

TAHAJJUD PRAYERS

SALAAT AL-LAYL [NAMAZ-E-SHAB]

IMPORTANCE

The *Tahajjud* Prayer (*Salaat al-Layl, Namaz-e-Shab*) ranks first and foremost in importance among all other optional (*Sunnat*) prayers. *Tahajjud* means to abandon sleep so as to pray *Salat*. The Qur'an refers to it in Surah 17:79 and says, "And (during part) of the night, abandon sleep and keep vigil to pray *Salat*, in addition to the regular obligatory prayer. Your Rabb (the Sustainer) may (as a reward) elevate you to the position of High Distinction, Glory and Praise." The Prophet (s.a.w.w.) said, "I will be at "Maqam-e-Mahmuda" on the Day of Resurrection when I will seek forgiveness for the sinners from the Rabb (the Sustainer) who does what He wills." We, as sinners, would also wish to receive intercession and are forgiven so as to be in the company of the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) on that Fearful Day. But, we need by working hard to attain the required spiritual level to qualify, while we are still living.

The verse quoted above which prescribes *Salaat al-Layl* has been placed immediately next to the verse (17:78) which prescribes the regular daily obligatory *Salat*. Therefore, it underscores the great importance of *Salatul-Layl*. Although optional, *Tahajjud* is considered "nearest to obligatory (*Wajib*) prayer."

While advising Imam 'Ali (a.s.), the Prophet repeated three times, "*Alayka Bis-Salatul-Layl*" which means, "incumbent upon you (O! Ali) is *Salat al-Layl*." This *Hadith* underscores further the importance of *Salatul-Layl*. Therefore, we should try never to miss it.

MERITS

By praying *Salat al-Layl* one's livelihood is increased, one passes easily through "*Sakaraat*" (great and grueling pain a dying person suffers at the time of death) and finds happiness in "*Barzakh*" (the Spiritual world where

the departed souls stay either in happiness or misery, until the Day of Resurrection).

Imam Jaffar Sadiq (a.s.) quotes Imam Ali (a.s.) as saying that the Prophet (s.a.w.w.) said that a person who prays *Salat al-Layl* gets the following twenty four kinds of benefits:

1. Secures Allah's pleasure.
2. Makes friendship with Angels.
3. Is the *Sunnat* of the Prophets (a.s.)
4. Provides the means to pursue knowledge.
5. Constitutes the root of our faith.
6. Keeps one physically fit.
7. Drives Shaytan away.
8. Protects one from enemies.
9. Serves as a means of acceptance of one's Duas and good deeds.
10. Increases one's livelihood.
11. Intercedes with the Angel of Death.
12. Lights up the grave.
13. Provides comfortable bedding in the grave.
14. Helps answering with ease the questioning of Munkar and Nakir in the grave.
15. Gives companionship in the grave.
16. Provides shelter on the Day of Judgment.
17. Crowns one on the Day of Reckoning.
18. Clothes one on the Day of Resurrection.
19. Provides one with light on the Day of Judgment.
20. Forms a barrier against the fire of Hell.
21. Gets Allah's pardon on the Day of Judgment.
22. Increases the weight of good deeds on the scale.
23. Helps one crossing the Bridge of "*Siraat*" without any difficulty.
24. Forms the key to the Paradise.

TIME

The time for praying *Salat al-Layl* is from midnight (midnight is reckoned as the time which is exactly half the time between sunset and the actual dawn) to the time of *Adhan* for *Fajr* prayers. However, it can be prayed at any

time after *Isha* prayers but it is better to pray during the last part of the night near to the time of *Fajr* prayers. If it is not possible to pray after midnight or before *Fajr*, then it can be prayed in the morning or any part of the day with the *Niyyah* (intention) of *Qadha*. It is better to pray with the *Niyyah* of *Qadha* during the day time than to pray in the early part of the night.

NOTE: According to Ayatullah Al-Sistani Dama-Dhilluhu, the time for *Salaat al-Layl* is from midnight to the *Adhan* time for *Fajr* prayers. However, it is better to pray near the time of *Fajr* prayers. Anyone who finds it difficult to pray *Salaat al-Layl* after midnight can pray before midnight.

METHOD

***Salaat al-Layl* is made up of eleven *Rak'ats*.**

- ❖ The first eight *Rak'ats* are prayed as normal in pairs of two *Rak'ats* each with the *Niyyah* of *Nawafilatul-Layl*.
- ❖ The next two *Rak'ats* are prayed with the *Niyyah* of *Salat al-Shaf'a*.

NOTE: *Qunoot*, recited, normally, in the second *Rak'at* of every *Salat*, is a *Mustahab* (recommended) act in all *Salat*, *Wajib* (obligatory) as well as *Sunnat* (including *Nafilah*). However, its recitation in *Salat al-Shaf'a* is a matter of *Ishkal*. Nevertheless, it can be recited with the *Niyyah* of *Raja' al-Matlubiyyah*, meaning, to seek Allah's pleasure (*Qurbatan ilal Llah*).

- ❖ The remaining one *Rak'at* is prayed with the *Niyyah* of *Salaat al-Witr*.

In the last one *Rak'at*, *Qunoot* is recited before *Ruku* and the *Salat* is completed as usual with *Tashahhud* and *Salaam*. The last one *Rak'at* is prayed as follows:

Hold *Tasbeeh* in the right hand for keeping count of the *Dhikr* mentioned below to be recited.

Make *Niyyah* and say *Takbiratul Ihram*.
 Recite: *Surah Al-Hamd*;
Surah Qul Huwallahu Ahad - three times;
Surah Qul-Audhubi Rabbil Falaq - once;
Surah Qul-Audhubi Rabbin Naas - once.

NOTE: If one does not know the last two Surahs mentioned above, then it is sufficient to recite *Surah Qul Huwallahu Ahad*, three times.

Say *Takbir* and raise both hands for *Qunoot*.

1. You may recite any *Du'a*. However, it is recommended to recite the following *Du'a*.

*Laa ilaaha illallaahul Halimul
 Karim*

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْحَلِيمُ الْكَرِيمُ

*Laa ilaaha illallaahul 'Aliyyul 'Azim
 Subhaanallaahi Rabbis
 Samaawaatis Sab'*

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ
 سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ

*Wa Rabbil 'Arzinas Sab'
 Wa Maa Fihinna Wa Maa
 Baynahunna*

وَ رَبِّ الْأَرْضِينَ السَّبْعِ
 وَمَا فِيهِنَّ وَمَا بَيْنَهُنَّ

*Wa Rabbul 'Arshil 'Azim
 Wal Hamdul Lillaahi Rabbil
 'Aalamin*

رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ
 وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

2. Then, while holding the *Tasbih* in the right hand, raise the left hand and pray for forgiveness of forty [40] or more *Mu'mineen/Mu'minaat* who are either dead or living in the following manner.

Allaahummagh Firli...
 (Name)

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ ل...

O Allah, forgive ... giving the names of *Mu'mineen/Mu'minaat*.
 (In each case saying, *Allaahummagh Firli*, i.e. *Gulamali Kermalli*)

3. Continuing with the *Qunoot*, while still raising the left hand, recite the following *Istighfar* seventy [70] times:

Astaghfirullah Rabbi wa **أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَ أَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ**

Atuubu Ilayh

I seek forgiveness of Allah my Lord and I turn to Him

4. Still continuing further while raising the left hand, recite the following *Du'a* seven [7] times:

Haadhaa Maqaamul 'Aaidhi Bika **هَذَا مَقَامُ الْعَائِدِ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ**

Minannaar

ر

This is the position of one who seeks refuge in You from the fire [of Hell]

5. Continuing yet further while still raising the left hand, recite three hundred [300] times:

Al-'Afwa **الْعَفْوِ**

(I ask for) forgiveness

Finally, complete the *Salat* in the normal way by going to *Ruku'* followed by *Sajdah*, *Tashahhud* and *Salaam*, ending *Salaat al-Layl*.

As a *Ta'kibaat* after the *Salat*, recite

Tasbih of Janabe Fatemah Zahra (a.s.),

34 times *Allahu Akbar*;

33 times *Al-Hamdu Lillah*;

33 times *Subhanallah*,

Followed by *Sajdah* of *Shukr*.

Next, recite *Ayatul Kursi*.

Finally, for the second time, perform *Sajdah* of *Shukr*.