

الصلاة معراج المؤمنين

**Prayer:
The *Mi'râj* (Ascension)
Of the Believers**

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الصلوة معراج المؤمنين

Prayer: The *Mi'râj* (Ascension) of the Believers

Nadeem Abdul Hamid

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ وَكَفَى وَ سَلَامٌ عَلَىٰ عِبَادِهِ الَّذِينَ اصْطَفَىٰ

Introduction

The salât (prayer or *namâz*) is a duty upon Muslims which cannot be overemphasized. There are books and collections of hadîth detailing the importance and benefits of prayers. Due to space and time constraints, we will not be mentioning all of these in this article but will simply suffice by recalling the saying,

مفتاح الجنة الصلوة .

“Prayer is the key to Paradise.” [*Ihyâ*]

Namely, our ultimate success in the Hereafter very much depends on the performance of salât.

Allâh has not enjoined prayers simply as a burden upon His servants. In fact, it is a special privilege and a gift which was the “coolness of the eyes” of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Furthermore, as the title of this article reminds us, prayer is said to be the “*Mi'râj*” of the believers. *Mi'râj* refers to the miraculous ascension of the Prophet (ﷺ) to the heavens and his direct communion with Allâh there, among other things. (It was also on this journey that the five daily prayers were made obligatory.) In the same way, the salât is the direct means of communication with Allâh for every believing Muslim man and woman. It is through this medium, not through the medium of any intercessors as in other misguided religions and belief systems, that a Muslim can express his praise to Allâh, his thanks for His favors, his

seeking for His mercy and forgiveness and his requests for any type of need- be it *dînî* (spiritual) or *dunyâwî* (worldly).

The attainment of the true pleasure and purpose of salât is granted only by Allâh to whom He wills and especially to those who strive hard to achieve it. Thus, in order to motivate ourselves and the entire Muslim *ummah* (nation) towards the practice and upkeep of the obligatory and superogatory prayers, we have composed this short article summarizing the various types of prayers that are established from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Again, due to constraints of time and space, we will not mention the entire details of the methods of saying these prayers in this article. For that information, one should learn from someone who knows, or read about them in reliable Islamic textbooks.

May Allâh grant us the felicity of attaining the “coolness of our eyes” in the performance of salât. May He accept our humble prayers and forgive our copious sins and shower us with His pleasure. *Aameen*.

أمين

اصطلاحات

Technical Terminology

There are eight classes of injunctions and prohibitions which apply to all deeds and actions of mankind. The various types of prayers which we will be discussing later also fall into one or another of these categories of rulings. Thus, we will first review their definitions here before continuing farther. The eight categories are: (1) *Fard* (2) *Wâjib* (3) *Sunnah* (4) *Mustahab* (5) *Mubâh* (6) *Makrûh Tanzîhî* (7) *Makrûh Tahrîmî*, and (8) *Harâm*. [Taken from *Kitaabus-Salaat*]

Fard (فرض) is a Divine Command which is established by undeniable proof (*daleel qat'i*). One who neglects a *fard* without valid excuse is termed a *fâsiq*

(corrupt transgressor) and is liable for punishment in an Islamic government. One who rejects a *fard* is not a Muslim. There are two types of *farâ'id*: *fard 'ayn* (فرض عين) and *fard kifâyah* (فرض كفاية). The first is a duty which is compulsory upon every individual Muslim. The second is a duty which is binding upon the community as a whole- if a few individuals perform it, the entire community will be absolved from its performance. If nobody in the community performs it, the entire community will be sinful.

Wâjib (واجب) is a Divine Command established by a proof which is not as strong or direct as the previous (*daleel zanni*). However, the proof is strong enough that, practically speaking, this act is also compulsory. One who neglects or rejects such an action is a *fâsiq* but will not be a *kâfir* (disbeliever).

Sunnah (سنة) refers to those deeds which were practiced by the Prophet (ﷺ) or his companions. There are also two levels of these: *mu'akkadah* (emphasized- سنة مؤكدة) and *ghayr mu'akkadah* (less emphasized- سنة غير مؤكدة). The first refers to an action which was steadfastly upheld by the Prophet (ﷺ) or his companions and was not left out without a valid reason. To constantly neglect such an action is sinful. The second category refers to those acts which were sometimes left off without any excuse. Although its neglect does not warrant punishment, to perform the *sunnah ghayr mu'akkadah* brings great reward. (Note, sometimes *sunnah* is used in a more general sense of being any action which was performed by the Prophet (ﷺ).)

Mustahab (desirable- مستحب) is also known as *nafl* (superogatory- نفل) or *mandûb* (recommended- مندوب). It refers to those actions which the Prophet (ﷺ) and his companions (Allâh be pleased with them all) occasionally performed.

There is no sin in neglecting such an action. However, there is great reward in engaging in it. Furthermore, the *nafl* actions are the method in which one grows closer to Allâh and also will be used to make up for any shortcomings in the performance of the obligatory acts. Note, performance of *nafl* has no benefit if the obligatory acts are not being fulfilled.

Mubâh (permissible- مباح) refers to those actions which merit neither reward nor punishment.

Makrûh Tanzîhî (reprehensible- مكروه تنزيهى) is that action whose avoidance will bring reward but if it is done, it will not be a punishable offense. Note, however, that engaging constantly in *makrûh tanzîhi* will become sinful.

Makrûh Tahrîmî (مكروه تحريمى) is a prohibition established by a proof as strong as *daleel zanni*, ie. one who engages in such an act or does not view it as being prohibited will be a transgressor.

Harâm (حرام) is a prohibition which is established by an undeniable proof. One who engages in such acts will be a *fâsiq* and one who does not regard such an act as being forbidden will not be a Muslim.

We will now, *insha-Allâh*, mention the various prayers which are *fard*, *wâjib*, *sunnah* and *mustahab*.

الصلوة المكتوبة

The Obligatory Prayers

Everyone who professes to be Muslim knows about the establishment of the five daily obligatory (*fard*) prayers. The times for these prayers have been detailed in the Qur'ân and Sunnah. In addition, the Prophet (ﷺ) stressed or recommended the performance of extra prayers around the five daily prayers. Thus, the commonly known and recommended routine for the daily prayers is as follows:

Fajr – 2 rak'ât (units) of *sunnah mu'akkadah*; 2 *farḍ*.

Zuhr – 4 *sunnah mu'akkadah*; 4 *farḍ*; 2 *sunnah mu'akkadah*; 2 *nafl*.

Asr – 4 *sunnah ghayr mu'akkadah*; 4 *farḍ*.

Maghrib – 3 *farḍ*; 2 *sunnah mu'akkadah*; 2 *nafl*.

Ishâ – 4 *sunnah ghayr mu'akkadah*; 4 *farḍ*; 2 *sunnah mu'akkadah*; 2 *nafl*; 3 *Witr (wâjib)*; and 2 *nafl*.

The performance of the *farḍ* in the masjid, with congregation, is extremely emphasized for men. For women, the home is a better place to pray. However, men should also pray some at home, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said among other things,

عن زيد بن ثابت رضى الله عنه ان النبي ﷺ

قال: صلوا ايها الناس في بيوتكم فان افضل

الصلوة صلوة المرء في بيته الا المكتوبة •

(متفق عليه)

“O people! Offer (optional) prayers in your homes for truly, with the exception of the obligatory prayers, the best prayer is that of a man's in his own home.” [RS-1128, from *Bukhârî* and *Muslim*]

The twelve rak'ât (units of prayer) which are *sunnah mu'akkadah* have been established from several narrations of the Prophet (ﷺ). For example:

عن ام حبيبة رضى الله عنها قالت قال رسول

الله ﷺ: من صلى في يوم و ليلة اثنتى

عشرة ركعة بنى له بيت في الجنة: اربعا قبل

الظهر و ركعتين بعدها و ركعتين بعد

المغرب و ركعتين بعد العشاء و ركعتين قبل

صلاة الفجر • (رواه الترمذى و كذا في

المسلم)

“He who observes twelve (*sunnah*) rak'ât in the course of a day and night

will have a house built for him in Jannah: four before Zuhr and two after it; two after Maghrib; two after 'Isha; and two before Fajr.” [M-1159, from *Tirmidhi* and *Muslim*]

Among these twelve, the two before Fajr and four before Zuhr have been especially emphasized:

عن عائشة رضى الله عنها ان النبي ﷺ كان

لا يدع اربعا قبل الظهر و ركعتين قبل الغداة

(رواه البخارى)

The Prophet (ﷺ) never omitted the four rak'ât before Zuhr and the two before the Fajr. [R-1100, from *Bukhari*]

The four *sunnah rak'ât* after 'Asr have been mentioned in another hadîth:

عن ابن عمر رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول الله

ﷺ: رحم الله امرءاً صلى قبل العصر اربعاً

(رواه احمد والترمذى و ابو داود)

“May Allâh have mercy upon the person who observes four rak'ât before the 'Asr.” [M-1170, from *Ahmad*, *Tirmidhi*, and *Abu Dawud*]

الاقوات المكروهة فيها الصلوة

Makrûh and Forbidden Times of Prayer

There are three times during which it is forbidden to pray any salât at all or to perform *sajdah tilâwah* (prostration during recitation of Qur'ân): at sunrise, midday and sunset. However, if for unavoidable reason, one is late in performing 'Asr, it is permissible to pray it although it will be makrûh. Thus, Hadrat 'Uqba ibn 'Âmir (Allâh be pleased with him) reported:

عن عقبة بن عامر رضى الله عنه قال: ثلاث
ساعات كان رسول الله ﷺ ينهانا ان نصلى
فيهن او نقبر فيهن موتانا: حين تطلع
الشمس بازغة حتى ترتفع و حين يقوم قائم
الظهيرة حتى تميل الشمس و حين تضيف
الشمس للغروب حتى تغرب • (مسلم)

Three were the times at while Allâh's Messenger (ﷺ) forbade us from praying or burying our dead (ie. funeral prayer): when the sun begins to rise until it is fully up; when the sun is at its height until it passes the meridian; and when the sun begins to set until it is completely set. [M-1040, from *Muslim*]

Furthermore, besides than the 2 *sunnah* of Fajr, no other *nafl* should be prayed in that time (it is *makrûh*). Also, no prayers should be offered after the *fard* of Fajr until after sunrise. And similarly, no prayers should be offered after the *fard* of 'Asr until after sunset. During these times, however, it is permissible to offer *qadâ* (makeup for missed prayers) or *sajdah tilâwah*. [BZ p.10-12]

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

عن ابى سعيد الخدرى قال: قال رسول الله
ﷺ: لا صلوة بعد الصبح حتى ترتفع
الشمس و لا صلوة بعد العصر حتى تغيب

الشمس • (متفق عليه)

“There is no prayer after the Fajr until the sun (sufficiently) rises; and there is no prayer after the 'Asr until the sun completely sets.” [M-1041, agreed upon]

النوافل في اليوم و الليل Nafl Prayers During the Day and Night

Other than the times mentioned above, one may offer as much *nafl* prayers as one desires. During the day, one should

offer *nafl* prayers in units of two or four. It is *makrûh* to offer more than four *rak'ât nafl* at a time (ie. with one pair of *salaams*) during the day. At night, it is permissible to make intention for performing up to six, or even eight, *rak'ât* at a time. To pray in batches greater than eight *rak'ât* at night is also *makrûh* and should not be done. [BZ p.110; KS; also in *Hidayah*]

There are several *nafl* prayers which may be offered at specific times during the day and night, in specific quantities. To be consistent in performing such prayers will result in great reward. We will discuss these various prayers in detail below.

صلوة الوتر

Witr Prayer

The *Witr* prayer is *wâjib* (compulsory). To neglect it is a major sin and if it is missed for some reason, it should be made up. The *Witr* is to be performed during the night, after 'Ishâ and *Tahajjud*. For those who are not sure that they can wake up in the middle of the night, they can pray it right after the 'Ishâ, and that is common nowadays. “*Witr*” means “odd”, and the number of *rak'ât* in the prayer is three. During the third *rak'ah* also the *qunût* and *du'â* is to be performed. Following the *Witr* one may offer two *rak'ât* of *nafl* but otherwise the *Witr* should be the last prayer of the night until the Fajr. [See RS-1133-1138]

Hadrat 'Ali (Allâh be pleased with him) reported that Allâh's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

عن على رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول الله

ﷺ: إن الله وتر يحب الوتر فاوتروا يا اهل

القران (رواه الترمذى و ابو داود و النسائى)

“Truly Allâh is an odd number (ie. One) and He loves what is odd in number, so perform the *Witr*, O believers

of the Qur'ân." [M-1266, from *Tirmidhi*, *Abu Dawud* and *Nasâ'i*]

During the month of Ramaḍân, the Witr prayer is offered in congregation after the Tarâwih, but other than that it is not permissible to perform it in congregation.

صلوة الجمعة

Jumu'ah Prayer

The Jumu'ah prayer is offered on Fridays in the place of Zuh. There are several prerequisites which must be met before the prayer can be held and is valid, including a minimum congregation, *khutbah*, etc. The units of prayer for Jumu'ah are: 4 *sunnah mu'akkadah*, (then, after the *khutbah*,) 2 *farḍ*, 4 *sunnah mu'akkadah*, 2 *sunnah mu'akkadah* and 2 *nafl*.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

عن ابي هريرة رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول

الله ﷺ: اذا صلى احدكم الجمعة فليصل

بعدها اربعا • (رواه مسلم)

"When any one of you finishes praying the Jumu'ah, then pray 4 *rak'ât* after it." [M-1166, RS-1126, from *Muslim*]

عن ابن عمر رضى الله عنه انه صلى مع النبي

ﷺ ركعتين بعد الجمعة. (متفق عليه)

It is also related that the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed two *rak'ât* after the Jumu'ah. [RS-1126, agreed upon]

صلوة الجنازة

Salât-ul-Janâzah (Funeral Prayer)

When a Muslim dies, it is a *farḍ kifâyah* (communal obligation) upon the community that he or she should be buried. Before the burial, a special prayer is made for the dead person. This prayer, which is offered in a different manner than the regular prayers, is called the *Janâzah* prayer. The details of how to perform this prayer are readily available

in English in various books and pamphlets.

صلوة العيدين

The Two 'Eid Prayers

On the two days of 'Eid, it is *wâjib* to perform two *rak'ât* of prayer after sunrise, again in congregation and followed by a *khutbah*. The 'Eid prayers are usually held at a large prayer ground or field. Other than the two *rak'ât* of the 'Eid prayer, it is not permissible to perform any other *nafl* prayers at the prayer ground:

عن ابن عباس رضى الله عنه ان النبي ﷺ

خرج يوم الفطر فصلى ركعتين ثم لم يصل

قبلها ولا بعدها. (الترمذى)

The Prophet (ﷺ) went out on the day of Fitr and prayed two *rak'ât* and did not pray anything before them or after them. [T-522]

صلوة التراويح

Tarâwih Prayer

The Tarâwih prayer is a special prayer performed during Ramaḍân after 'Ishâ. It consists of 20 *rak'ât sunnah mu'akkadah* and is preferably offered in congregation. Usually the entire Qur'ân is recited in the course of the month. The Tarâwih is performed in units of 2 *rak'ât* and after every 4 *rak'ât* there is a short rest (called "*tarwihah*"- hence the name *Tarâwih*, which is the plural). The Witr prayer is also performed in congregation after the Tarâwih. Note, it is not permissible to perform the Tarâwih prayer, or any other prayer, while reading out of a Qur'ân-doing so will break the *salât*.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

عن ابي هريرة رضى الله عنه ان رسول الله

ﷺ قال: من قام رمضان ايمانا واحتسابا

غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه • (متفق عليه)

“Whoever stands during Ramadân (for Tarâwih), with true belief and self-scrutiny will be forgiven for his previous sins.” [RS-1187, agreed upon]

تحية الوضوء

Tahiyat-ul-Wudû'

After performing *wudû'*, one should pray two *rak'ât* of *nafl*, known as *Tahiyat-ul-Wudû'*. Several hadîth have mentioned the blessings and benefit of doing so. For example:

عن عقبة بن عامر رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله ﷺ: ما من مسلم يتوضأ فيحسن وضوءه ثم يقوم فيصلى ركعتين مقبلا عليهما بقلبه وجهه الا وجبت له الجنة. (مسلم)

“There is no Muslim who performs *wudû'* and performs it well and then stands and offers 2 units of prayer with devotion of heart and mind in the two of them, except that Paradise becomes guaranteed for him” [M-288, from *Muslim*]

However, it should not be performed if it is one of the *makrûh* or prohibited times of *salât*.

تحية المسجد

Tahiyat-ul-Masjid

Upon entering the *masjid* (mosque), it is *sunnah* to perform 2 *rak'ât* of prayer, as a greeting and honor towards Allâh and His house. It is best to perform these 2 *rak'ât* before sitting down, unless it is a *makrûh* time. However, if one sits first and then afterwards performs this prayer, it will be valid as well but less rewarding. If one visits the *masjid* multiple times in a day, it is enough to perform *Tahiyat-ul-masjid* once. Also, if one enters the *masjid* and performs any other *sunnah*, *nafl* or *fard* prayers, it will suffice for the *Tahiyat-ul-masjid*.

عن ابي قتادة رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله ﷺ: اذا دخل احدكم المسجد فلا يجلس

حتى يصلى ركعتين • (متفق عليه)

Hadrat Abu Qatâdah (Allâh be pleased with him) relates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “When one of you enters the *masjid*, he should not sit until he has prayed two *rak'ât*.” [RS-1144, agreed upon]

صلوة الاشراق

Ishrâq (Prayer After Sunrise)

After completing *Fajr salât*, one does not move from one's place and remains there reciting *dhikr*, *tasbîh*, *Qur'ân*, etc., avoiding participation in worldly affairs until the sun has fully risen (at least 15 minutes after sunrise). Then, one stands and offers two or four *rak'ât* of *nafl*. This is called *Salât-ul-Ishrâq*. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

عن انس رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله ﷺ: من صلى الفجر في جماعة ثم قعد يذكر الله حتى تطلع الشمس ثم صلى ركعتين كانت له كاجر حجة و عمرة •

(رواه الترمذی)

“Whoever prays *Fajr* with the congregation (*jamâ'at*) and then sits and remembers Allâh until the sun rises and then prays two *rak'ât*, he will have the reward of a *Hajj* and ‘*Umrah*.’” [T-567]

صلوة الضحی

Salât-ud-Duhâ (Morning Prayer)

This prayer is also known as *Chaasht namâz*. It is performed after the sun has risen high in the morning, after about one-third of the day has passed and it lasts until *zawâl*. One may perform 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 or 12 *rak'ât* of *nafl*.

عن معاذة رضى الله عنها قالت سألت عائشة
كم كان رسول الله ﷺ يصلى صلوة
الضحى. قالت اربع ركعات ويزيد ما شاء
الله. (رواه مسلم)

Hadrat ‘Ā’ishah (Allāh be pleased with her) was asked how much the Prophet (ﷺ) used to pray for the *Duhâ* prayer. She said, “Four *rak’ât* or he increased it as Allāh wills.” [M-1235, from *Muslim*]

Also, the Prophet (ﷺ) was reported as saying:

و عن انس رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول الله
ﷺ: من صلى الضحى ثنتى عشرة ركعة
بنى الله له قصرا من ذهب فى الجنة. (رواه
الترمذى و ابن ماجه)

“Whoever prays 12 *rak’ât* for the *Duhâ* prayer, Allāh will built a golden castle for him in Paradise.” [M-1240, from *Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah*]

صلوة الاوابين **Salât-ul-Awwâbîn (Prayer of the Repentent)**

After performing the *farḍ* and *sunnah* of Maghrib, one may perform from 6 to a maximum of 20 *rak’ât nafl*. This prayer has been called as *Awwâbîn*. (This name is sometimes also applied to the morning prayer.)

The Prophet (ﷺ) reportedly said:

عن ابى هريرة رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول
الله ﷺ: من صلى بعد المغرب ست
ركعات لم يتكلم فيما بينهن بسوء عدلن له
بعبادة ثنتى عشرة سنة. (رواه الترمذى و

قال هذا حديث غريب)

“Whoever prays, after the Maghrib, six *rak’ât* without talking of anything indecent in between them, it would be

equivalent to twelve years of worship for him.” [M1173, from *Tirmidhi*]

عن عائشة رضى الله عنها قالت قال رسول
الله ﷺ: من صلى بعد المغرب عشرين

ركعة بنى الله له بيتا فى الجنة (رواه الترمذى)
“The one who prays twenty *rak’ât* after Maghrib- Allāh will build for him a house in Paradise.” [M-1174, from *Tirmidhi*]

صلوة التهجد

Tahajjud (Night Prayer)

Of all the *nafl* prayers, that prayer which is offered in the middle of the night, known as *Tahajjud* or *Salât-ul-Layl*, is the most rewarding and beneficial:

عن ابى هريرة رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول

الله ﷺ افضل الصلاة بعد الفريضة صلاة

الليل. (رواه مسلم)

“The best *salât* after the prescribed (compulsory) prayers is the night prayer (ie. *tahajjud*).” [RS-1165, from *Muslim*]

و عن جابر رضى الله عنه قال سمعت رسول

الله ﷺ يقول: ان فى الليل لساعة لا يوافقها

رجل مسلم يسأل الله تعالى خيرا من امر الدنيا

و الآخرة الا اعطاه اياه و ذلك كل ليلة.

(رواه مسلم)

“There is a certain period of time in the night during which if a Muslim prays for anything beneficial to his life in this world or the next, it will be granted to him. And this time occurs every night.” [RS-1178, from *Muslim*]

There are many other narrations mentioning the *thawâb* (reward) that is brought by engaging in this prayer.

The number of *rak’ât* prayed in *tahajjud* should be between 4 and 12

rak'ât. They can be performed in units of two or four *rak'ât* each. It is best to wake up in the middle of the night to perform the *tahajjud*. However, if one is not sure that one will be able to do so, then one can pray four *rak'ât* right after the 2 *sunnah mu'akkadah* of 'Ishâ with the intention (*niyyah*) of *tahajjud*. Although the reward will be much less, the pious authorities of the religion have advised this method for those who find it difficult to wake up later in the night. The *Witr* prayer should be offered after the *tahajjud*.

صلوة التسبيح

Salât-ut-Tasbîh (Prayer of Glorification)

It is related that once the Prophet (ﷺ) said to his beloved uncle, 'Abbâs ibn 'Abd-ul-Muttalib:

عن ابن عباس ان النبي ﷺ قال للعباس بن

عبد المطلب : يا عباس يا عماء ال اعطيك

الا امنحك الا اخبرك الا افعل بك عشر

خصال اذا انت فعلت ذلك غفر الله لك ذنبك

اوله و اخره قديمه و حديثه خطاه و عمدته

صغيره و كبيره سره و علانيته ان تصلى اربع

ركعات (الى...) ان استطعت ان تصلها في

كل يوم مرة فافعل و ان لم تفعل ففي كل

جمعة مرة فان لم تفعل ففي كل شهر مرة فان

لم تفعل ففي كل سنة مرة فان لم تفعل ففي

عمرك مرة (رواه ابو داود و ابن ماجه و

البيهقي في الدعوات الكبير و روى الترمذی

عن ابى رافع نحوه)

“O ‘Abbâs! O my dear uncle! Should I not present you a gift? Should I not bestow something to you? Should I not inform you of something greatly beneficial? Should I not show you such an act which, if you render it, Allâh will forgive all your sins, old and new, those committed in error and those committed deliberately, those small or large, committed in secrecy or openly? [This act is] that you pray four *rak'ât* (*Salât-ut-Tasbîh*) ... (he described the method)” After describing the details of its performance, he said: “If possible, perform this prayer daily. If you cannot do that, then do it every week, or every month. And if you cannot do that, then perform it once a year and if you cannot even do this, then perform it at least once in your lifetime.” [M-1252, from *Abu Dawud*, *Ibn Majah* and *Bayhaqi* with similar report in *Tirmidhi*]

There are specific details regarding how one is to perform this special *nafl* prayer, involving the recitation of large quantities of *tasbîhs* (glorifications of Allâh) in parts of the prayer. We have not included those in this article.

Regarding the authenticity of this prayer, *Tirmidhi* states,

(و قال الترمذی:) و قد روى عن النبي ﷺ

غير حديث في صلوة التسبيح و لا يصح منه

كبير شيء و قد روى ابن المبارك و غير

واحد من اهل العلم صلوة التسبيح و ذكروا

الفضل فيه .

“Multiple hadîth have been narrated from the Prophet (ﷺ) regarding the *Salât-ut-Tasbîh*. Although the chains of narrators of these are not *sahîh*, the practice of this prayer has been narrated by ('Abdullâh) Ibn-ul-Mubâarak and more than one of the reliable people of knowledge- [they have enjoined its practice] and mentioned its benefits.”

Thus, the scholars have written that although the chains of narration may be weak, due to the number of different sources of narration, it is not correct to claim that it is an innovation (*bid'ah*) or that it is against the *sunnah*. And Allâh knows best. [DT p. 250]

صلوة التوبة

Salât-ut-Taubah (Prayer of Repentance)

Salât-ut-Taubah consists of 2 *rak'ât* *nafl* which should be performed after one mistakenly commits a sin. After performing the 2 *rak'ât*, one should raise one's hands sincerely and humbly in *du'â* (supplication) and repent with true and abundant repentance. One should have the sincere intention of avoiding that sin in the future. It is reported from Abu Bakr, the Truthful (Allâh be pleased with him) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

عن علي كرم الله وجهه قال حدثني ابو بكر و
صدق ابو بكر قال سمعت رسول الله ﷺ
يقول: ما من رجل يذنب ذنبا ثم يقوم فيتطهر
ثم يصلي ثم يستغفر الله الا غفر الله له. (رواه

الترمذى و ابن ماجه)

“There is no person who commits a sin and then afterwards purifies himself and stands and offers prayer and seeks sincere forgiveness of Allâh except that Allâh forgives him.” [M-1248, from *Tirmidhi* and *Ibn Majah*]

صلوة السفر

Salât-us-Safar (Prayer Before and After Journey)

When setting out on a journey, one should perform 2 *rak'ât* of *nafl* prayer before leaving home. Also, after returning from the journey, it is *sunnah* or *mustahab* to first go to the masjid and offer 2 *rak'ât* of prayer before going home.

عن كعب بن مالك رضى الله عنه ان رسول
الله ﷺ كان اذا قدم من سفر بدأ بالمسجد

فركع فيه ركعتين. (متفق عليه)

When the Prophet (ﷺ) used to return from a journey, he would first go to the masjid and pray in it 2 *rak'ât*. [RS-988, agreed upon]

صلوة الاستخارة

Salât-ul-Istikhârah (Prayer Seeking Goodness and Advice)

“*Istikhârah*” means to seek goodness. This prayer is a way of seeking advice from Allâh. It consists of 2 *rak'ât* of *nafl* to be performed when one intends to embark on some venture or project. Following the prayer, one should make the supplication which is mentioned in the hadîth of the Prophet (ﷺ).

عن جابر رضى الله عنه قال كان رسول الله
ﷺ يعلمنا الاستخارة فى الامور كلها كما
يعلمنا السورة من القران يقول اذا هم احدكم
بالامر فليركع ركعتين من غير الفريضة ثم

ليقل (الخ...) رواه البخارى.

Hadrat Jâbir (Allâh be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to teach us [to perform] *Istikhârah* in all our affairs, just as he used to teach us chapters of the Qur'ân. He would say, “When one of you intends a matter, he should pray 2 superogatory *rak'ât* of prayer, and then say...”- he mentioned further the supplication to be offered. [M-1247, from *Bukhari*]

Note, however, that one should not offer this type of prayer frivolously.

صلوة الحاجة

Salât-ul-Hâjah (Prayer for Need)

When someone is in need or in difficulty, the Prophet (ﷺ) said that the

person should perform *wudû'* perfectly and completely and then perform 2 *rak'ât* of prayer. After completing that, he should praise Allâh abundantly and pray for blessings upon the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ). Then, he should make a fervent *du'â* for the fulfillment of the need. [KS; TD p.54, from *Tirmidhi* and *Ibn Majah*]

صلوة الاستسقاء

Salât-ul-Istisqâ' (Prayer for Rain)

In the event of severe drought, this special prayer is performed. "*Istisqâ'*" means to petition for water. The prayer consists of 2 *rak'ât* performed in congregation, without *adhân* or *iqâmah*. The entire Muslim community should go to the outskirts of the city, on foot and wearing extremely simple and humble clothing. The imâm leads the prayer loudly and then recites 2 *khutbahs* just as on 'Eid. After the *khutbahs*, the imâm faces the Qiblah, raises his hands and petitions Allâh for rain. All those present also make *du'â*. This procedure is repeated for three consecutive days. The complete details of how the Prophet (ﷺ) performed this type of prayer are to be found in the books of hadîth and fiqh. See, for example, [M-1410-1424; T-540-543; KS; BZ]

According to Imâm Abu Hanîfah there is no *sunnah* prayer specifically for rain, only supplication. However, the ruling is upon that of his students, Abu Yusuf and Muhammad, on this point who ruled that it is indeed supported by the various traditions. Imâm Shâfi'i and Imâm Mâlik also support it. [*Al-Hadis*. v.3. p.500]

صلوة الكسوف و الخسوف

Salât-ul-Kusûf and Khusûf

At the time of a solar eclipse (*kusûf*), 2 *rak'ât* of prayer are *sunnah*. This prayer should be offered in congregation, led by the imâm of Jumu'ah or the ruler or his deputy. The recitation is done inaudibly

but it should be exceptionally long (eg. *Sûrah Baqarah*). After the *salât*, the imâm and the followers should engage in making *du'â* until the eclipse disappears.

عن عبد الله بن عباس رضى الله عنه قال

انخسفت الشمس على عهد رسول الله

ﷺ فصلى رسول الله ﷺ والناس معه

فقام قياما طويلا نحو من قراءة سورة البقرة

(الى...) ثم انصرف وقد تجلت الشمس

فقال ان الشمس والقمر ايتان من آيات الله

لا يخسفان لموت احد ولا لحيوته فاذا رايتم

ذلك فاذكروا الله (الخ. متفق عليه)

"When there was a solar eclipse during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), he prayed and the people prayed with him (in congregation). He stood for a long time, for example, to recite the *Sûrah Baqarah*, and then performed a long *rukû'*. [The hadîth goes on to describe how he also made the *rukû'* and *sujûd* very long.] When he finished the prayer, the sun had come out again and he said, "Truly the sun and moon are two signs from the signs of Allâh- they do not eclipse due to the death or birth of any person (this was a superstition at the time). So, when you witness them, remember Allâh (during them)." [M1396, agreed upon]

At the time of a lunar eclipse (*khusûf*) it is also *sunnah* to offer 2 *rak'ât* of lengthy prayer. However, it is not *sunnah* to offer this in congregation or in the masjid. It should be done at home. [BZ; KS, as in *Hidâyah*]

صلوة الخوف

Salât-ul-Khauf

At the time of great fear (*khauf*) due to an enemy, disasters or other calamities, two or more *rak'ât* of prayer should be offered. [KS]

If the Muslims are faced with an enemy, there are special procedures for praying in two groups, or praying while riding on an animal, etc. These situations have been described in the hadith. [See M1336-1341. Also BZ and *Hidayah*]

قنوت نازلة

Qunût Nâzilah

This is a *du'â* which is recited when some portion of the Muslim community or nation is afflicted with calamity or disaster. This supplication is recited only in Fajr salât after coming up from the *rukû'* in the second *rak'ât*. One remains in the *qaumah* (standing) position with hands at the sides and recites an appropriate supplication. [KS p.97; DT p.166-171] Note, whereas *qunût nâzilah* is offered audibly after the *rukû'*, the *qunût* in Witr is offered quietly before the *rukû'* of the third *rak'ah*.

For example, Hadrat Anas (Allâh be pleased with him) reported that,

قال انس رضى الله عنه: انما قنت رسول الله

ﷺ بعد الركوع شهرا . انه كان بعث اناسا

يقال لهم القراء سبعون رجلا فأصيبوا فقنت

رسول الله ﷺ بعد الركوع شهرا يدعو

عليهم • (متفق عليه)

The Prophet (ﷺ) had sent seventy reciters of the Qur'ân (to a tribe of the desert Arabs for their education) and they were killed treacherously. So the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) performed *qunût* after the *rukû'* for a month, invoking curses upon them. [M-1289, agreed upon]

صلوة القتل

Salât-ul-Qatl

When a Muslim is about to be killed, it is *mustahab* for him to offer 2 *rak'ât* of salât and make *du'â* to Allâh for

forgiveness. This is so that this prayer will be his last action in the world.

Once the Messenger of Allâh (ﷺ) sent a group of his companions to a certain place in order to teach the Qur'ân. On the way, they were captured by the disbelievers of Makkah. All of them were killed on the spot, except for Hadrat Khubayb (Allâh be pleased with him). They took him to Makkah in a great procession and executed him with pomp and ceremony. When he was about to be martyred, he asked permission to offer 2 *rak'ât* of prayer. From that time, the offering of this salât became *mustahab*. [BZ p. 177]

سجدة التلاوة

Sajdah Tilâwah (Prostration of Recitation)

There are fourteen places in the Qur'ân wherein one commonly finds the word "*sajdah*" written on the margin. Upon reciting one of these verses, or hearing it recited, it becomes *wâjib* (compulsory) to perform a single *sajdah*. One should stand and say *Allâhu akbar* without raising the hands and then perform a single *sajdah*. After that, one says *Allâhu akbar* again and stands or goes into the sitting position. This completes the *sajdah tilâwah*. If one is in prayer and recites one of these verses, one must perform the single *sajdah* right away. [BZ]

The companions narrate that, "the Prophet (ﷺ) used to recite Qur'ân to us and when he came to the *sajdah*, he would say *Allâhu akbar* and perform the prostration, and we would do along with him." [M-1031, from *Abu Dawud*]

سجود الشكر

Sajdah ash-Shukr (Prostration of Thankfulness)

To perform a prostration on receipt of good news is *sunnah* according to some scholars, like Imâm Shâfi'i. However,

Imâm Abu Hanîfah and Imâm Mâlik hold it to be *makrûh* (reprehensible). [*Al-Hadis*, v.3. p.498]

اعمال رجب و شعبان
و احياء ليلتى العيدين

Prayers During Rajab and Sha'bân and the Nights of 'Eid

Imâm Ghazzâlî mentions in his book, *al-Ihyâ*, the performance of certain *nafl* prayers in the month of Rajab.

Also, he mentions extra prayer during the night of the fifteenth of Sha'bân, about which other scholars have also indicated its desireability. However, one should stay away from actions which are innovations during these special nights and stick to that which is from the *sunnah*. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

إذا كانت ليلة النصف من شعبان فقوموا ليلها

و صوموا يومها فان الله تعالى ينزل فيها

لغروب الشمس الى السماء الدنيا فيقول الا

من مستغفر فاغفر له الا مسترزق فارزقه الا

مبتلى فأعافيه ال كذا الا كذا حتى يطلع

الفجر • (ابن ماجه)

“When the middle night of the month of Sha'bân arrives, then stand during it in prayer and fast during its day (ie. the fifteenth). For truly, Allâh descends (figuratively speaking) in this night at Maghrib time to the lowest heaven and says, ‘Is there anyone seeking forgiveness that I may forgive him? Is there anyone seeking provision that I may provide him? Is there any sinful one that I may forgive him,’ and so on until the beginning of Fajr.” [*Ibn Majah*] Various other similar narrations can be found describing the virtues of this night.

Several narrations also indicate the virtue of staying awake in worship on the nights before 'Eid. For example,

من قام ليلتى العيدين محتسبا لم يممت قلبه

يوم تموت القلوب • (عين ترغيب عن ابن

ماجه و معناه عن اوسط الطبراني و الكبير)

“Whoever stands (in prayer) on the nights of the two 'Eids, with self-examination, his heart will not be dead on the Day when the hearts will die.” [*Ibn Majah, Tabarâni*]

Conclusion

An important point to remember, when one decides to engage in *nawâfil* prayers or other forms of worship is that one should only begin that which he or she can reasonably handle. It is not part of Islâm to put excessive burden on oneself and in fact, this can lead to despair when one is not able to fulfill all that one has intended to do. Thus, it is more important to be sincere and consistent on a given amount of worship, even if it is small, and then increase it slowly if one feels the strength to do more. On more than one occasion, the Prophet (ﷺ) spoke disapprovingly of people who began offering some form of *nafl* prayers regularly and then later on gave it up.

Furthermore, it is related from Hadrat 'Â'ishah (Allâh be pleased with her) that:

عن عائشة رضی الله عنها قالت قال رسول

الله ﷺ : احب الاعمال الى الله ادومها و ان

قل • (متفق عليه)

“The most beloved actions to Allâh are the most consistent, even if they are small.” [M-1242, agreed upon]

عن ابي هريرة رضى الله عنه عن النبي ﷺ
 قال: ان الدين يسر ولن يشاد الدين الا غلبه
 فسددوا وقاربوا و ابشروا واستعينوا
 بالغدوة و الروححة و شىء من الدلجة • (رواه
 البخارى و فى رواية له: سددوا و قاربوا
 و اغدوا و روحوا و شىء من الدلجة . القصد

القصد تبلغوا

Hadrat Abu Hurairah (Allâh be pleased with him) relates that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: “The practicing of the religion is easy and nobody indulges in extremes in matters of faith except that it will overwhelm him; So be moderate, and practice in proportion to your capacity, and have good cheer and seek Allâh’s help [through extra prayers] in the morning, evening and part of the night.” [RS-145, from *Bukhari*] In another version: “Be moderate, practice according to your capacity and [offer extra prayers] sometimes during the day, evening and part of the night. The middle course! The middle course! And you will reach [your goal].”

Also, as mentioned earlier, one should make sure that he or she is practicing upon the compulsory and emphasized *sunnah* prayers before engaging overmuch in superogatory worship. When one does not fulfill the rights of Allâh which are due to Him through the obligatory prayers, then there is no benefit in *nafl*. And Allâh knows best.

In conclusion, we have summarized in this article the various types of prayers which are established from the life and practice of the Prophet (ﷺ). Several of these prayers are to be performed in special ways which we have not included here but can be found in any reliable Islamic textbook.

Any good and benefit in this work is from Allâh through His Mercy and any

errors are a result of our shortcomings and the evil of the *shaytân*. And the last of our prayers is that, “All praise is for Allâh, the Lord of the Worlds.”

وآخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العالمين

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