



BISMILLAAHIRRAHMAANIRRAHIIM

IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE MOST GRACIOUS, THE MOST MERCIFUL

THE NIGHT PRAYERS - SECRETS AND BEAUTY

The verses on the night prayers which we called Qiyam al Layl or better known as tahajjud, witr etc are explained by Allah in various verses on the Qur'an:

Say: "Shall I inform you of things far better than those? For *Al-Muttaqun* (the pious - see V.2:2) there are Gardens (Paradise) with their Lord, underneath which rivers flow. Therein (is their) eternal (home) and *Azwarzun Mutahharatun* (purified mates or wives) [i.e. they will have no menses, urine, or stool, etc.], And Allah will be pleased with them. And Allah is All-Seer of the (His) slaves".

Those who say: "Our Lord! We have indeed believed, so forgive us our sins and save us from the punishment of the Fire."

(They are) those who are patient ones, those who are true (in Faith, words, and deeds), and obedient with sincere devotion in worship to Allah. Those who spend [give the *Zakat* and alms in the Way of Allah] and those who pray and beg Allah's Pardon in the last hours of the night.

3: 15-17

And those who spend the night before their Lord, prostrate and standing.

25: 64

And it is also one of the earliest verses that was revealed in Makkah:

O you wrapped in garments (i.e. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him))! Stand (to pray) all night, except a little. Half of it, or a little less than that,

73: 1-3

Verily, your Lord knows that you do stand (to pray at night) a little less than two-thirds of the night, or half the night, or a third of the night, and so do a party of those with you, And Allah measures the night and the day. He knows that you are unable to pray the whole night, so He has turned to you (in mercy). So, recite you of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you. He knows that there will be some among you sick, others travelling through the land, seeking of Allah's Bounty; yet others fighting in Allah's Cause. So recite as much of the Qur'an as may be easy (for you), and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat) and give Zakat, and lend to Allah a goodly loan, and

whatever good you send before you for yourselves, (i.e. Nawafil non-obligatory acts of worship: prayers, charity, fasting, Hajj and 'Umrah, etc.), you will certainly find it with Allah, better and greater in reward. And seek Forgiveness of Allah. Verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most-Merciful. 73: 20

"And in some parts of the night (also) perform the Salat (prayer) with it (i.e., recite the Qur'an in the prayer) as an additional prayer (Tahajjud optional prayer - Nawafil) for you (O Muhammad (PBUH)). It may be that your Rubb will raise you to Maqam Mahmud (a station of praise and glory, i.e., the honour of intercession on the Day of Resurrection)." (17:79)

"Their sides forsake their beds..." (32:16)

"They used to sleep but little by night [invoking their Rubb (Allah) and praying, with fear and hope]." (51:17)

It also mentioned in the very first sermon of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) after the Hijrah to Madinah

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ أَفْشُوا السَّلَامَ
وَأَطْعِمُوا الطَّعَامَ وَصَلُّوا الْأَرْحَامَ
وَصَلُّوا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ
تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ . "

Abdullah bin Salam said:

"When the Prophet (ﷺ) came to Al-Madinah, the people rushed to meet him, and it was said: 'The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has come! The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has come! The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has come!' Three times. I came with the people to see him, and when I saw his face clearly, I knew that his face was not the face of a liar. The first thing I heard him say was when he said: 'O people! Spread (the greeting of) Salam, feed others, uphold the ties of kinship, and pray during the night when people are sleeping, and you will enter Paradise with Salam.'"* This is related by al-Hakim, Ibn Majah, and at-Tirmizhi who calls it hasan sahih.

HADEETHS

Salim bin `Abdullah bin `Umar bin Al-Khattab (May Allah be pleased with them) reported, on the authority of his father, that the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "What an excellent man `Abdullah is! If only he could perform optional prayers at night." Salim said that after this, (his father) `Abdullah slept very little at night. [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Commentary: This Hadith points out the excellence of `Abdullah bin `Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) as well as the merits of Qiyam-ul-Lail. It also tells us that it is permissible to praise someone in his presence if one is sure that he will not become proud due to that praise. Another aspect of this Hadith is that it induces one to wish for others' welfare and happiness.

Salman al-Farsi relates that the Prophet sallallahu alehi wasallam said: "Observe the night prayer, it was the practice of the righteous before you and it brings you closer to your Lord and it is penance for evil deeds and erases the sins and repels disease from the body."

Sahl ibn Sa'd reports: "Gabriel came to the Prophet sallallahu alehi wasallam and said: 'O Muhammad, live as long as you like, for you are to die. Do whatever deed you wish, for you are to be rewarded. Love whomever you wish, for you are to be parted. And know that the honour of the believer is in the night prayer and his glory is being free from want from the people.'"

Abu ad-Darda' reports that the Prophet said: "Three people are loved by Allah, and He laughs for them and He grants them glad tidings. [The first is] a man who fights behind a group that flees and does so with his own soul for Allah's sake, regardless of whether he is killed or he is aided by Allah and made victorious. Allah says: 'Look to my slave there who is patient with his life for My sake.' [The second is] the one who has a beautiful wife and a soft bed and rises during the night. Allah says: 'He leaves his desires and remembers Me and if he wished he would sleep.' [The third] is a person who is traveling with a group and they pass the night awake and then sleep, but he still observes his prayer in hardship or ease."

Jabir (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: I heard the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) saying, "Every night there is a special time during which whatever a Muslim asks Allah of any good relating to this life or the Hereafter, it will be granted to him; and this moment comes every night."
[Muslim]

It is an act of worship which is revived by the Muslims in the most exciting and heart-warming of ways on the first night of each Ramadān; but is abandoned by the majority of them in the most depressing and heart-aching of ways following the last night of Ramadān. I speak of a real paradise on earth, of the introduction of prophethood and of the hallmark of every wakeful Muslim from every era. I speak of Allāh's gift to humanity; Qiyāmul Layl/the night prayer.

The Prophet (sall Allāhu `alayhi wa sallam) said,

"Hold fast to the night prayer, for it is the practice of the righteous before you, and a means of drawing closer to your Lord, and an eraser of sin, and a means of their prevention." At-Tirmidhi, on the authority of Abū Umaamah

We wish to pause with this narration since it speaks of an act of worship that the majority of us will be participating in on a nightly basis in Ramadān in the form of the *Tarawīh* prayers. This narration on its own is enough to transform one's perception towards the

night prayer altogether, for it clearly is not an average deed, limited to bowing and prostration, nor is it limited to the nights of Ramadān, rather -

The night prayer is, as we read above; (1) “THE PRACTICE OF THE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE YOU”

In mentioning the greats of the past how can any name be mentioned before the greatest and purest of them all: Our Prophet Muḥammad (sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam)? Sūrah Al-Muzammil is one of the earliest chapters of the Qur’ān to be revealed to the Prophet (sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam). The scholars are generally agreed that it was the third or fourth Sūrah revealed to him. In it, Allāh commanded His Prophet:

“Arise the night, except for a little. Half of it or a little less than that, or add to it, and recite the Qur’ān with measured recitation.” [73: 2-4]

Therefore, if Sūrah Al-Muzammil was amongst the first of revelation given to the Prophet Muḥammad (sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam), then the instruction to pray at night was also one of the very first instructions given by Allāh to the Prophet Muḥammad (sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) in his preparation for the mammoth tasks that awaited him. What is amazing however is that within this Sūrah, Allāh said, describing the night prayer of the Prophet (sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam):

*“Indeed, your Lord knows that you stand in prayer **almost two thirds of the night** or half of it or a third of it, and so do a group of those with you...” [73: 20]*

At a time when the *entire* collection of the Qur’ān only consisted of 3 or 4 Sūrahs, the Prophet’s prayer was described as occupying around two-thirds of the night! Therefore what would he be doing for all those hours, bearing in mind the few options of Qur’ān that he had access to at the time? Was he repeating them over and over? Was he engaging in Dhikr (remembrance) or Du’ā (supplication)? Regardless of the answer, what we do know for sure is that the night prayer was the introduction of his prophethood, one that remained with him until his very last moments. The night prayer is truly “the way of the righteous people before you.”

In fact, Abūz Zinād said,

“I used to walk towards the Masjid of the Prophet (sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) during the latter part of the night and every house that I’d walk past, I’d hear the recitation of Qur’ān.” He also said, “When we were kids and had a need that required our attention, we would say ‘Let’s meet up during the prayer time of the reciters.’ [Mukhtasar Qiyaamul Layl, Al-Marwazi]

Tāwūs said:

“I never used to see anyone sleeping during the latter part of the night.” [Hilyatul Awliyaa, Abū Nu’aim]

A student of knowledge once spent the night at Imām Aḥmad's house and so Aḥmad placed for him a container of water in his room so that he could use to make Wudū for his night prayer. When Aḥmad came to him at Fajr time, he noticed that the water had not been moved from its place, so he said:

"SubḥānAllāh, a student of knowledge who doesn't pray at night?" [Siyaru A'laamin Nubalaa, AdhDhahabi]

The night prayer is (2) "A MEANS OF DRAWING CLOSER TO YOUR LORD"

If you ask about the *shortest* staircase towards Allāh's acceptance, then you can find one of those staircases during the night, and perhaps this is the reason why Allāh has offered so much to those who discipline themselves to glorify Him through this act of worship; because it means so much to Him. What is their reward? In truth, we do not entirely know for certain.

Allāh said:

"Their sides forsake their beds, as they call upon their Lord in fear and hope, and from what We have provided them, they spend." [32: 16]

So what is their reward? Allāh said, in the āyah after it:

*"And so **no soul knows** of the delights of the eyes that have been hidden for them, as reward for what they used to do." [32: 17]*

Why was a specific reward not mentioned? Imām Ibnul Qayyim gives a suggestion:

"Ponder over how, since they were keen to hide their acts of night prayer, He compensated them by offering them a hidden and unknown reward." [Haadil Arwaah, Ibnul Qayyim]

This is not to say that Allāh has not uncovered some of the secrets behind this unknown reward. The Prophet (sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) said:

*"In Jannah, there are rooms, the outsides of which can be seen from their insides and their insides can be seen from their outsides. An Arab Bedouin man got up and asked, 'Who do they belong to O messenger of Allāh?' He responded, 'They belong to those who speak with goodness, offer food, consistently fast **and pray at night when people are asleep.**'" [AtTirmidhi, on the authority of 'Ali]*

The Prophet (sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) also said:

"There are three categories of people whom Allāh loves, smiles at and is happy with." One of which was "a person who has a beautiful spouse and soft bedding. Nevertheless, he arises to pray at night. Thus Allāh says, 'He has left his desire in order to remember me, and if he had willed, he could have continued sleeping.'" [AlHaythami, on the authority of Abūd Dardaa]

One may ask: What does it mean if Allāh smiles at me? The Prophet (sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said:

“And if Allāh smiles at a servant of His in this world, then such a person will have no accountability on the day of judgement.” [Ahmad]

The night prayer is (3) “an eraser of sin, and a means of their prevention”

If you have accumulated sins which you fear being reminded of on the Day of Reckoning, then erase them during the night. Not only that, if you need a shield to prevent you from those sins that you fear returning to after repentance due to how irresistible they seem, again, such a shield can be acquired during the night.

This is one of the most amazing realities of the night prayer; it erases the sins of yesterday whilst providing a shield against the sins of tomorrow. Perhaps this is one of the reasons the Prophet (sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) referred to the night prayer as being “the honour of a believer”, for sins give rise to humiliation; a cold, bitter and dark sense of inward humiliation that one truly feels during the sin and after it as well, whilst the night prayer is a liberator from this.

The Prophet (sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam) said,

*“Angel Jibrīl came to me and said, ‘O Muḥammad, live as long as you wish, you shall die in the end. Love whom you wish, you will be separated from them in the end. Do whatever you wish, you shall be held accountable in the end, and **realise that the honour of a believer is in his night prayer**, and that his dignity is when he is not reliant on others.” [al Hakim]*

Therefore you will usually find that those who collapse into all sorts of sins only do so after they let go of Salāh. Allāh said:

*“But there came after them a generation who **neglected prayer and pursued desires**; so they are going to meet evil.” [19: 59]*

It is almost as if we are being told that it was only after they had neglected the prayer that they pursued desire. Apply this to your past or present and you will see just that. Thus the “honour of the believer” is in his prayer at night, an honour which Allāh will publicise even if that sincere believer tries to hide their good deeds. Thus ‘Atā Al-Khurasāni said:

“The night prayer is a means of life for the body, light for the heart, luminosity for the eyes and strength for one’s body. When a person engages in the night prayer, he wakes up the next day with real joy that he feels within his heart.” [AtTahajjud wa Qiyaamul Layl, Ibnu Abid Dunya]

Sa‘īd Ibnul Musayyib said:

“It may be that a person prays at night and so Allāh causes light to emit from his face which causes every Muslim to love him, thus those who see him for the first time find themselves saying, ‘I really do love that person.’”

Those who would see the face of Wakī' b. Al-Jarraah would say "That's an angel." Note that Wakī' used to pray at night. Similarly, those who would see the face of Muḥammad b. Sīrīn would say "SubḥānAllāh" due to his radiant appearance. Again, Muḥammad used to pray at night.

In fact, Imām Ibnul Qayyim said:

"Some women used to take care of the night prayer diligently and when asked about that, they'd respond: 'It beautifies the face and I desire a beautiful face.'" [Rawdatul Muhibbeen]

After reading the above, I am certain that some will be eager to turn a new page with this act of worship as of *this* very evening, having finally decided to plug it in within their nightly routine, in hope for a prize, the true extent of which will only be discovered on the Day of Judgement. Let us therefore address a few common questions in preparation for tonight:

- How much should I recite during my night prayer?

The Prophet (sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) said,

"Whoever prays at night, having recited 10 verses, he will not be recorded among the negligent. Whoever prays at night, having recited 100 verses, he will be recorded among those who are obedient to Allāh; and whoever prays at night, having recited 1,000 verses, he will be recorded among the Muqantirīn (gatherers of a Qintār)." [Abū Daawood, on the authority of 'Abdullaah ibn 'Amr ibnul 'Aas]

Linguistically a Qintār refers to:

"An enormous sum of gold. The majority of the linguists are of the view that it equates to 4,000 Dinars [...] others have said that it refers to an unknown amount of wealth." [AnNihaaya fee Ghareebil Hadeeth, Ibnul Atheer]

The Prophet (sall Allāhu 'alayhi wa sallam), however, has given an idea of what he was referring to when he used the term Qintār, for in another narration he said:

*"A Qintār is **better than the entire world** and everything within it."* [at Tabarani]

On a side note, Imām Ibnu Hājar mentioned a benefit, saying:

"From Sūrah Al-Mulk (Chapter 67) until the end of the Qur'ān are 1,000 verses."

- What if my memorisation of Qur'ān is limited?

Then, as Allāh said:

"..then recite what is easy for you from the Qur'ān.." [73: 20]

In fact, Abū Ghālib said that Ibnu ‘Umar b. Al-Khaṭṭāb would at times say to him moments before dawn,

“O Abū Ghaalib, why don’t you pray a few units of night prayer, even if it means that you only recite one third of the Qur’ān?” Abū Ghaalib would respond: “How can I do that when it’s almost dawn?” He said to him:

“Sūrah Al-Ikhlās equates to one third of the Qur’ān!” [Hilyatul Awliyaa]

- What if I set my alarm clock and set an intention to wake up but fail to do so?

Rest assured that Allāh will not leave you empty handed. The Prophet (sall Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam), said:

“Whoever goes to bed whilst intending to pray later on in the night but is overcome by sleep until the next morning, he will be given the full reward according to his intention and his sleep would have been a charity from his Lord upon him.” [AnNasaa’i, on the authority of Abūd Dardaa]

- What if I struggle to experience the sweetness of the night prayer?

The joy of conversing with Allāh during the night brings a joy which no poet could ever describe. The people of the night impatiently count down the hours, minutes and seconds of the day, wishing that they could hurry the sunset as they yearn for those moments of private conversation and desperate supplication with Allāh. Sulaymān AdDārāni said:

*“The joy of the people of the night is **far** sweeter than the joy of the people of play, and if it was not for the night, I would not want to remain alive.” [AlMujaalasa wa Jawaahirul ‘ilm, AdDeenoori]*

These, however, are meanings, emotions and values that cannot be given justice to through words but need to be experienced first-hand. Just as Imām Ibnu Rajab said:

“Whoever does not join them in their joy and tastes the sweetness of their calling will never understand what it is that makes them weep, the same way that those who did not witness the beauty of Yūsuf will never understand why the heart of his father was so hurt.” [Lataa’iful Ma’aarif]

“But why can’t I taste this?!” I hear you ask. Arriving at such an experience will take us time and much determination. At first, one’s soul will complain and whine, preferring rest, sleep and timeout, but when it realises just how determined you are to take it to Allāh and the Home of the Hereafter, it will surrender. It has to.

Thābit Al-Bunāni said:

“I struggled with my night prayer for 20 years, then I enjoyed it for 20 years.” [Hilyatul Awliyaa]

Therefore, congratulations to those who illuminate their graves before they enter it, and to those who please their Lord before they meet Him, and to those who pray before they are prayed upon.

STEPS TO BE TAKEN BEFORE AND AFTER NIGHT PRAYER

1. Have intention to wake up for tahajjud

Upon going to sleep, one should make the intention to perform the tahajjud prayers. Abu ad-Darda' relates that the Prophet sallallahu alehi wasallam said: "Whoever goes to his bed with the intention of getting up and praying during the night, and sleep overcomes him until the morning comes, he will have recorded for him what he had intended, and his sleep will be a charity for him from his Lord." This is related by an-Nasa'i and ibn Majah with a sahih chain.

2. Sleep early

3. Recite the various surah/verses/du'a before sleeping

4. Set up alarm clock

5. Du'a after waking up

وَهُوَ ، الْحَمْدُ وَلَهُ الْمُلْكُ لَهُ ، لَهُ شَرِيكَ لَا دَمُوحَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا إِلَهَ لَا
 اللَّهُ إِلَّا إِلَهَ وَلَا ، لِلَّهِ وَالْحَمْدُ اللَّهُ سُبْحَانَ ، قَدِيرٌ شَيْءٍ كُلِّ عَلَى
 رَبِّ الْعَظِيمِ الْعَلِيِّ بِاللَّهِ إِلَّا قُوَّةَ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا ، أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ
 يَلِ اغْفِرْ

laa ilaaha ill-allaahu waḥdahu laa shareeka lah, lahul-mulku wa lahul-ḥamd, wa huwa 'alaa kulli shay'in qadeer, subḥaan-allaahi wal-ḥamdu lillaah, wa laa ilaaha ill-allaahu wallaahu akbar, wa laa ḥawla wa laa quwwata illaa billaahil-'aliyyil-'azeem rabbigh-fir lee

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever wakes up at night and says: 'None has the right to be worshipped except Allah, alone and with no partner, to Him belongs [all] sovereignty and praise, and He is able to do all things; How far from imperfections Allah is, and all praise is for Allah, and none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, Allah is the greatest, and there is no power nor might except with Allah, The Most High, The Supreme.' and then supplicates: 'O my Lord forgive me.' will be forgiven." In another narration: "and

then asks [for something], he will be answered. If he then performs ablution and prays, his prayer will be accepted."

النُّشُورُ وَإِلَيْهِ أَمَاتْنَا مَا بَعْدَ أَحْيَانَا ذِيَالٍ لِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ

alhamdu lillaahil-ladhee ahyaanaa ba'da maa amaataanaa wa ilayhin-nushoor

All praise is for Allah who gave us life after causing us to die, and unto Him is the resurrection.

Sources: Bukhari No# 6312

6. Immediately do wudhu - try not to press snooze button

Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah (PBUH) said, "When any one of you sleeps, Satan ties three knots at the back of his neck. He recites this incantation at every knot: 'You have a long night, so sleep.' If he awakes and remembers Allah, one knot is loosened. If he performs Wudu', the (second) knot is loosened; and if he performs prayer, (all) knots are loosened. He begins his morning in a happy and refreshed mood; otherwise, he gets up in bad spirits and sluggish state." [Al Bukhari & Muslim]

7. Recite last 10 verses in surah al Imran and do 2 rakaat sunnah before start of tahajjud

One should recite the last ten 'ayat of al-'Imran, starting with, "Lo! In the creation of the heavens and the earth and [in] the difference of night and day are tokens (of His sovereignty) for men of understanding." Then one should say, "O Allah, to You belongs the praise. You are the Light of the heavens and the earth and what is therein. And to You belongs the praise. You are the truth and Your promise is true. And the meeting with You is true. And the paradise is true. And the Fire is true. And the prophets are true. And Muhammad is true. And the Hour is true. O Allah, to You have I submitted. And in You have I believed. And in You have I put my trust. And to You have I turned. And by You I argue. And to You do I turn for my decisions. Forgive me of my former and latter sins, and those done in private and those done in public. You are Allah, there is no God besides Thee."

One should begin Qiyam al-Layil with two quick rak'at and then one may pray whatever one wishes after that. 'Aishah says: "When the Prophet prayed during the late-night, he would begin his prayers with two quick rak'at." Both of these reports are related by Muslim.

8. Ideally - 8 rakaat of tahajjud and 3 rakaat of witr

9. Immediately After witr - say the sunnah invocation:

"سُبْحَانَ الْمَلِكِ الْقُدُّوسِ"

Subhaanal-Malikel-Quddoosi.

Glory is to the King, the Holy. [Recite three times in Arabic, and raise and extend the voice on the third time and say . . .]

"رَبِّ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ."

Rabbil-malaa'ikati warroohi.

Lord of the angels and the Spirit.

Reference: An-Nasa'i 3/244, Ad-Daraqutni and others. The final addition is from Ad-Daraqutni's version 2/ 31 and its chain of narration is authentic. See the checking of Zadul-Ma'ad by Shu'aib Al-Arna'ut and 'Abdul-Qadir Al-Arna'ut 1/337.

10. End witr before the adhan of Fajr

11. Time to do night prayer

The recommended time for tahajjud

Salatul Layil may be performed in the early part of the night, the middle part of the night, or the latter part of the night, but after the obligatory salatul 'isha.

While describing the salah of the Prophet sallallahu alehi wasallam, Anas would say: "If we wanted to see him praying during the night, we could see him praying. If we wanted to see him sleeping during the night, we could see him sleeping. And sometimes he would fast for so many days that we thought he would not leave fasting throughout that month. And sometimes he would not fast (for so many days) that we thought he would not fast during that month." This is related by Ahmad, al-Bukhari, and anNasa' i .

Commenting on this subject, Ibn Hajar says: "There was no specific time in which the Prophet sallallahu alehi wasallam would perform his late night prayer; but he would do whatever was easiest for him."

Best time for tahajjud

It is best to delay this prayer to the last third portion of the night. Abu Hurairah reports that the Messenger of Allah said: "Our Lord descends to the lowest heaven during the last third of the night, inquiring: 'Who will call on Me so that I may respond to him? Who is asking something of Me so I may give it to him? Who is asking for My forgiveness so I may forgive him?'" This is related by the group.

'Amr ibn Abasah reports that he heard the Prophet say: "The closest that a slave comes to his Lord is during the middle of the latter portion of the night. If you can be among those who remember Allah, the Exalted One, at that time then do so." This is related by

al-Hakim who grades it sahih according to Muslim's standards, and at-Tirmizhi calls it hasan sahih. AnNasa'i and Ibn Khuzaimah also recorded it.

Abu Muslim asked Abu Zharr: "Which late-night prayer is the best?" He said: "I asked the Messenger of Allah the same that you asked me and he said, 'The (one done during) middle of the latter half of the night, and very few do it.'" This is related by Ahmad with a good chain.

'Abdullah ibn 'Amr reports that the Prophet said: "The most beloved fast to Allah is the fast of David. And the most beloved prayer to Allah is the prayer of David. He would sleep half of the night and then pray during the next third of the night and then sleep during the last sixth of the night. And he would fast one day and not fast the next." This is related by the group except at-Tirmizhi.

The number of rak'at to be performed during tahajjud: The tahajjud prayer does not entail a specific number of rak'at which must be performed nor is there any maximum limit which has to be performed. It would be fulfilled even if one just prayed one rak'ah of witr after the obligatory night prayer.

Samurah ibn Jundub says: "The Messenger of Allah ordered us to pray during the night, a little or a lot, and to make the last of the prayer the witr prayer." This is related by at-Tabarani and al-Bazzar.

Anas relates that the Messenger of Allah said: "Prayer in my mosque is equal to one thousand prayers [elsewhere]. And prayer in the inviolable mosque is equivalent to one hundred thousand prayers [elsewhere]. And prayer in the battlefield is equivalent to one million prayers [elsewhere]. And what is more than all of that is two rak'at by a slave [of Allah] during the middle of the night." This is reported by Abu ash-Shaikh, Ibn Hibban in his work ath-Thawab, and al-Munzhiri, in his book at-Targhib watTarhib, is silent about it.

Iyas ibn Mu'awiyah al-Mazni reports that the Prophet sallallahu alehi wasallam said: "The night prayer should certainly be performed even if it is for the length of time that it takes one to milk a sheep. And whatever is after the obligatory 'isha is of the tahajjud." This is related by at-Tabarani, and all of its narrators are trustworthy save Muhammad ibn Ishaq.

Ibn 'Abbas relates: "I mentioned the tahajjud prayer and some of the people said that the Prophet sallallahu alehi wasallam said: 'It may be half of the night, a third of the night, a fourth of the night or a fraction of the time for milking a camel or a sheep.'"

Ibn 'Abbas also narrates that the Prophet ordered them and encouraged them to make the tahajjud prayer to the extent that he said: "You should perform salatul layil even if it is just one rak'ah." This is related by at-Tabarani in al-Kabir and al-Awsat.

