّ مَوْلَاهُ. اللَّهُمَّ وَالِ مَنْ وَالِ الْآهَ وَعَادِ مَنْ عَادَاهُ.

Behold! 'Ali is now the master of every one who has regarded me as his master. O Allah, (please) support whoever supports 'Ali and be the enemy of whoever incurs the hostility of 'Ali... 16

The Shi'ah thus hold that Imam 'Ali ('a) is a servant of Almighty Allah and one of His most intimate saints, no more.

Fifth: The Ahl al-Bayt ('a) School permits the combining of the midday with the afternoon obligatory prayers at one time and the sunset with the early night prayers at one time, without need of a particular excuse for such combining. In this ruling, this school depends upon traditions that have been reported from the Holy Prophet (S) and the Holy Imams ('a).

In the most reliable Sunni books of Hadith which Sunnis consider thoroughly authentic, it is reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas that the Holy Prophet (S) performed the eight units of the midday and afternoon obligatory prayers together; and seven units of the sunset and early night obligatory prayers without separating (in time) one prayer from the other. This tradition has been reported by the five Sunni master Hadithists,¹⁷ one of whom is Muslim (al-Nayshaburi) who reported the tradition in the following form:

The Messenger of Allah combined the midday with the afternoon (obligatory) prayers and the sunset with the early night prayers in Madinah although there was neither fear nor rain.

When Ibn ‘Abbas was asked about the reason, he answered, “The Prophet did not want the matter (of prayer) to be a burden upon his people.”¹⁸

In *Ilal al-Ahkam*, Shaykh al-Saduq has reported, through a valid chain of authority, that Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) said, “The Messenger of Allah (‘a) performed the midday and the afternoon prayers together, although there was no reason or cause for that. When ‘Umar, who challenged him the most, asked whether a change had occurred in the rulings of prayer, the Holy Prophet (S) answered, ‘No, I only want to make the matter more feasible for my people.’”¹⁹

Individuals of the virtuous community combine these sets of prayers most of the time as a constant course, although the Holy Prophet (S) and the Holy Imams (‘a) generally used to perform each prayer separately (i.e. each one in its definite time) as is maintained by many other traditions.²⁰

Sixth: The Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) School rubs the feet with the water of *wudhu'* instead of washing them in the ritual ablution (*wudhu'*) for the prayer, unlike other Muslims who usually wash their feet, except in certain states when they rub their sandals with water—a practice that is deemed legal and adopted by some Muslim jurisprudential schools.

In their practice, the Ahl al-Bayt (‘a) and their followers rely upon the holy verse of ablution, which reads:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ (6)

O you who believe, when you rise up to prayer, wash your faces and your hands as far as the elbows, and rub (with water) your heads and your feet to the ankles. (5:6)

Although this holy verse clearly states that the feet, like the head, should be rubbed with water and washing is not mentioned for the feet, Muslim scholars other than the Shi’ah have interpreted this holy verse according to their own logic and joined the ‘feet’ to the ‘faces’ and ‘hands’ based upon some traditions, contradicting the obvious meaning of the holy verse.²¹

Post-Prayer Litanies

The post-prayer litanies are supplications, doxologies, and invocations said after the obligatory prayers. Emphasis on these litanies has been laid by the Holy Prophet (S) and the Holy Imams (‘a) in many traditions. Following the obligatory prayers with supplications, doxologies, and invocations is a well-confirmed tradition by which all Muslims abide.

Once again, the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and the virtuous community are distinguished from others with regard to these post-prayer litanies in the following points:

1. Litanies of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) and their followers are more comprehensive and all-inclusive than others.
2. There are many traditions of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) carrying supplications, doxologies, and litanies said after prayers.
3. In the literature of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), each supererogatory prayer has its own litanies in addition to the general post-prayer litanies said after all obligatory prayers.

The most favored post-prayer litany is the following:

Repeat the following phrase three times:

اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Allah is the Greatest.

Repeat the following invocation three times:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

O Allah, send blessings upon Muhammad and the Household of Muhammad.

Finally, say the following litany:

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ إِلَهًا وَاحِدًا وَتَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَا نَعْبُدُ إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْمُشْرِكُونَ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّ آبَائِنَا آلَا وَوَلِيِّنَا لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ وَحْدَهُ وَحْدَهُ أُنْجَزَ وَعْدُهُ وَتَصَرَّ عَبْدُهُ وَآلَ عَزَّ جُنْدُهُ وَهَزَمَ آلَا حَزَابَ وَحْدَهُ فَلَهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَيُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَهُوَ حَيٌّ لَا يَمُوتُ بِيَدِهِ الْخَيْرُ وَهُوَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

There is no god save Allah; One and Only God; and we are submissive to Him. There is no god save Allah and we worship none save Him, making our devotion sincere in His sight, even though the polytheists may detest it. There is no god save Allah; (He is) Our Lord and the Lord of our fathers of old. There is no god save Allah; alone, alone, alone. He has truly fulfilled His promise, granted His servant victory, made powerful His soldiers, and defeated the parties alone. So, sovereignty be His and praise be His. He grants life and causes to die and, after causing to die, raises from the dead; while He is eternally ever-living and He never dies. All goodness is by His Hand, and He has power over all things.

Another most favored post-prayer litany is the famous invocation known as *Tasbih al-Zahra'*, which consists of one hundred phrases praising Almighty Allah. The most famous and considerable form of it is to say *allahu-akbar(u)* (Allah is the Greatest) thirty-four times, *alhamdu-lillah(i)* (Praise be to Allah) thirty-three times, and *subhanallah(i)* (Glory be to Allah) thirty-three times.[22](#)

Additional post-prayer litanies include reciting *Ayat al-Kursi* (2:255), *Surah al-Falaq* (No. 113), *Surah al-Nas* (No. 113), and *Surah al-Tawhid* (No. 112), the prostration of thanks (*sajda al-shukr*) and many other post-prayer supplications that can be found in books on supplications.[23](#)

Recitation of the Holy Qur'an

Recitation of the Holy Qur'an is one of the daily acts of worship. In this respect, Imam al-Sadiq ('a), through a valid chain of authority, is reported to have said:

الْقُرْآنُ عَهْدُ اللَّهِ إِلَى خَلْقِهِ، فَقَدْ يَنْبَغِي لِلْمَرْءِ الْمُسْلِمِ أَنْ يَنْظُرَ إِلَى عَهْدِهِ وَأَنْ يَفْرَأَ مِنْهُ فِي كُلِّ يَوْمٍ خَمْسِينَ آيَةً.

The Qur'an is Almighty Allah's trust that He has entrusted to His creatures. Therefore, a Muslim individual is required to pay regard to this trust and recite fifty verses of it everyday.[24](#)

According to another validly reported tradition, Imam al-Ridha ('a) has said:

يَنْبَغِي لِلرَّجُلِ إِذَا أَصْبَحَ أَنْ يَفْرَأَ بَعْدَ النَّعْتِيبِ خَمْسِينَ آيَةً.

At the beginning of the day, it is required to recite fifty verses of the Qur'an after post-prayer invocations.[25](#)

According to another tradition, the Holy Prophet (S) said:

مَنْ قَرَأَ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ مِائَةَ آيَةٍ فِي الْمُصْحَفِ بِتَرْتِيلٍ وَخُشُوعٍ وَسُكُونٍ، كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مِنَ الثَّوَابِ بِمِقْدَارِ مَا يَعْمَلُهُ جَمِيعُ أَهْلِ الْأَرْضِ. وَمَنْ قَرَأَ مِائَتِي آيَةٍ كَتَبَ اللَّهُ لَهُ مِنَ الثَّوَابِ مَا يَعْمَلُهُ أَهْلُ السَّمَاءِ وَأَهْلُ الْأَرْضِ.

Whoever recites one hundred verses from a copy of the Qur'an everyday with modulation, reverence, and tranquility, Almighty Allah will record for him a reward that is equal to the reward of the deeds of the inhabitants of the earth. Whoever recites two hundred, Almighty Allah will record for him a reward equal to the reward of the deeds of the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth.[26](#)

From the many traditions regarding the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, we can conclude the following instructions:

1. It is advisable to recite the Holy Qur'an and ponder and contemplate upon it.
2. When Paradise, Hellfire, or the other exhortative topics are recited, the reciter is required to pause a while and think deeply.
3. Recitation of the Holy Qur'an should be done with reverence.
4. The Holy Qur'an must not be recited heedlessly because an impetuous manner has been described by traditions as prattle.
5. It is recommended not to recite more than one part (*juz'*)²⁷ of the Holy Qur'an per day so as not to recite it entirely in less than a month.²⁸

The Best Times of Worship in a Day

According to traditions and instructions of the Holy Imams ('a), the best times of worship during a 24-hour day are the last third of night—'night' begins at sunset and ends at the rise of dawn—and the period between dawn and sunrise. These two times are distinguished for prayers, supplications, litanies, and whispered prayers.

Traditions have drawn attention to the necessity of spending the dawn in acts of worship and warned against sleeping in the period between dawn and sunrise, which should be spent doing supplications, litanies, recitation of the Holy Qur'an, and earning a lawful living.

The two times of sunrise and sunset have also been introduced as the best times of worship in the Holy Qur'an which recommends mentioning Almighty Allah at these two times. It thus reads:

(وَإِذْ كَرَّمْنَا اسْمَ رَبِّكَ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا 25)

Glorify the name of your Lord morning and evening. (76:25)

Many supplicatory prayers and litanies are to be said in the morning and evening. Shaykh al-Qummi, in *Mafatih al-Jinan*, has cited some of these supplications, the most important of which are *Du'a' al-'Asharat* and Imam Zayn al-'Abidin's supplications in the morning and evening.²⁹

Voluntary Prayers and Prayer of Inadvertence

In addition to their encouragements to offer the daily supererogatory prayers, the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a), have encouraged offering more prayers voluntarily,³⁰ especially at night. Among these prayers are the following:

1. A voluntary ten-unit prayer after the obligatory sunset prayer

2. A voluntary twelve–unit prayer everyday
3. A voluntary four–unit prayer after the obligatory afternoon prayer
4. A special voluntary four–unit prayer before or after noon
5. A voluntary two–unit prayer between the obligatory sunset and early night prayer. According to some traditions, this prayer is called the Will Prayer or *Salat al-Ghufaylah* (prayer of inadvertence) familiar to the individuals of the virtuous community. This prayer is offered in a particular way. It consists of two units: in the first unit, after *Surah al-Fatihah*, you recite the following verses of (*Surah al-Anbiya*¹ 21:87–88):

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ
الظَّالِمِينَ (87) فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَجَجْنَاهُ مِنَ الغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (88)

And (mention) Dhu'n-Nun (Jonah), when he went off in anger and deemed that We would not suppress his sustenance. But he cried out in the darkness, "There is no god save You. Be You Glorified! Lo! I have been a wrongdoer." Then we heard his prayer and saved him from the anguish. Thus, we save the believers.

In the second unit, the following verse (6:59) should be recited after *Surah al-Fatihah*:

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ
الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ (59)

And with Him are the keys of the Invisible. None but He knows them. And He knows what is in the land and the sea. Not a leaf falls but He knows it, not a grain amid the darkness of the earth, naught of wet or dry but (it is noted) in a clear record.

After reciting this verse, you should raise both hands for Qunut,³¹ saying:

...اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِمَفَاتِحِ الْغَيْبِ الَّتِي لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ وَأَنْ

O Allah, I beseech You in the name of the Keys of the Invisible (world) that none knows save You; (please) send blessings upon Muhammad and his Household and...

You may then mention your needs.

Then, you should say the following:

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ وَلِيُّ نِعْمَتِي وَالْقَادِرُ عَلَى طَلِبَتِي تَعْلَمُ حَاجَتِي فَاسْئَلْكَ بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ لِمَا قَضَيْتَهَا لِي.

O Allah, You are the source of all graces that I have, You have the power to respond to my request, and You know my needs; I therefore beseech You in the name of Muhammad and his Household, peace be upon him and them, to grant me my needs.

You may then pray to Him for your personal needs, for traditions hold that any one who offers this prayer and supplicates to Almighty Allah will have his requests granted.[32](#)

6. One thousand units of prayer in 24 hours, a whole day. It is worth mentioning that the Holy Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) used to practice this voluntary act persistently.

[1.](#) – The Holy Prophet (S) is reported through valid chains of authority to have said at the final hours of his blessed lifetime: *لَيْسَ مِنِّي مَنْ اسْتَحْفَ بِصَلَاتِهِ وَلَا يَرِدُ عَلَيَّ الْحَوْضَ*. He that belittles his prayer does not belong to me and will not join me at the Divine Pond. Imam al-Sadiq ('a), through a valid chain of authority, is reported to have said at the final hour of his lifetime: *لَا تَنَالُ شَفَاعَتُنَا مَنْ اسْتَحْفَ بِالصَّلَاةِ*. Our intercession shall never reach him who belittles his prayer. Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 3:16, H. 7 & 3.

[2.](#) – This number of units of prayer, which has been proficiently maintained by the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) as they received it from the Holy Prophet (S), is one of the features that distinguish the Ahl al-Bayt ('a) School from the other Muslim schools. The dawn supererogatory prayer and the night prayer are the most preferable of all the supererogatory prayers, since many traditions highlight the merits and rewards obtained from performing these two prayers.

[3.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 3:33, H. 6.

[4.](#) – Shaykh al-Saduq, Sifat al-Shi'ah, pp. 2; 'Allamah al-Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar 68:167, H. 33 as quoted from the previous reference book.

[5.](#) – To explain, this tradition can be quoted as follows:

The signs of a faithful believer are five: (a) Offering fifty-one units of prayer (a day): seventeen units of the obligatory prayers and thirty-four of the supererogatory (nafilah), (b) visiting (Imam al-Husayn's tomb) on Arba'in, the twentieth of Safar; forty days after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn ('a), (c) wearing a ring in the right hand, (d) pressing the forehead (by frequent prostration to Allah), and (5) saying aloud: *bismi'llahi'rrahmani'rrahim* (basmalah: In the Name of Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful). [Translator]

[6.](#) – Al-Hurr al-'Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi'ah 10:373, H. 1. "Offering the fifty" mentioned in this tradition stands for the fifty-one units of prayers that are offered daily. In many traditions, the number fifty replaced the actual number fifty-one either for brevity or because the two-unit prayer that is offered in a sitting posture after the early night obligatory prayer has not been counted in this tradition.

[7.](#) – This law is almost unanimously agreed upon by the Shi'ite jurists although there are a few scholars that have cited that it is not obligatory to recite a lengthy Surah completely.

[8.](#) – Shaykh al-Saduq, 'Ilal al-Shara'i' 2:341, S. 42, H. 1.

[9.](#) – Shaykh al-Tusi, Kitab al-Khilaf 2:436.

[10.](#) – Mansur 'Ali Nasif, al-Taj al-Jami' lil-Usul 1:230, 234; al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li'alfaz al-Hadith, A. s-j-d 2:424, 428.

[11.](#) – Shaykh al-Tusi, Kitab al-Khilaf 2:434 as quoted from Sunan Abi-Dawud 1:227, H. 858.

[12.](#) – Shaykh al-Tusi, Kitab al-Khilaf 2:436.

As a footnote, the author has mentioned that this tradition has been reported in Sahih Muslim 1:433, H. 619, Sunan Ibn Majah 1:222, H. 675, Sunan al-Nasa'i 1:247, Musnad Ahmad 5:108–110, and Sunan al-Bayhaqi 2:105.

[13.](#) – It can be seen that the individuals of the virtuous community usually carry with them a piece of clay taken from the soil of Imam Husayn's tomb (in Karbala') on which they prostrate in prayers. In a booklet entitled 'al-Turbah al-Husayniyyah',

the great scholar, Shaykh Muhammad Husayn Kashif al-Ghita', has discussed this issue thoroughly.

The individuals of the virtuous community are advised to prostrate on the stone floor of mosques, especially the Sacred Mosque in Makkah, reed-mats or other materials upon which it is lawful to prostrate. They should not carry cakes of clay to these places in order to avoid spurious charges and oppressive campaigns which the enemies of Islam and ignorant people wage against them. Finally, it is Almighty Allah Who is the patron of success, rightfulness, and victory.

[14.](#) – The Zaydiyyah is a Muslim sect believing in Zayd, the son of Imam `Ali ibn al-Husayn (`a), as the Imam after his father. As a condition of Imamate, they specify that the true Imam is the one who leads an armed uprising against the tyrannical ruler. Their school of jurisprudence is greatly influenced by the Sunni jurisprudence. Presently, they live in northern Yemen although they have a history in some regions of Iran.

[15.](#) – The Shi`ah include in the adhan the phrase, “ashhadu anna `aliyyan waliyyu allah (I bear witness that `Ali is the leader by Allah’s command)” after the phrase, ‘ashhadu anna muhammadan rasulu allah (I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah)’, as the third creed. In this, they rely on many narrations reported from the Holy Prophet (S) and the Holy Imams (S) stating that the phrase, “Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah” is not mentioned or written above the gate of Paradise apart from the phrase, “`Ali is the leader by Allah’s command.” However, this does not indicate that the Shi`ah claim that Imam `Ali (`a) is a prophet, or a god...etc. Allah forbid!

[16.](#) – Shaykh al-Kulayni, al-Kafi 1:292, H. 3.

[17.](#) – Namely, al-Bukhari, Muslim, al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Dawud, and al-Nasa'i.

[18.](#) – Mansur `Ali Nasif, al-Taj al-Jami` lil-Usul 1:148.

[19.](#) – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 3:161, H. 2.

[20.](#) – This issue requires much investigation. Since performing the two prayers at the same time is no more than lenience granted for Muslims in order to make the matter (of performing prayers) easier for them, and the Holy Prophet (S) and the Holy Imams (`a) used to perform each prayer separately in its definite time, why are the Shi`ah then committing themselves to this combining of prayers all the time? Beyond doubt, to perform two prayers at one time is easier, especially when we take into consideration the current social circumstances, the nature of work, and the structure of modern cities and societies. We may now ask whether this commitment of combining prayers is a manifestation of the Holy Imams (`a) desire to ease human life in the future or the result of the social and political circumstances their followers had to encounter throughout the history of Islam that forced them to decrease their performance of prayers to some extent.

There is a validly reported tradition, which suggests that the reason for such combining of prayers is to perform the two prayers at the best time of performance of one of them when there is no supererogatory prayer offered between the two. Yet, if there is a supererogatory prayer to be offered between the two, then to combine the two obligatory prayers becomes void. This tradition thus reads:

Two prayers are combined when there is no supererogatory prayer to be offered between them, but if there is any, then combining is canceled.

Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 3:163, H. 3.

According to this tradition, the jurisprudentially educated individuals of the virtuous community must separate prayers because they have to offer supererogatory prayers between each pair of prayers, especially the sunset and early night prayers.

At any rate, the individuals of the virtuous community are supposed to pay attention to this recommended Prophetic practice and demanding religious manner.

[21.](#) – In his book entitled ‘Masa'il Khilafiyah (Controversial Jurisprudential Issues)’ `Allamah Sharaf al-Din, dealing with certain issues like rubbing the feet with water in prayers, combining two prayers, rulings of the basmalah, has undoubtedly proven that the Ahl al-Bayt (`a) School is following the right path in all these issues.

[22.](#) – This invocation has been mentioned in the traditions of other Muslim sects, although somewhat different, which is to repeat the three phrases thirty-three times each ending with the phrase allahu-akbar. One tradition only has mentioned that the phrase allahu-akbar should be repeated thirty-four times.

[23.](#) – Shaykh `Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 12–22.

In this book, general post-prayer litanies (that may be said after all prayers) and particular ones (that are defined for each prayer) are mentioned.

- [24.](#) – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 4:849, H. 1.
- [25.](#) – Al-Hurr al-`Amili, Wasa'il al-Shi`ah 4:849, H. 3.
- [26.](#) – Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:48, H. 3.
- [27.](#) – The Holy Qur'an is divided into thirty parts (juz') and sixty sub-parts (hizb). [Translator]
- [28.](#) – Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:51, S. 13.
- [29.](#) – Shaykh `Abbas al-Qummi, Mafatih al-Jinan, pp. 22–23. See also Sayyid al-Borujerdi, Jami` Ahadith al-Shi`ah 15:444–457.
- [30.](#) – Some traditions may hint that these voluntary prayers overlap the daily supererogatory prayers. However, Almighty Allah best knows.
- [31.](#) – Qunut is an act of raising the hands for supplication in the second units of prayers.
- [32.](#) – These voluntary prayers have been mentioned by al-Hurr al-`Amili in the fifth volume of his book Wasa'il al-Shi`ah, pages 247, 246, 250, 286, 247, and 249 respectively.

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