

# Ṣalāt al-Lail

Taken from Weapon of the Believer

Translated by Saleem Bhimji

www.al-mubin.org / al-mubin@al-mubin.org

In many of the verses of the Qurʾān, the performance of Ṣalāt al-Lail and staying awake a portion of the night after midnight in the worship of Allāh (Glory and Greatness be to Him) has been mentioned, of which, we present some of these verses:

﴿وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ﴾

“...and those who ask forgiveness in the morning times.”

﴿وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ﴾

“Say your special (tahajjud) prayer during some part of the night...”

﴿وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا﴾

“And they who pass the night prostrating themselves before their Lord and standing.”

﴿تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ﴾

“Their sides draw away from (their) beds, they call upon their Lord in fear and in hope, and they spend (benevolently) out of what We have given them.”

﴿كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ﴾

“They used to sleep but little in the night. And in the morning they asked forgiveness.”

The Ṣalāt al-Lail was Wājib upon the Messenger of Allāh<sup>1</sup> and no Prophet had been sent before him except that it was obligatory upon them too.<sup>2</sup>

In the aḥādīth from the Ahl al-Bait (peace be upon all of them), it has been emphatically mentioned that:

1. Ṣalāt al-Lail protects one during the daytime.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bihār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 122

<sup>2</sup> Bihār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 136; Tafsīr Al-Qummi, Pg. 701

<sup>3</sup> Bihār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 154; Maḥāsīn Barqī, Pg. 53

2. Ṣalāt al-Lail is a Kaffārah for the sins committed in the day.<sup>4</sup>

3. That house in which Ṣalāt al-Lail is recited beams with light for those who are in the heavens just as the stars beam with light for those who are on earth.<sup>5</sup>

4. The great and noble people of our nation are those who are protectors of the Qurʾān and who stay awake the night in worship.<sup>6</sup>

5. There are three things which raise a person’s rank and station: (1) Initiating the greeting to a fellow Muslim, (2) feeding people, (3) Ṣalāt in the darkness of the night when all other people are busy sleeping.<sup>7</sup>

6. Ṣalāt al-Lail makes one’s face beautiful; beautifies one’s etiquette; gives a pleasant smell to one’s body and increases one’s daily sustenance. It also removes sorrow and grief and gives strength to the eyes.<sup>8</sup>

7. One who does not read the Ṣalāt al-Lail is not considered as a Shiʿā of the Ahl al-Bait.<sup>9</sup>

8. One who is not able to perform the Ṣalāt al-Lail is truly a very unfortunate person.<sup>10</sup>

9. Committing sins is one of the reasons for one to be unsuccessful in the performance of Ṣalāt al-Lail.<sup>11</sup>

10. The performance of Ṣalāt al-Lail leads to gaining the pleasure of Allāh; love of the Angels; is the Sunnah of the Prophets; leads to the light of true recognition of Allāh; is the foundation of belief; tranquility of the soul; destruction of Shaitān; a weapon against one’s enemies; acceptance of one’s supplications; acceptance of one’s actions; blessings in one’s sustenance; intercession when the Angel of Death comes; brightness in the grave; protects the person while in the grave; ease in the answering of the angels Munkir and Nakir and is the companionship and friendship in the grave.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Bihār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 136

<sup>5</sup> Bihār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 161; Rawḍhatu l-Wāi’dhīn, Pg. 320

<sup>6</sup> Bihār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 138; Amāli Shaikh Ṣadūq, Pg. 141

<sup>7</sup> Bihār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 141; Khiṣāl, Vol. 1, Pg. 42

<sup>8</sup> Bihār Al-Anwār, Vol. 86, Pg. 153; Thawāb Al-A’māl, Pg. 38

<sup>9</sup> Bihār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 162; Maqnaḥ of Shaikh Mufid, Pg. 119

<sup>10</sup> Bihār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 164; Ma’āni Al-Akḥbār, Pg. 342

<sup>11</sup> Bihār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 152; Tawḥīd Shaikh Ṣadūq, Pg. 97

<sup>12</sup> Bihār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 161; Irshād Al-Qulūb, Pg. 316

## Method of Reciting Ṣalāt al-Lail

Ṣalāt al-Lail is 11 Rakāt in which:

1. The first 8 Rakāt are prayed in four Ṣalāt of two Rakāt each with the intention of *Ṣalāt al-Lail*.
2. Following this, two Rakāt would be read with the intention of Ṣalāt ash-Shaf‘.
3. Once this is recited, one Rakāt with the intention of Ṣalāt al-Witr would be recited.

## Qunūt of Ṣalāt al-Witr

The Ṣalāt al-Witr is one Rakāt and is the Ṣalāt and whispered supplication that completes the Ṣalāt al-Lail. As it has been mentioned in the aḥādīth, the Ṣalāt is the Me fāj of the believer, and the Ṣalāt al-Witr is the wave that carries the believer to the higher realms. It has been specifically mentioned in the aḥādīth that, “The more a person stands while in the Ṣalāt al-Witr will have to stand less on the Day of Judgement.”<sup>13</sup>

The main item that carries one during this spiritual journey is the Qunūt of the Ṣalāt al-Witr in which those who are the true servants of Allāh, spend countless hours, engrossed in supplication and tears and asking forgiveness for their sins.

The Prophet of Islām Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullah (blessings of Allāh be upon him and his family) has said: “Whichever of you prolongs the Qunūt in his Ṣalāt al-Witr will have more ease on the Day of Judgement.”<sup>14</sup>

During the Qunūt of the Ṣalāt al-Witr, there are many supplications, which can be recited, and although it is not possible to list all of them here, we will mention the most important forms of seeking forgiveness.

At the time of asking forgiveness, one should lift his left hand for asking forgiveness and use the right hand to count the number of times<sup>15</sup> and if one uses a tasbīḥ made from the dirt of Kerbalā, then the reward of the forgiveness is increased.

<sup>13</sup> Biḥār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 154; Fiḥr ar-Riḍā, Pg. 9

<sup>14</sup> Biḥār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 287; Al-Faqīh, Vol. 1, Pg. 308

<sup>15</sup> Biḥār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 208

The method of asking forgiveness as taught to us by Amīr al-Mo’minīn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (peace be upon him) in the night as is follows:

1. Recite the following 70 times:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

“I seek repentance from Allāh, my Lord and to Him I turn back.”

2. Followed by reciting the following seven times:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ الَّذِي لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ

“I seek repentance from Allāh the One whom there is no god except Him, the Living and Self-Subsisting and to Him I turn back.”<sup>16</sup>

3. One of the most important acts in the Qunūt of the Ṣalāt al-Witr is supplication for forty believers (men or women) amongst one’s family, friends, those who have asked to be prayed for, the deceased and the Shi‘ā of Amīr Al-Mo’minīn ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (peace be upon him). Whosoever does this will be assured that his supplications are answered.<sup>17</sup>

4. One should then say the following three hundred times:

الْعَفْوُ

“I ask for forgiveness.”

5. Following this, the following should be said once:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَأَرْحَمْنِي وَتُبْ عَلَيَّ إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيمُ

“Lord, please forgive me and have mercy upon me and turn back towards me. Verily You are the Oft-Turning back, Most Merciful”<sup>18</sup>

Please do not forget all of the believers throughout the world in your Ṣalāt al-Lail especially those downtrodden and oppressed Muslims of Palestine, Iraq, Kashmir, Chechniya, Bosnia, and all over the globe. May Allāh (Glory and Greatness be to Him) hasten the advent of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imām (may Allāh hasten his return) to fill this world with justice and equality. ☪

<sup>16</sup> Biḥār Al-Anwār, Vol. 87, Pg. 308; Miṣbāḥ of Al-Kaf‘amī, Page 58

<sup>17</sup> Biḥār Al-Anwār, Vol., 87, Pg., 284; Miṣbāḥ Al-Muttahajjid, Pg. 109

<sup>18</sup> Biḥār Al-Anwār, Vol., 87, Pg. 275; Miṣbāḥ Al-Muttahajjid, Pg. 109