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56) Night Prayer

There are many verses in the Holy Quran about the recommendable night prayer. One of these verses is addressed to the Holy Prophet as an example of a perfect man and it may include all people. Allah says: ***"O you wrapped up in your raiment! Rise to pray in the night except a little. Half of it or lessen it a little, or add to it, and recite the Quran as it ought to be recited."***[1]

In another verse, God says: ***"And during a part of the night, pray as supererogatory (devotion) beyond what is incumbent on you; maybe your Lord will raise you to a position of great glory."***[2]

Describing the Pious, God says: ***"...and those who ask forgiveness in the early times of dawn."***[3]

Imam Sadiq (AS) has been reported by Mo'awiya ibn Wahab as saying: "As for recommendable night prayer, when the Holy Prophet (SAW) wanted to sleep, he would put a bowl of water near his bed and a toothbrush under his mat. He took a nap, woke up and looked at the sky. Then, he began reciting the following verses:

"Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alteration of the night and the day there are signs for men who understand. Those who remember Allah standing and sitting and lying on their sides, and reflect on the creation of heavens and the earth: Our Lord! Thou hast not created this in vain! Glory be to Thee; save us then from the chastisement of the fire."[4]

Then, he brushed his teeth, performed ablution and headed for the mosque. He offered four rak'as of prayer with perfect humbleness, came back to his house, slept for a short while and woke up to do as before. He looked at the sky, recited the same verses, brushed his teeth, performed ablution and offered four rak'as of prayer, returned to his house and bed, slept again and when waking up, he repeated the same things, and finally he offered three rak'as of prayer (watr prayer). Then, he went out to offer the Dawn Prayer."[5]

In this relation, Imam Sadiq (AS) says: "Surely, in the Messenger of Allah, there was a good example."[6]

Imam Sadiq has said: "The Messenger of Allah (SAW) said to Imam Ali (AS): 'I recommend you of some virtues that you should keep in mind." Then he said: "O Lord! Help him..." From those recommended

things was: “… Keep to the Night Prayer! Keep to the Night Prayer! Keep to the Night Prayer!”[7]

In a tradition narrated by Sahl ibn Sa’d, we read: “Gabriel came down to the Holy Prophet (SAW) and said: ‘O Mohammad! Live as long as you wish, but you shall finally die. Love whomever you wish and act as you wish, for you shall be rewarded for it. Know that man’s honor lies in keeping vigil at night (worshipping), and his honor lies in his being in no need of people.”[8]

The recommendable night prayer has many benefits as follows:

1– Reaching a praiseworthy position

2– Making atonement for sins

3– Reaching high ranks

4– Warding off punishment

The Messenger of Allah (SAW) has been reported by Imam Sadiq (AS) as saying: “When God Almighty sees the people of some village indulged in sins, and there are three groups of believers among them, He will call: O sinners! If among you there were no believers who loved their Lord, and made the earth and mosques prosperous with their prayer and asked forgiveness in the dawns, I would surely send down chastisement upon you and I would not care.”[9]

5– Bringing honor

6– Lessening fear in the grave

7– Bringing happiness

8– Bringing health and removing pain from the body

9– Leaving it shall prevent one’s sustenance

10– Leaving it causes wretchedness

11– Causing a source of Divine pride

12– Enlightening the face and giving good smell to the body

13– Making one’s temper good

14– Removing sorrows

15– Improving one’s sight

16– Making one’s stop on the Day of Judgment short

17- Turning the grave into a garden of paradise

18- Enlightening one's grave

1. Qur'an, 73:1-4.
2. Qur'an, 17:79.
3. Qur'an, 3:17.
4. Qur'an, 3:190-191.
5. Tahtheeb, vol. 1, p. 231.
6. Al-Kafi, vol. 3, p. 445.
7. Wasa'il al-Shiah, vol. 3, p. 67.
8. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p. 138.
9. Ibid., p. 137.

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