

Chapter – 08

Prayers at Midnight

(نماز تہجد)

Quran:

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَىٰ أَنْ يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا

{And forego sleep in some part of the night; an increase for you, it is likely your Lord will set you on a place where everyone will praise you (on the Day of Resurrection). (17:79)}

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُرْتَلِّمُ اللَّيْلِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا - نَصَفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا - أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا

{O the one wrapped in piety! Stand up for worship during the night, except some part of it. For half the night, or reduce some from it. Or increase a little upon it, and recite Quran slowly in stages. (73:01to04)}

Hadith:

Narrated 'Aisha:

Allah's Prophet used to offer eleven Rakat (8 Rakat Tahajjud and 3 Rakat Witr) for the night prayers. He used to prolong the prostration for a considerable time. He used to pray two Rakat (Sunnah) before the Fajr prayer and then used to lie down on his right side till the call-maker came and informed him about the prayer. (Sahih Bukhari: 1055)

Narrated Masruq:

I asked Aisha about the night prayer of Allah's Prophet and she said, "It was seven (4+3), nine (6+3) or eleven (8+3) Rakat besides the two Rakat of the Fajr prayer. (Sahih Bukhari: 1072and1073)

Narrated Abu Hurairah:

Allah's Prophet said, "Our Lord, the Blessed, the Superior, comes every night down on the nearest Heaven to us when the last third of the night remains, saying: "Is there anyone to invoke Me, so that I may respond to invocation? Is there anyone to ask Me, so that I may grant him his request? Is there anyone seeking My forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?" (Sahih Bukhari: 1078)

Narrated 'Aisha:

One night Allah's Prophet offered the prayer (Tahajjud) in the Mosque and the people followed him. The next night he also offered the prayer and too many people gathered. On the third and the fourth nights more people gathered, but Prophet did not come out. In the morning he said, "I saw what you were doing, but the fear that it might be ordered on you, stopped me from coming to you." (Sahih Bukhari: 1061)

Narrated 'Aisha:

Allah's Prophet never exceeded eleven (8+3) Rakat in Ramadan or in other months; he used to offer first four Rakat much longer. (Sahih Bukhari: 1087)

Narrated Abdullah Ibn 'Umar:

Hafsa narrated one of my dreams to the Prophet and the Prophet said, "Abdullah is a good man. Would that he offer the night prayer (Tahajjud)" --- So after that day I slept less and started offering Tahajjud. (Sahih Bukhari: 1088)

Important Aspects of Islamic Doctrine

Obligatory (فرض) and Essential (واجب):

(1) Quran says about Tahajjud prayer as Optional/Voluntary. So it is neither obligatory nor essential. The Verse is as follows:

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ

{And forego sleep in some part of the night, an increase for you (17:79)}

Sunnah (سنة):

(1) The Tahajjud prayer is optional for the Noble Prophet, but for all of us it is Sunnah prayer. (2) It has been offered with 2 Rakat each as well as 4 Rakat each. So it can be offered both ways. (3) Longer recitation of Quran is recommended during this prayer.

Note: The Noble Prophet used to offer Witr after Tahajjud.

Desirable (مستحب):

(1) After Tahajjud prayers, offering Dua as recommended by our Noble Prophet. (For suggested Dua see Chapter 20, Hadith No 1053 of Sahih Bukhari)

