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Lesson 9: Night Prayers

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَىٰ

{أَن يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا}

And as for the night, keep vigil a part of it, as a work of supererogation for thee; it may be that thy Lord will raise thee up to a laudable station. (Israa 17:79).

"مَجُود" gives the meaning of sleep and "تهجد" gives the meaning of keeping away from sleep with acts of worship. In the word مَقَامًا there is a hidden meaning (due to the ء vowel) and in narrations, مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا (laudable station) is that very intercession.

Three things were obligatory upon the Prophet and that are recommended to all of us: Night prayers, use of miswak¹, and rising early in the morning.

Night prayers is a prayer full of virtue and in Surahs Muzammil and Mudathir the recommendation was emphasized:

{قُمِ اللَّيْلَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا}

Keep vigil the night, except a little (Al Muzzammil 73:2).

In narrations, more than 30 virtues have been listed for night prayers, some of which are listed below:

- All of the Prophets performed night prayers. Night prayers is the secret of a healthy body and the light of the grave. The night prayers will positively affect ones manners and etiquettes, daily earnings and wealth, keeps away sorrow and grief, tools of religion, the enlightenment of the face and the brightening of the eyes.

- Night prayers suppresses the sins of the day and is the light of the Day of Judgement.
- Imam Sadiq(pbuh) states the reward of Night Prayers is so much so that Allahﷻ says

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةٍ أَعْيُنٍ

{جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ}

No soul knows what comfort is laid up for them secretly, as a recompense for that they were doing. (Sajda 32: 17).

- Imam Sadiq (pbuh) states the honour of a believer is the Night Prayer and his glory is not hurting and persecuting people.
- We read in the narration that unfortunate is the one that is deprived of Night Prayers.
- Abd Dhar, next to the Ka'ba, advised people to perform two rakaat prayers at night to assist against the fear and loneliness of the grave.

The Prophet (pbuh) states that the best of you is one whose words are good and proper, feeds the hungry, and while others are asleep, recites the Night Prayers.

The Prophet (pbuh) three times said to Imam Ali (Pbuh) Upon you is the Night Prayer:

عليك بصلاة الليل

عليك بصلاة الليل

عليك بصلاة الليل.

Imam Sadiq (pbuh) states the ornament and pride of the believer is the recitation of the Night Prayer. Someone said to Imam Ali (pbuh) I have been deprived from the recitation of the Night Prayer, Imam Ali (pbuh) replies

قَيَّدَتْكَ ذُنُوبُكَ

Your sins have tied you up.

Imam Sadiq(pbu) states that the Prophet in his Witr prayer², would seek forgiveness 70 times over.³

Rising Early and Night Vigil

{إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْئًا وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا}

Surely the first part of the night is heavier in tread, more upright in speech (Al Muzzammil 73:6).

Allahﷻ was sworn an oath on all parts of the day: I swear by: The Dawn, The Morning, The Day, The Afternoon, but has done so thrice with regards to Dawn

{وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَسْرِ}

By the night when it journeys on!

{وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا عَسْعَسَ}

By the night swarming

{وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا أَدْبَرَ}

And the night when it retreats

The oath in the above three ayahs is an oath by the night as it ends.

And with regards to seeking forgiveness at dawn and rising early, two Ayahs have been revealed

{وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ}

Imploring God's pardon at the daybreak.

{وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ}

And in the mornings they would ask for forgiveness

Allahﷻ says to Moses (pbu) Oh Moses, a liar is he who imagines he loves Me but while when the night falls, instead of conversing with Me, asleep he falls.

The Prophet states that two rakaat in the heart of the night is more beloved to me than the world and everything that's in it.

- [1.](#) Tooth cleansing twig.
- [2.](#) The final supplication of the Night Prayer.
- [3.](#) تهذيب الاحكام Tahdhib al-Ahkam) V2 P120

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