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Question 33 : Do the Shi'ah regard witr prayer as obligatory?

Reply: *Witr* prayer is part of the supererogatory night prayers and it is one of the recommended {*mustahabb*} works which the Muslims who follow the Messenger of Allah (S) perform, but the Shi'ah jurists {*fuqaha*} who rely on the Book of Allah and the Prophet's *Sunnah* say that the *witr* prayer is one of the things which are incumbent on no one except the Holy Prophet (S).

In his book, *Tadhkirah al-Fuqaha*, 'Allamah al-Hilli enumerates about 70 salient features of the Prophet (S) and at the beginning of his statement, he thus says:

> فأما الواجبات عليه دون غيره من أمّته أمور أ: السّواك ب: الوتر ج: الأضحيه. روي عنه صلى الله عليه وأله وسلم أنه قال: ثلاث كتب عليّ ولم تكتب عليكم: السواك والوتر والأضحية.

As for the things which are incumbent only upon him (S) and not upon his *ummah*, they are: the use of tooth-stick {*miswak*}, *witr* prayer, and offering sacrifice {*adhiyah*}. He (S) is reported to have said: "Three things were made incumbent upon me but not you: the use of tooth-stick {*miswak*}, *witr* prayer and offering sacrifice."[1]

Consequently, according to the Shi'ah *witr* prayer is obligatory {*wajib*} upon the Holy Prophet (S) and it is recommended {*mustahabb*} upon the other Muslims.

1. 'Allamah al-Hilli, Tadhkirah al-Fuqaha, vol. 2, "Kitab an-Nikah," Introduction 4.

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