

## The Night prayer: Between Rooting and Revelation

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### **Abstract :**

Prayer is a bond between servants and their Lord, a tenet of faith and a pivotal duty. It is the first accountability criterion on the Day of Judgment. A sound prayer resonates throughout the faith, and neglecting it leads to spiritual negligence.

Divine Mercy established complementary practices alongside obligatory acts, elevating recommended deeds. The night prayer (Qiyam al-Layl) is among them, achieved by the spiritually elevated. Its impact is profound, with diverse opinions among scholars regarding its obligation, timing, and performance details.

This prayer serves two roles: it signifies Islam, especially during Ramadan, and concludes recommended prayers, often performed privately for sincerity. Various names—night vigil (Qiyam), Witr (odd-numbered), and Taraweeh (rest prayer)—highlight its diversity. So do these names influence its ruling?

Thus, it is best to begin by clarifying its essence and virtues, and then discussing derived rules and their implications

**Key Words:** fadl; nafila; night; dinner; morning; prayer.

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### **Introduction:**

Praise is due to Allah, and peace and blessings be upon the one after whom there is no prophet. To proceed,

Prayer is the cornerstone of faith and the most emphasized pillar after the foundation of religion. If one's prayers are whole and prompt, their entire religion is sound. Prayer is the prime matter for which individuals will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment. If it is achieved, they will succeed, but if it is disregarded, what follows will be lost.

Out of God's mercy towards His creation, He established fostering acts to accompany prayer, rectifying any deficiencies. He is asked, glorified be His name, by His angels – and He is the most knowledgeable – whether a servant can engage in supererogatory prayers if they relented in their obligatory ones. These voluntary prayers are complementary to what is lacking in the obligatory prayers.

After the obligatory prayers, the most one Sunnah (Customary/non-obligatory) prayer that holds a significant place is the night prayer (Salat al-Layl), an act of worship that connects the heart to Allah. It is a measure of genuine determination and a characteristic of exalted souls. Allah, the Most High, said, "They used to sleep but little of the night, and in the hours of dawn, they were (found) asking for forgiveness." [Surah Adh-Dhariyat - Chapter of Winds ٥١:١٧-١٨] The Messenger of Guidance, peace be upon him, said: "Our Lord, the Glorified and Sublime be he, is pleased with two men: a man who rises from his bed and his blanket between his family and his beloved to engage in his prayer. Our Lord says, 'Look at My servant, who has risen from his bed out of desire for what is with me, and out of awe for what I have.'" Narrated by Ahmad from the narration of Ibn Mas'ud, may Allah be pleased with him".

### **Importance of the Subject:**

It has become a custom among scholars to consider the customary prayers after the Isha prayer as the night vigil (Qiyam al-Layl). However, upon closer investigation, there are some differences in scriptural evidence and the practices of the early predecessors. Therefore, the judicious must scrutinize their rulings, and explore their implications in terms of extent, time, manner of performance, and fulfilment.

### **Issues of the Subject:**

- Do the three types mentioned have the same core even if their names change?
- Do they have specific degrees? Moreover, does the manner and type affect their worth?
- What is the most virtuous time for these prayers? In addition, is there reproof for neglecting them?
- Is Witr dissimilar to Qiyam, and if so, what are the classes and distinctions?

### **Topic Outline:**

From these introductions, it is fitting to clarify certain truths and concepts as keys to the subject. Thus, the first emphasis is related to the concept of the Night Vigil (Qiyam al-Layl), and the second concerns Taraweeh prayers, considering it as an outlet for the main subject. The third is about the Witr prayer, and the fourth section deals with the question of whether the Night Vigil and Witr are the same or separate concepts.

## **I. Definition of the Night Vigil (Qiyam al-Layl)**

### **١.١. Definition of the Night Vigil (Qiyam al-Layl)**

The Night Vigil is the act of vivifying the night with any form of worship, such as prayer, glorification, Quran recitation, and others. It is not a compulsion to spend the whole night in worship, nor is the majority of it necessary. It suffices to engage in worship for a part of the night. Some scholars, like Al-Baydawi, contend that the Night Vigil is synonymous with the Night Prayer itself. On the other hand, others, such as Hasan ibn Ammar, the author of the book "Marāqī al-Falāh," hold that the Night Vigil should comprise a significant portion of the night in worship. (Kuwaiti Ministry of Awqaf, from ١٤٠٤ AH to ١٤٢٧ AH, page ١١٧, c ٣٤)

### **١.٢. The Merits of the Night Vigil:**

#### **A. Mention of the verses related to the Night Vigil and urging Towards It:**

١. Allah, the Most High, said, "Prayer (Tahajjud optional prayer Nawafil) for you (O Muhammad SAW). It may be that your Lord will raise you to Maqaman Mahmuda (a station of praise and glory, i.e. the highest degree in Paradise!)." [Surah Al-Isra- Chapter of the Night Journey, ١٧:٧٩].

٢. He also said: "Their sides forsake their beds" [Surah as-Sajda- Chapter of Adoration, ٣٢:١٦], and: "They used to sleep but little by night [invoking their Lord (Allah) and praying, with fear and hope]" [Surah Adh-Dharyat- Chapter of Winds, ٥١:١٧].

٣. In addition, He said, " And those who spend the night before their Lord prostrate and standing " [Surah Al-Furqan- Chapter of Criterion, ٢٥:٦٤].

### **B. The Night Vigil as Worship and Gratitude:**

Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim from the narration of Aisha, may Allah be pleased with her, that the Prophet ﷺ used to stand in prayer during the night until his feet swelled. Aisha asked, "Why do you do this, O Messenger of Allah, while Allah has forgiven your former and latter sins?" He replied, "Should I not be a grateful servant?" (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ٤٨٣٧) (Muslim, DT, page ٢٨٢٠).

### **C. The Merits of the Night Vigil as a Means to Enter Paradise and Elevate Ranks Therein:**

A. Narrated by At-Tirmidhi with an authentic chain of transmission from Abdullah ibn Salam, may Allah be pleased with him, who said, The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "O people, exchange greetings of peace (i.e., say Assalamo Alaikum to one another), feed people, strengthen ties of kinship, and be in prayer when others are asleep, you will enter Jannah (Paradise) in peace." (Tirmidhi, ١٣٩٥ AH-١٩٧٥ AD, page no. ٢٤٨٥).

B. Imam Ahmad narrated in his transmitted chain from Abu Malik Al-Ash'ari, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Indeed, in Paradise, there are rooms, the outside of which can be seen from within, and the inside from without which Allah has prepared for those who speak gently, provide food, observe frequent fasting, and pray at night while people are asleep." (Ibn Hanbal, ١٤١٦ AH-١٩٩٥ AD, page no. ٢٢٩٠٥).

### **D. The Night Vigil as a Means of Expiating Sins:**

Tirmidhi reported from Abu Umamah Al-Bahili, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet ﷺ said, " Make a practice of getting up at night, for it was the custom of the pious before you, is a means of bringing you near to your Lord, an atonement for evil deeds and a preventative of wrongdoing " (Tirmidhi, ١٣٩٥ AH-١٩٧٥ AD, page after hadith ٣٥٤٩).

### **E. The Night Vigil as the Best Prayer after the Obligatory Ones:**

Narrated by Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The most superior prayer after the obligatory prayers is the night prayer." (Muslim, DT, p. ١١٦٣)

### **١.٢. The Time of the Prophet's Night Vigil (Qiyam al-Layl):**

The Prophet ﷺ used to engage in the Night Vigil at diverse times, sometimes in the middle of the night, slightly before it, or a bit after it. Occasionally, he would stand

for prayer upon hearing the crowing of the rooster, which is in the second half of the night.

#### **A. Evidence from the Sunnah:**

- Narrated by the two Sheikhs (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) from the narration of Abdullah ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with them, who said: "He spent the night with Maimuna, the mother of believers, who was his aunt. In it, he prayed at night. Abdullah ibn Abbas said, 'I also stood up and did the same, as the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had done, and then went to him and stood by his side. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ placed his right hand upon my head and took hold of my right ear and twisted it, and then observed a pair of rak'ahs, again a pair of rak'ahs, again a pair of rak'ahs, again a pair of rak'ahs, again a pair of rak'ahs, again a pair of rak'ahs, and then observed Witr and then lay down till the Mu'adhdhin came to him. He (the Holy Prophet) then stood up and observed two short rak'ahs, and then went out (to the mosque) and prayed Fajr- the dawn prayer." (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ١١٩٨), (Muslim, DT, page no. ٧٦٣).

A٢. As reported by Masruq ibn al-Aswad who said, I asked Aisha, May Allah be pleased with her, "What deed was most beloved to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ?" She said, "Continuous deeds." "I then asked, "What time does he get up to pray?" She said, "He used to get up when hearing the cockcrow." (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ٦٤٦١), (Muslim, DT, page no. ٧٤١).

#### **١,٣. The Ruling of the Night Vigil (Qiyam al-Layl): Customary practice**

##### **Evidence:**

##### **Firstly, from the Sunnah:**

- Narrated by Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Prophet ﷺ said, "The most superior prayer after that which is obligatory is one in the depth of the night." (Muslim, DT, p. ١١٦٣).

- Narrated by Abdullah ibn Salam, may Allah be pleased with him, who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "O people, exchange greetings of peace, feed people, strengthen family ties, pray at night while others are asleep, and you will enter Paradise in peace." (Tirmidhi, ١٣٩٥ AH-١٩٧٥ AD, page no. ٢٤٨٥)

##### **Secondly, Consensus (Ijma') on the Sunnah of the Night Vigil:**

Consensus has been reported on the Sunnah of performing the Night Vigil prayer for the entire community. This consensus is mentioned by Ibn Abd al-Barr, Imam al-Nawawi, Ibn Hazm, and Ibn Hajar.

#### **١,٤. The Number of Rak'ahs – Prayer Units in the Night Vigil Prayer:**

There is no fixed number of Rak'ahs- prayer units for the Night Vigil prayer; it can be increased or decreased.

##### **Evidence from the Sunnah:**

- Narrated by Abu Salama ibn Abd al-Rahman he asked Aisha, May Allah be pleased with her, "How was the prayer of Allah's Messenger ﷺ in the month of Ramadan?" She replied, "He used not to pray more than eleven rak'ahs whether in Ramadan or any other month. He used to offer four rak'ahs, let alone their beauty and length, and

then four rak'ahs, let alone their beauty and length. Afterwards, he would offer three rak'ahs. "(Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ٢٠١٣), (Muslim, DT, p. ٨٣٧).

- Narrated by Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with both of them, that A man asked the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about prayer at night and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Prayer at night is two by two, then if one of you fears that dawn will break, pray one rak'ah to make the total number that he prayed odd." (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ١٤٢٢), (Muslim, DT, page ٧٦٤).

Indication: The indication is that the Prophet ﷺ did not set a specific number of Rak'ahs that a person should pray before the Witr prayer.

### **Consensus (Ijma'):**

Consensus has been reported on this by Ibn Abd al-Barr, Qadi Ayyad, and al-Iraqi. (Ibn Abd al-Barr, ١٤٢١ AH, page ٩٨, part ٢), (Ayyad, ١٤١٩ AH-١٩٩٨ AD, page ٨٢, part ٣), (Al-Iraqi, d.t., p. ٤٣, vol. ٣).

### **١,٥. The Description of the Night Vigil Prayer:**

The night prayer is performed in pairs of two Rak'ahs each. This is the consensus of the majority of scholars including the Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools, as well as the opinion of Abu Yusuf and Muhammad from the Hanafi School. Ibn Baz and Ibn Uthaymin have also chosen this view. (Al-Hattab, ١٤١٢ AH-١٩٩٢ AD, page ٤٦٤, part ٢), (Al-Bahooti, ١٤١٤ AH-١٩٩٣ AD, page ٢٤٨, part ١), (Al-Sarkhsi, ١٤١٣ AH-١٩٩٣ AD, page ١٤٧, part ١).

### **Evidence from the Sunnah:**

- Narrated by Abdullah bin Umar, may Allah be pleased with both of them, who said, The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The night prayer consists of pairs and when you see the approach of dawn, make this number odd by one rak'ah. It was said to Ibn 'Umar: What does the (word) pair imply? He said: (It means) that salutation is uttered after every two rak'ahs. " (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ١١٣٧), (Muslim, d.t., p. ٧٤٩).

### **١,٦. What is prophetically recommended Before Standing for Night Prayer (Qiyam), and Beginning with Two Light Rak'ahs:**

**First Issue:** What is Prophetically Recommended before Standing for Night Prayer (Qiyam):

Firstly, it is regarded with favour for anyone who intends to stand for night prayer to wipe sleep off his face, use the Siwak (tooth-stick), and extol Allah the Almighty. The evidence for this is the Hadith of Maimuna, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, when her nephew, Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with both of them, stayed with her.

**Second Issue:** Performing Two Light Rak'ahs at the Beginning of the Night Prayer: It is considered recommendable for anyone who intends to stand for night prayer to start with two light Rak'ahs.

### **Evidence from the Sunnah:**

- Narrated by Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), she said, "When the Prophet stood up at night to pray he began his prayer with two short *rak'as*." (Muslim, d.t., p. ٧٦٧).

- Narrated by Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him), from the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said, "When any one of you gets up at night, he should begin the prayer with two short rak'ahs." (Muslim, d.t., p. ٧٦٨).

### ١.٧. Ruling of Consistently Performing the Night Prayer in its Entirety:

It is not intended to consistently perform the night prayer in its entirety every night. This ruling is supported by the Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools of thought.

#### Evidence from the Sunnah:

- Narrated by Abdullah bin Amr (may Allah be pleased with him), the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said to him: "The prayer dearest to God is David's and the fasting dearest to God is David's. He would sleep half the night, get up to pray for a third of it, then sleep the remaining sixth; and he would fast on alternate days." (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page ١١٣١), (Muslim, DT, page ١١٥٩).

### ١.٨. Ruling for One Who Misses the Night Prayer:

Whoever misses the night prayer and performs it during the day, the Hanbali school of thought stipulates this, and Ibn Al-Arabi from the Maliki School, Ibn Taymiyyah, Al-Shawkani, Ibn Qayyim, Ibn Baz, and Ibn Uthaymeen support it. (Al-Bahooti, ١٤١٤ AH-١٩٩٣ AD, page ٤٤١, part ١), (Ibn al-Arabi, ١٤٢٤ AH-٢٠٠٣ AD, page ٣٣١, part ٤), (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, ١٤١٥ AH-١٩٩٤ AD, page ٣٢٤, part ١).

Evidence from the Sunnah: Narrated by Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), she said: "When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not pray at night because he was prevented from doing so by sleep- meaning, sleep overwhelmed him- or by pain, he would pray twelve rak'ahs during the day." (Muslim, DT, p. ٧٤٦).

## II. Taraweeh:

### ٢.١. Definition of Taraweeh:

Linguistic Definition of Taraweeh: Taraweeh is the plural of "Tarawihah," which refers to a single instance of rest. The term "tarawih" was used because people used to prolong their standing, bowing, and prostration during it. They would pray four rak'ahs, then take a break, and then resume prayer for another four rak'ahs, followed by a break, and finally, they would pray three rak'ahs. (Ibn Manzur, ١٤١٤ AH, page ٤٦٢, part ٢).

### Taraweeh, Terminological Definition:

Taraweeh prayer is the night prayer performed during Ramadan. Al-Nawawi said, "By 'qiyam Ramadan' (standing in Ramadan) what is meant is Taraweeh prayer." (Al-Nawawi, Al-Minhaj Sharh Muslim bin Al-Hajjaj, ١٣٩٢ AH, page ٣٩, part ٦).

### ٢.٢. Virtues of Taraweeh Prayer:

- Taraweeh prayer is a means for the forgiveness of past sins:

Narrated by Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him), he said, "God's Messenger used to commend prayer at night in Ramadan, but did not command it as a duty. He would say, "If anyone prays during the night in Ramadan because of faith and seeking his reward from God, his former sins will be forgiven him." (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ٢٠٠٩), (Muslim, DT, p. ٧٥٩).



- Whoever prays Qiyam with the *imam* until he finishes will have the reward of a full night's prayer:

Narrated by Abu Dharr (may Allah be pleased with him), he said, I asked, "Messenger of God, I wish you had led us in supererogatory prayers during the whole of this night." He replied, "When a man prays with an *imam* till he goes away he is reckoned as having spent a night in prayer." (Al-Tirmidhi, ١٣٩٥ AH-١٩٧٥ AD, page no. ٨٠٦ and said: Hasan Sahih).

- Whoever prays Qiyam continuously until his death will be associated with the upright and the martyrs:

Narrated by Amr ibn Murrah al-Juhani: A man from the Quda'ah tribe came to the Prophet ﷺ and said, "I have testified that there is no god but Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah. I have performed the five obligatory prayers, fasted in Ramadan, and stood for its prayers. I have paid the zakat (poor dues)." The Prophet ﷺ then said, "Whoever dies while holding on to these will be amongst the upright and the martyrs." (Ibn Khuzaymah, ١٤٢٤ AH-٢٠٠٣ AD, page no. ٢٢١٢).

**٢.٣. Ruling of Taraweeh Prayer:** Taraweeh prayer is a confirmed Sunnah.

**Evidence:**

**Firstly, From the Sunnah:**

- Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) reported: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prayed one night in the mosque and people also prayed along with him. He then prayed on the following night and there were many persons. Then on the third or fourth night (many people) gathered there, but the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not come out to them (to lead the Tarawih prayer). When it was morning he said, "I saw what you were doing, but I desisted to come to you (and lead the prayer) for I feared that this prayer might become obligatory for you." (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ١١٢٩), (Muslim, d.t., p. ٧٦١).

**Secondly: By Consensus:**

Consensus is transmitted on its consideration as a Sunnah: Al-Nawawi and Al-San'ani. Al-Nawawi said: "Taraweeh prayer is a Sunnah by consensus of scholars." (Al-Nawawi - Al-Majmoo' Sharh Al-Muhdhab (with the complement of Al-Subki and Al-Mutai'i), d.t., page ٣٧, part ٤), and Al-San'ani said: (Qiyaam Ramadan Sunnah without dispute). (Al-San'ani, d.t., p. ١١, part ٢).

**٢.٤. Ruling of Performing Taraweeh Prayer in Congregation in the Mosque:**

Performing the Taraweeh prayer in a congregation in the mosque is better than performing it alone.

**Evidence:**

**Firstly, From the Sunnah:**

Narrated by Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her): "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ prayed one night in the mosque and people also prayed along with him. He then prayed on the following night and there were many persons. Then on the third or fourth night, (many people) gathered there, but the Messenger of Allah ﷺ did not come out to them (to lead the Tarawih prayer). When it was morning, he said, "I saw

what you were doing, but I desisted to come to you (and lead the prayer) for I feared that this prayer might become obligatory for you.”

‘And that happened in Ramadan.’ (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ١١٢٩), (Muslim, d.t., p. ٧٦١).

### **Secondly, Based on Consensus:**

There is a transmitted consensus on this matter by Ibn Abd al-Barr, Ibn Qudamah, and others.

Note: Is it better to perform Taraweeh prayer in mosques or is it preferable to establish it at home?

- Al-Tahawi said, "It has been unanimously agreed that people are not allowed to abey mosques from performing the voluntary night prayer in Ramadan. Performing this prayer was collectively obligatory. Whoever performed it collectively was better than one who performed it individually." (Al-Tahawi, ١٤١٧ AH, page ٣١٥, part ١). Ibn Qudamah stated, "Praying Taraweeh in congregation is better. However, if a person is followed as an imam, then he can pray it independently at home. I feared that people might take him as an imam, and it has been narrated from the Prophet ﷺ, 'Follow the caliphs.' It has also been narrated that Umar used to pray in the congregation... and the practice of the companions confirms that. The Prophet ﷺ gathered his companions and family in the narration of Abu Dharr, where he said, 'When people pray behind the imam until he finishes, they are reckoned as having spent a night in prayer.'" (Ibn Qudamah, d.t., p. ١٢٤, vol. ٢) .

Even the Maliki School, which deems it recommended performing Taraweeh at home, mentions conditions to it. Al-Sawi al-Maliki said, "The recommendation to perform it at home is conditional upon three terms:

- Not suspending the mosques.
- Briskly performing it at home.
- Not being adjacent to the Haramain.

Then he said – may Allah have mercy on him – 'If any of these conditions are not met, performing it in the mosque is better.'" (Al-Sawi, ١٣٧٢ AH-١٩٥٢ AD, page ١٤٦, part ١).

### **Thirdly, From the Narrations:**

Narrated by Abd al-Rahman ibn Abd al-Qari: "I went out with Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) during a night in Ramadan to the mosque, when, behold the people were scattered and praying individually, one man prayed alone, while another man prayed and others followed his prayer. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: 'I think if I gathered these people behind one reciter, it would be better.' Therefore, he resolved to gather them behind Ubayy ibn Ka'b. I went out with him on another night, and people were praying following their individual reciter. Umar said, 'What an excellent innovation this is,' the one they were neglecting. He meant the last part of the night, while people usually stood at the beginning of it." (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ٢٠١٠).

### **٢.٥. Timing of Taraweeh Prayer:**

The Sunnah for Taraweeh prayer is to be performed after the last Isha prayer.



### Evidence from Consensus:

There is consensus amongst the predecessors and scholars on this matter, Ibn Taymiyyah conveyed, that the practice of the *imams*, from the time of the Prophet ﷺ and his righteous successors, was to pray Taraweeh after Isha prayer. The Muslim *imams* also followed this practice; no one is known to have purposely prayed it before Isha. This is what is referred to as the Qiyam of Ramadan. Shaykh al-Islam, in his comprehensive work, states: "The Sunnah for Taraweeh prayer is to perform it after the last Isha prayer, as agreed upon by the predecessors and scholars." (Ibn Taymiyyah, ١٤١٦ AH-١٩٩٥ AD, pp. ١١٩-١٢٠, vol. ٢٣).

### ٢,٦. Number of Rak'ahs in Taraweeh Prayer:

The discussion concerning the number of rak'ahs in the Qiyam prayer has been formerly addressed.

### ٢,٧. Recitation in Taraweeh Prayer:

There is no fixed amount for the recitation of the Quran in Taraweeh prayer, and reciting it entirely is recommended, and there is consensus on this matter; this is to enable people to hear the entirety of the Quran, as the Quran was revealed during the month of Ramadan; and because Angel Gabriel used to teach the Prophet ﷺ the Quran during Ramadan.

The author of "Nihayat al-Uqool" stated: The specific quantity of recitation in each rak'ah is not stipulated by evidence. (Al-Shawkani, ١٤١٣ AH-١٩٩٣ AD, page ٥٣, part ٥). Ibn Baz stated in his fatwa: The matter is broad in this regard. (Ibn Baz, d.t., p. ٣٣٠, vol. ١١). The author of "Bada'i as-Sana'i" mentioned that the Sunnah is to complete the recitation of the Quran once in Taraweeh, following the statement of Abu Hanifah and the practice of Umar, and this is deemed virtuous. It is also endorsed to complete the recitation two or three times. This was during their time. As for our time, it is preferable for the *imam* to recite according to the congregation's inclination and enthusiasm, reciting an amount that does not discourage people from congregational prayer. Growing congregational attendance is better than prolonging the recitation. (Al-Kasani, ١٤٠٦ AH-١٩٨٦ AD, page ٢٨٩, part ١).

### ٢,٨. Reciting Aloud during Taraweeh Prayers:

It is recommended to recite aloud during the Taraweeh prayers.

The evidence from consensus (ijmaa'):

Al-Nawawi stated in "Al-Tibyan": "The Muslims unanimously agree on the recommendation of reciting aloud during... the Taraweeh prayers and the Witr prayer following it." (Al-Nawawi, Al-Tibyan fi Etiquette of the Qur'an Campaign, ١٤١٤ AH-١٩٩٤ AD, p. ١٢٩).

## III. Witr Prayer:

### ٣. Ruling of the Witr Prayer:

The Witr prayer is a confirmed Sunnah, and this is the consensus of the majority: the Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools and a narration from Abu Hanifa. Abu Yusuf and Muhammad ibn al-Hasan, among the Hanafis, also adopted this opinion, which is the view of most scholars. (Al-Mawaq, ١٤١٦ AH-١٩٩٤ AD, page ٧٥, part ٢), (Al-Nawawi - Al-Majmoo' Sharh Al-Muhdhab (with the complement of Al-Subki and

Al-Mutai'i), d.t., page ١٩, part ٤), (Ibn Qudamah, d.t., pp. ١١٨-١١٩, vol. ٢), (Ibn Najim, d.t., p. ٤٠, vol. ٢).

### ٣.١. Evidences: First: From the Quran:

Allah, the Almighty, says, " Guard strictly (five obligatory) As-Salawat (the prayers) especially the middle Salat (i.e. the best prayer - 'Asr). And, stand before Allah with obedience [and do not speak to others during the Salat (prayers)] " [Al-Baqarah: ٢٣٨] The indication is that if Witr prayer were obligatory, then the obligatory prayers would be six, and the six (prayers) cannot have a middle (prayer), so it is known that they are five.

### Secondly, Regarding the Sunnah:

- On the authority of Talhah ibn 'Ubaidullah, may Allah be pleased with him, who reported that a man came to the Prophet ﷺ and asked, "What is Islam?" He replied, " Five times of prayer each day and night: He asked: Must I observe any more than them? He replied, No, unless you do it voluntarily. The man then said I swear by Allah, I shall not add anything to this or fall short of it. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: The man will be successful if he speaks the truth. " (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ٤٦), (Muslim, D.T., p. ١١).

- Ali, May Allah be pleased with him, said: "The Witr prayer is not obligatory as the prescribed prayer is [i.e. the five daily prayers], but it is a Sunnah which was established by the practice of Allah's Messenger ﷺ". (Tirmidhi, ١٣٩٥ AH-١٩٧٥ AD, page no. ٤٥٣ and Hassana) .

Implication: Ali's statement clarifies that Witr is not obligatory in the same definitive manner as the prescribed prayers with their fixed structures. Instead, it is a practice established by the Prophet's ﷺ example.

### ٣.٢. The Timing of Witr Prayer:

The first time for Witr prayer starts after the Isha prayer and its last time is until the break of dawn (Fajr). This is the consensus of the majority of scholars: the Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools of thought. It is also the view of Abu Yusuf and Muhammad ibn al-Hasan from the Hanafi School. The consensus of scholars is reported regarding this matter. (Ibn Rajab, ١٤١٧ AH-١٩٩٦ AD, page ٢٢٤, part ٦).

### Evidence: First: From the Sunnah:

- Abdullah bin Umar reported that a man asked the Prophet ﷺ while I was with him: "O Messenger of Allah, what is the night prayer?" He replied: "It consists of pairs of rak'ahs, but if you apprehend morning, you should pray one rak'ah and make the end of your prayer as Witr." (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ٤٧٢), (Muslim, d.t., p. ٧٤٩)

- Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Hasten to pray a Witr before dawn." (Muslim, DT, page ٧٥٠).

- Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him, reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: "Offer Witr prayer before it is morning." (Muslim, DT, page no. ٧٥٤).

- He also said, "Witr prayer is a single Rak'ah at the end of the night." (Muslim, DT, page ٧٥٢).

- Nafi' reported that Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both, used to say: "Whoever prays at night, let him make his last prayer a Witr prayer before dawn. This is how the Messenger of Allah commanded them." (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ٤٧٢), (Muslim, DT, page ٧٥١).

**Secondly**, the consensus is that its earliest time is after the Isha prayer.

The consensus on this was reported by Al-Maruzi, Ibn al-Mundhir, and Ibn Abd al-Barr. The author of "Al-Istidhkar" said, "Early scholars and later generations differed about the ending time of Witr prayer after unanimously agreeing that its earliest time is after Isha prayer and that the entire night, until dawn breaks, is its time. Thus, some of them said, Witr should not be prayed after dawn has risen. Its time is from Isha prayer until dawn; once dawn breaks, no Witr prayer should be performed." (Ibn Abd al-Barr, ١٤٢١ AH, page ١٢٢, part ٢).

### ٣.٣. The Number of Rak'ahs in Witr Prayer:

#### A. Witr with a Single Rak'ah:

Offering Witr with a single, separate Rak'ah from what preceded it is permissible. This is the consensus of the majority of scholars: the Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools of thought. It is also the view of a group among the early scholars. Al-Nawawi stated in his commentary on Al-Muhadhdhab: "Our school's opinion is that the minimum is one Rak'ah, and the maximum is eleven, and there is a valid opinion for thirteen, and anything in between is permissible. The closer it is to the higher limit, the better. This is the position of the majority of scholars among the Companions and their followers and those who followed them." (Al-Nawawi, Al-Majmoo' Sharh Al-Muhdhab (with the complement of Al-Subki and Al-Mutai'i), d.t., pp. ٢١-٢٢, part ٤). He also mentioned in "Tartib al-Tathrib": "The view of Malik, Shafi'i, Ahmad, and the majority is the permissibility of performing Witr with a single Rak'ah." (Al-Iraqi, DT, page ٧٨, part ٣).

#### Evidence: First: From the Sunnah

- Narrated by Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with them both: "A man asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) about prayer at night and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: "Prayer at night is two by two, then if one of you fears that dawn will break, pray one rak'ah to make the total number that he prayed odd." (Previously cited).

- Narrated by Abu Ayyub, may Allah be pleased with him: The Prophet ﷺ said, "The Witr is a duty for every Muslim, so if anyone wishes to observe it with five *rak'as* he may do so; if anyone wishes to observe it with three he may do so; and if anyone wishes to observe it with one he may do so." (Abu Dawood, D.T., p. ١٤٢٢).

#### Second: From the Traces (Athar)

- Narrated by Nafi': "Abdullah ibn Umar used to make Taslim - final salutations-between the Rak'ah and the two Rak'ahs in Witr until he commanded for something he needed." (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ٩٩١).

- From Ibn Abbas (may Allah be pleased with both of them), it was said to him, "Do you have anything to say about the Commander of the Believers (Caliph), Muawiya? He only prays Witr with one (rak'ah)?" He replied, "He is correct. Indeed, he is a

knowledgeable person!" In another narration, "Leave him, for he accompanied the Prophet ﷺ." (Bukhari, ١٤٢٢ AH, page no. ٣٧٦٦).

### **B. Witr comprises three consecutive rak'ahs with one Tashahhud (Testification):**

Praying Witr with three consecutive rak'ahs is permissible. This is the view of the Shafi'i and Hanbali Schools of thought, and it is the chosen opinion of some early scholars, Ibn Taymiyyah also adopted this view. He said - May Allah have mercy on him - in his jurisprudential choices: "One is given the choice in Witr between separating the rak'ahs and making them consecutive." (Ibn Taymiyyah, Fiqh Choices, ١٤٣٥ AH, p. ٤٢٧) .

#### **Evidence: First: From the Sunnah:**

A. From Abu Ayyub (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet ﷺ said, "The Witr is a duty for every Muslim, so if anyone wishes to observe it with five *rak'as* he may do so; if anyone wishes to observe it with three he may do so; and if anyone wishes to observe it with one he may do so." This hadith is narrated by Abu Dawood and its chain is considered good according to Imam Nawawi in *Al-Majmu'*. (Abu Dawood, D.T., p. ١٤٢٢), and (Al-Nawawi - *Al-Majmoo'* Sharh *Al-Muhdhab* (with the complement of *Al-Subki* and *Al-Mutai'i*), d.t., page ١٧, part ٤).

### **C. Witr consists of three consecutive rak'ahs with two Tashahhuds:**

Praying Witr with three consecutive rak'ahs connected by two Tashahhuds is not decreed, resembling the format of Maghrib prayer. This is the view of the Hanbali School of thought, and it is an option among the Shafi'i school of thought. It is also the chosen opinion of Ibn Baz and Ibn 'Uthaymeen. (Ibn 'Uthaymeen, ١٤١٣ AH, pp. ١٦٦-١٦٧, vol. ١٤).

#### **Evidence from the Sunnah:**

Narrated by Abu Huraira (may Allah be pleased with him), from the Prophet ﷺ who said, "Do not pray Witr with three rak'ahs; pray Witr with five or seven. Do not resemble the Maghrib prayer." (Al-Hakim, ١٤١١ AH-١٩٩٠ AD, page no. ١١٣٨).

#### **Significance of the Evidence:**

The option of praying Witr with three rak'ahs while including two Tashahhuds is achieved by combining the hadiths about Witr being prayed with three rak'ahs and the hadith that prohibits praying Witr exactly like Maghrib.

### **D. Performing Witr in five, seven, or nine rak'ahs:**

Praying Witr with five rak'ahs involves making the taslim only in the last rak'ah. Praying Witr with seven rak'ahs involves making the taslim only in the last rak'ah, and one has the option to sit for Tashahhud in the sixth rak'ah before standing for the seventh. Praying Witr with nine rak'ahs involves reciting the taslim after eight rak'ahs, then sitting for Tashahhud in the eighth rak'ah before standing for the ninth, followed by the final Tashahhud and taslim. This is the view of the Shafi'i School of thought and a valid perspective among the Hanbali School. It is also Ibn Baz's chosen opinion.

#### **Evidence from the Sunnah:**

- Narrated by Abu Ayyub (may Allah be pleased with him), the Prophet ﷺ said, "The Witr is a duty for every Muslim, so if anyone wishes to observe it with five *rak'as* he may do so; if anyone wishes to observe it with three he may do so; and if anyone wishes to observe it with one he may do so." (Abu Dawood, D.T., p. ١٤١٩).

- Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) reported: "When the Messenger of Allah ﷺ grew old and his flesh shrank, he prayed seven rak'ahs of Witr, and he would not sit except in the last of them." (An-Nasa'i, ١٤٠٦ AH-١٩٨٦ AD, page no. ١٧١٨).

- Narrated by Umm Salamah, she said: "The Messenger of Allah ﷺ used to perform Witr prayer with five and seven rak'ahs, and he would separate between them neither with salutations nor speech." (Al-Nasa'i, ١٤٠٦ AH-١٩٨٦ AD, page no. ١٧١٤).

**Benefit:** Abdullah ibn Abi Qays reported: I asked A'isha how many Rak'ahs God's Messenger prayed when observing a Witr and she replied, "He used to observe a Witr with four and three, six and three, eight and three, and ten and three, never observing one with less than seven or more than thirteen." (Abu Dawood, d.t., p. ١٣٦٢).

In Al-Mirqat: "It would be eleven rak'ahs (and ten and three): making it thirteen rak'ahs in total. When adding three rak'ahs in each set, there is a clear indication that Witr prayer, in reality, consists of three rak'ahs. The acts preceding it, known as the prelude to the Witr prayer, are metaphorically included under the term "Witr." This is supported by the authentic hadith: "Make the last of your prayer at night an odd number." (And he did not pray Witr with less than seven rak'ahs, nor more than thirteen rak'ahs), meaning usually. However, it has been established that he prayed Witr with fifteen rak'ahs.

Al-Nawawi said: This disparity is based on what was available in terms of extended time or the length of recitation, as indicated in the hadith of Hudhayfah and Ibn Mas'ud. Or it could be due to sleep, illness, or old age. She said: So when he grew older, he prayed four rak'ahs or others, as reported by al-Tayyibi. (Al-Mulla Qari, ١٤٢٢ AH-٢٠٠٢ AD, page ٩٤٥, part ٣).

**٣,٤. The Time for Witr:** It was narrated from the hadith of Ibn Umar that the Prophet ﷺ said: "Hasten to pray Witr before dawn." (Muslim, DT, page ٧٥٠).

This means to perform the Witr prayer before the break of dawn, and the matter is obligatory.

It is mentioned in "Marqat al-Mafatih": "The matter of obligation, as explained in our adherence to the teachings of the Sunnah, is that the Witr prayer is deemed obligatory. It has been asserted that there is no Witr prayer after the Fajr dawn prayer. This stance is attributed to 'Ata, and it is the view upheld by both Imam Ahmed and Imam Malik. Others have diverged, stating that Witr can be made up whenever it has been missed. This view is attributed to Sufyan al-Thawri. The more prominent opinion by the teachings of Imam al-Shafi'i is based on a narration attributed to him: 'Whoever falls asleep and misses the Witr prayer should perform it upon awakening.' This narration is cited by al-Tayyibi. The school of thought of Imam Abu Hanifa holds that making up the Witr prayer is obligatory, even if the worshipper has a consistent routine and has performed the Fajr prayer before Witr, recollecting it. This

perspective is not considered valid. (Narrated by Muslim). Mirk added that this narration is also conveyed by al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Hibban, and Ahmad."

Narrated by Jabir, may Allah be pleased with him, that the Messenger of Allah, ﷺ, said: "If anyone is afraid that he may not get up in the latter part of the night, he should observe a Witr in the first part of it; and if anyone is eager to get up in the last part of it he should observe a Witr at the end of the night, for prayer is attended by the angels, and that is most excellent. " (Muslim).

The Witr prayer is performed during the pre-dawn hours, which is the last third of the night. It seems evident that the pre-dawn time does not negate its latter part, for what is meant by it is the final one-third of the night, encompassing both the beginning and the end of the pre-dawn period.

Narrated by Abu Huraira, may Allah be pleased with him: "My close friend (the Prophet ﷺ) recommended to fast three days every month, to pray two Rak'ahs in the forenoon, and to observe a Witr before going to sleep." (Agreed upon).

(And to pray Witr before sleeping): Ibn Hajar said: It is said that the reason behind this is that he, may Allah be pleased with him, used to spend the first part of his night memorizing the numerous Ahadith that others could not match him in memorizing, among the majority of the Companions. Therefore, a considerable portion of his early night would be taken up with this, and he would hardly desire to wake up at the end of the night. Therefore, he instructed him (to perform) Witr before sleeping because of his preoccupation with what was more important. And it is possible that there could be another reason, and Allah knows best. (Al-Mulla Qari, ١٤٢٢ AH-٢٠٠٢ AD, pp. ٣٤٣-٣٤٤, vol. ٣).

It is known that the time for Witr is between the Isha prayer and the break of dawn. His practice (ﷺ) was to perform it at the beginning and middle of the night, this clarifies its permissibility; Delaying it until the end of the night indicates the preferable option for those who are attentive. Some of the predecessors used to pray Witr at the beginning of the night, including Abu Bakr, Uthman, Abu Huraira, and Rafi' ibn Khadij. And some of them prayed Witr at the end of the night, including Umar ibn al-Khattab, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Ibn Mas'ud, Abu al-Darda', Ibn Abbas, Ibn Umar, and others from the Tabi'un.

Some of them performed Witr prayer during the latter part of the night, including individuals like Umar ibn al-Khattab, Ali ibn Abi Talib, Ibn Masood, Abu Darda, Ibn Abbas, Ibn Umar, and others among the followers of the Prophet ﷺ.

### ٣.٥. Is Qiyam the same as Witr?

It is established that any prayer performed after Isha is considered Qiyam (Night Prayer). Furthermore, the Prophet ﷺ instructed people to make the Witr prayer the final prayer of the night, while advising some to perform it before sleeping. This division encompasses various circumstances.

However, scholars have differed on whether the Night Prayer (Qiyam) and Witr are intertwined or distinct, the distinction between them is subtle and delicate, yet they have varied characteristics. Modern scholars sometimes consider them as two distinct prayers and establish separate discussions for each, associating the Night Prayer with Witr through opposite arrangements of topics, maintaining their



interconnectedness. This view is held by the Hanafi school of thought, where they state that Witr is a segment of the Night Prayer that has become an independent prayer due to its distinctive recitation, description, and number of units.

On the other hand, the Shafi'i school of thought does not make a clear distinction between them, except that they consider the minimum units of Witr to be one, and they agree that the maximum units of Witr are eleven, differing on whether it can be thirteen units. There is an incident where the Prophet ﷺ woke his household for Witr but not for the Night Prayer, and the command to perform Witr prayer earlier in the night for those who are not confident in their attentiveness in the latter part of the night. Additionally, deliberate neglecting of Witr prayer renders a person's testimony inadmissible, even according to Imam Ahmad.

Just as they debated whether Witr is fulfilled with a single unit (rak'ah) or requires two units (rak'atayn) - the Night Prayer (Salat al-Layl) in pairs - similarly, if any one of you fears the approach of dawn, they should perform Witr. This hadith implies that the term "perform Witr" signifies the singular unit, which is the prescribed Witr according to Islamic law. The aspect of giving preference to it means to act Witr. In this context, the hadith serves as evidence that Witr is indeed a single unit, aligning with the view held by the Shafi'i school, may Allah exalt their mention.

Just as the apparent stance of Imam Malik in his "Muwatta" is that Witr consists of three units with two salutations (taslimatayn) - an obligation that cannot be validly performed with a single unit - commentators have interpreted his statement. They argued that the intent was to negate perfection, and they leaned toward the recommendation of three units while affirming the validity of a single unit. Imam Ahmad, may Allah exalt his mention, also held a view close to this.

### **Conclusion:**

- The Taraweeh prayer is a part of the Night Prayer (Qiyam al-Layl).
- It is decreed to perform it in a congregation, and it is recommended to perform it in mosques and one's own homes, following the view of the majority of scholars. This is also the view of the Maliki School unless its conditions cannot be met (such as fearing the disruption of congregational prayers in the mosques, or if a person's condition prevents them).
- Whoever prays with the *imam* until he concludes the prayer, a complete night's worth of prayer will be recorded for them.
- It is preferable to perform the Taraweeh prayer during the early part of the night, but if performed later, it is still recommended. However, this is to ease the burden on people.
- Taraweeh prayer can be performed in any number, as long as the units (rak'ahs) count is maintained. Although it is authentically reported that Aisha mentioned the Prophet ﷺ performed eleven units, the specific number of units may vary depending on individual considerations.

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