

Home > Self Building > The Means of Perfection and God's Nearness > Some Righteous Deeds > Third: Night Prayer (Salatul-Layl) > 2. Etiquette of Night Prayer > Prayer of Witr

Some Righteous Deeds

As was mentioned in earlier chapters of this books that the only path that could lead a wayfarer towards perfection and may help him in his ascend towards God's Nearness is obedience to revelations and following the path shown by Divine Prophets. The path which they followed themselves has been defined as performance of mandatory (*wajibat*) and recommended (*Nawafil wa Mustahabbat*) religious deeds which are called righteous deeds.

All mandatory and recommended righteous deeds incorporated into Islamic Cannon Law (*sharia*) and registered in the Holy Qur'an as well as in other books of traditions are called as righteous deeds. You may better identity them and might utilize them in following the righteous path. Here we will discuss some of righteous deeds as follows:

First: Obligatory Prayers

The Prayer is one of the best means for undertaking spiritual migration towards God-Almighty and attaining the exalted position of His-nearness. Imam al-Ridha (a.s.) has said:

قال الرضا عليه السلام: الصلوة قربان كل تقى.

*"The prayer is a means of attaining God's nearness for every righteous human being."*¹

Mu' awiyah bin Wahab asked Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.)

معاوية بن وحب قال: سألت ابا عبد الله عليه السلام عن افضل ما يتقرب به العباد الى ربهم واحب ذلك الى الله عز وجل ما هو؟ فقال ما أعلم شيئاً بعد المعرفة افضل من هذه الصلاة، ألا ترى أن العبد الصالح عيسى ابن مريم عليه

السلام » وأوصاني بالصلاة والزكاة ما دمت حياً. : قال

“What is the best deed which brings human beings close to God–Almighty, and is also liked by Him ? The Imam replied: After enlightenment of God’s Essence, I do not know any thing better than the ‘prayer’”. Did not you hear that God’s righteous servant Prophet Jesus (a.s.) has said: “God has recommended for me prayer and charity until I remain alive.”²

Also, he said:

زيد الشحام عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام قال سمعته يقول: أحب الاعمال إلى الله عز و جل الصلاة وهي آخر وصايا الانبياء (عل)، فما أحسن الرجل يغتسل أو يتوضأ فيسبغ الوضوء ثم يتنحى حيث لا يراه أنيس فيشرف عليه وهو راکع أو ساجد. إن العبد إذا سجد فأطال السجود نادى إبليس: ياويلاه أطاع وعصيت وسجد وأبیت.

“The most esteemed and favorite deed before God–Almighty is – “Prayer” The Prayer is the last dying will of all prophets. How good it is that a human being takes a bath or performs ablution, then retires into a secluded corner where he is not seen by anyone and have the honor of performing genuflexion and prostration. When a servant bows himself down into prostration and prolonged it than Satan says:

“Oh! Woe upon me! this servant has obeyed God–almighty, while I transgressed and he has offered prostration which I refused.”³

Imam al Ridha (a.s.) has said:

قال الرضا عليه السلام: اقرب ما يكون العبد من الله وهو ساجد وذلك قوله تعالى "واسجد واقترب"

“The most nearest position between the servant and God–Almighty is– the state of prostration ⁴because God–Almighty has said:

وَاسْجُدْ وَاقْتَرِبْ

“But prostrate thyself; and draw near (to God–Almighty).” (96: 19)⁵

Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: اذ اقام المصلى الى الصلاة نزلت عليه الرحمة من اعنان السما الى اعنان الارض وحفت به الملائكة وناداه ملك: لو يعلم هذا المصلى ما فى الصلاة ما انفتل.

“When a human being stands for prayers,. God's Blessings descend upon him from the sky; the angels circle him around and one of them says., If this prayer–offerer would have known the worth of his prayer, he would never have broken his concentration (towards God) throughout the prayer.”⁶

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: إذا قام العبد المؤمن في صلاته نظر الله إليه أو قال: أقبل الله عليه – حتى ينصرف، وأظلمته الرحمة من فوق رأسه إلى افق السماء، والملائكة تحفه من حوله إلى افق السماء، ووكل الله به ملكا قائما على رأسه يقول له: أيها المصلي لو تعلم من ينظر إليك ومن تناجي ما التفت ولا زلت من موضعك أبدا.

“When a believer stands for prayer, God–Almighty looks at him until he finishes it, His blessing covers him from the sky; the angels circle him around and God–Almighty assigns an angel who says: 'Oh prayer offerer! If you would have known –who is looking at you and with whom are you communicating ? You would never have paid your attention towards any other thing, and you would never have been deviated from this position.”⁷

1. Heart's Presence in Prayer

The Prayer is a celestial formula and Divine electuary, every part of which contains a hidden mystery. It is a means of love, communication, and remembrance of the Lord of the Universe. It is the best means of attaining perfection, spiritual ascension, and God's Nearness. According to Islamic traditions the prayer has been called –a believers heavenly journey (*Mairaj*) which protects him from moral indecencies.

It is such a pure sparkling stream of spirituality that whosoever enters into it five times a day will purify

his soul from all sort of pollution and contamination. It is the greatest trust of God–Almighty and is the criteria of acceptance of all other deeds. The prayer is such a mysterious heavenly formula, but subjected to its being alive and possessing spirit, which means heart's presence during prayer, paying attention towards God–Almighty, and being humble in front of Him.

The invocations, recitals of Qur'anic verses, genuflection, prostration, the witnessing, and salutations constitute the face and body of the prayer while the heart's presence and attention towards the Creator form its spirit. Since a body without a soul becomes a dead body lacking any characteristic, likewise a prayer offered without heart's presence, although satisfies as far as the performance of compulsory religious obligation is concerned, nevertheless, such a prayer does not help in ascending the prayer offerer towards higher spiritual positions.

In principle, the greatest objective behind the establishment of prayer may be described as –invocation recitals and engaging in God's Remembrance. God–Almighty said to the Holy Prophet (S):

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

“And establish worship for My Remembrance. (20: 14)

The Friday–Prayer has been described as an invocation in the Holy Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ

“Oh ye who believe! When the call is heard for the prayer of the Day of Congregation, haste unto remembrance of God. (62: 9)

The criteria for the acceptance of prayer is –the heart's presence, and whatever amount of heart's presence it may contain, the prayer will be accepted accordingly. It is because of this consideration that traditions have emphasized a lot about the importance of heart's presence in prayers.

For example:

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وآله: ان من الصلاة لما يقبل نصفها وثلثها وربعها وخمسها إلى العشر، وان منها لما تلف كما يلف الثوب الخلق فيضرب بها وجه

صاحبها, وإنما لك من صلاتك ما أقبلت عليه بقلبك.

*“Sometimes only half of the prayer gets accepted while at other times may be one-third, one fourth, one-fifth, and one-tenth of it will be accepted. Some of the prayers like an old wrapped cloth are pounded upon the offerer's head. As a matter of fact, only that portion of the prayer will be accepted from you, in which you have paid heartily attention towards God-Almighty.”*⁸

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) said:

عن أبي عبدالله عليه السلام يقول: إذا قام العبد إلى الصلاة أقبل الله عز وجل عليه بوجهه فلا يزال مقبلاً عليه حتى يلتفت ثلاث مرات فإذا التفت ثلاث مرات أعرض عنه.

*“When a servant stands of prayer, God-Almighty pays attention towards him and did not break it until the servant deviates from His- remembrance for the third time. When this happens, God-Almighty too turns his face away from the prayer offerer.”*⁹

The Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) says:

قال أمير المؤمنين عليه السلام: لا يقوم من أحدكم إلى الصلاة متكاسلاً ولا ناعساً ولا يفكر في نفسه فإنه بين يدي ربه عز وجل ، وإنما للعبد من صلاته ما أقبل عليه منها بقلبه.

*“Do not offer prayer in the state of drowsiness or napping; while offering prayer do not think about yourself; because, you are standing in the presence of God-Almighty. Indeed, only that portion of the prayer will be accepted from the servant in which he has paid heartiest attention towards God-Almighty.”*¹⁰

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال صلى الله عليه وآله: أيما عبد التفت في صلاته قال الله: يا عبدي إلى من تقصد ومن تطلب؟ أرباً غيري تريد أو رقيباً سواي تطلب؟ أو جواد خلالي تبغي؟ و أنا أكرم الأكرمين وأجود الأجودين وأفضل المعطين، أثيبك ثواباً لا يُحصي

قدره. أقبل عليّ فأني عليك مقبل وملائكتي عليك مقبلون. وأن أقبل زال عنه أثم ما كان منه. فإن ألتفت ثانية أعاد الله مقالته فإذا أقبل في صلاته غفر الله له وتجاوز عنه ما كان منه. فإن ألتفت الثالثة أعاد الله مقالته، فإن أقبل في صلاته غفر الله له ما تقدم من ذنبه. فإن ألتفت رابعة أعرض الله عنه وأعرضت الملائمة عنه ويقول: وليتك يا عبدي الى ما توليت.

“Each servant (of God), while standing in prayer pays attention towards other than Him, God–Almighty says: ‘Oh my servant! Which way are you turning your face ? Who is the one you are looking for ? Do you seek a God and protector other than me ? Are you looking for a benevolent other than me?’

While, I remain to be the Most Merciful among merciful, Most Compassionate among benevolent and happens to be the Greatest Bestower. I will bestow upon you such a reward that could not be counted. Pay attention towards Me, because I and my angels are paying attention towards you.”

“Thus, if the prayer offerer paid attention towards God–Almighty, his past sins are deleted. But again if he pays attention towards others (than God), he is reminded by God–Almighty like before. If he turns his attention towards prayer, his sins and negligence from prayer are pardoned and their effects are nullified.”

“If for the third time he deviates his attention from the prayer, God–Almighty once more repeats his earlier warning, in case he paid attention towards the prayer, again his sins are pardoned. But if he deviated his attention away from the prayer for the fourth time, then God–Almighty and his angels turn their faces away from the prayer offerer and God–Almighty says to him: ‘ Now I have assigned you to the guardianship of someone who is liked by you.’”¹¹

The value of prayer depends directly upon heart's presence and attention paid towards God–Almighty; to the extent heart's presence is achieved during prayer, it will be effective in attaining inner purification and God's–Nearness. It was not without reason that all Divine Prophets (a.s.) Infallible Imams (a.s.), and God's favorite saints paid so much attention towards prayer. About the Commander of the Faithful Imam ‘Ali (a.s.) it has been written:

“At the time of prayer his body used to tremble and the color of his face changed. They asked him the reason behind his agitation and fear. In reply he said: ‘ The time has arrived for returning of trust –which was offered to earth and heavens but they declined to assume this responsibility. But human being accepted this great trust. I am afraid that whether I would be able to discharge this heavy responsibility of returning this trust or not. “¹²

About the Imam al–Baqir (a.s.) and al–Sadiq (a.s.) it has been narrated: “At the time of prayer their faces used to turn pale and red with fear of God–Almighty; in their prayer they conversed with God–

Almighty as though they are actually seeing him.”¹³

About Imam al-Sajjad (a.s.) it has been narrated: “When he stood for prayer the color of his face became pale with fear, and like a humble slave standing in front of his Master, his body parts trembled. His prayer was always used to be his parting prayer as though there will never going to be any other prayer offered by him after this one.”¹⁴

About the life of Fatimah al-Zahra (s.a.) the daughter of the holy Prophet (S) it has been narrated: “Because, of the intensity of fear, during prayer even the number of her breaths could have been counted.”¹⁵

Regarding the life of Imam al-Hasan (a.s.) it has been narrated: “His body trembled during prayer. When he remembered Paradise and Hell, become so restless and agitated as though have been bitten by a snake. He requested Paradise from God-Almighty and sought His shelter from Hell.”¹⁶

“Ayesheh narrates about the Holy Prophet (S): while I was busy in talking with him, when the time of prayer arrived, suddenly he become so indifferent as though neither he recognizes us nor we do recognize him.”¹⁷

About Imam al-Sajjad (a.s.) it has been narrated:

“While he was in the middle of prayer his cloak rolled down from his shoulder but he remained unconscious about it. When he finished his prayer one of his companion asked: *'Oh son of the Holy Prophet (S) ! While you were offering prayer your clock rolled down but you did not pay attention to it.'*

“The Imam replied: *'Woe upon you! Do you know in front of whom I was standing ? Such awareness prevented me from paying attention towards my clock. Don't you understand that a servant's prayer is accepted only to the extent he pays attention towards God-Almighty during his prayer?'*”

'Oh son of the Holy Prophet (S), Therefore, on this basis we all are going to be doomed?' Asked the companion. *'No! If you offer recommended prayers (Nawafil) God-Almighty through them will treat your compulsory prayers as completed.'*¹⁸

“Regarding the Holy Prophet (S) it has been narrated that during prayer the color of his face changed completely, and a bubbling sound similar to the noises coming out from a boiling pot was heard coming out from his chest. When he stood for his prayer he was motionless like a piece of cloth fallen upon the ground.”¹⁹

2. Degrees of Heart's Presence

Heart's presence consists of various ranks and degrees which differ from each other from the point of view of perfection. A wayfarer has to go through these various grades gradually so that he may ascent towards the higher spiritual positions of God's Nearness and Witnessing.

It is a lengthy way containing various positions, whose introduction and explanation for some one deprived like me, who is looking from a distance and burning in regret –is not befitting. But some of these stages will be explained here in brief, which might be useful for wayfarers.

First Stage

This may be defined as a state in which the prayer offerer either through out the prayer or some part of it pays brief attention to the fact that he is standing before God–Almighty, speaks and converses with Him. However, at this stage he does not pay attention towards the meanings of words and does not understand the details of his conversation.

Second Stage

The second degree of heart's presence may be defined as a state in which the prayer offer apart from his being aware of the fact that he is standing before God–Almighty and is communicating with Him, also, pays attention towards the meanings of words and invocation and knows exactly what is he saying to God–Almighty. While announcing the worlds, simultaneously, he is also making his heart to understand its meaning like a mother who teaches her child how to pronounce a sentence as well as explains him its meanings.

Third Stage

The Third degree of heart's presence may be defined as a state in which the prayer offerer in addition of his being aware of the earlier stages, also comprehend very well the realities of Glorification, Adoration, Praise, Sanctification, Monotheism, and meanings of other invocations.

Further, his understanding of the above is based upon logical arguments, pays attention towards them during prayer, understand very well as to what is he saying, what does he want, and with whom is he speaking?

Fourth Stage

The fourth stage of heart's presence may be defined as a state in which the prayer offerer, in addition of his being aware of the early stages, must also have influenced upon his inner essence the learning and meanings of invocations, and must have achieved the state of certainty (*yaqin*) and faith (*iman*). In that case the tongue follows the heart and since the heart believes in those realities pursues the tongue to undertake the recital of invocations.

Fifth Stage

The fifth stage of heart's presence may be defined as a state in which the prayer offerer in addition of his being aware of early stages has achieved the most sublime spiritual positions of revelation, intuition, and countenance. Through his esoteric eyes witnesses the Sacred Names and Characteristics of God–

Almighty and does not see any thing except Him, even does not pay attention to himself his actions, deeds, and invocations.

He speaks with God–Almighty but is unconscious of the speaker and speech. He has given up his own existence and have become fascinated after witnessing the beauty of Lord's Holy Essence. Even at this stage there are ranks and degree varying in distinction relative to the status of the wayfarers. This stage is like an ocean of infinite depth and for some one deprived like me, it is better not to enter in it and leave it's description for those who deserve it:

اللهم ارزقنا حلاوة ذكرك ومشاهدة جمالك.

“Oh God! Please bestow upon us the sweetness of your invocations and the witnessing of your beauty.”

3. Important Factors for Attaining Heart's Presence

In as much as heart's presence is important and worthwhile, in the same proportion its attainment is extremely difficult. No sooner a person starts his prayer Satan suddenly whispers in his heart pulling him from one side to another, and continuously engaging him into all sort of thoughts and memories.

The heart engages himself into accounting, planning, reviewing past and future problems, solving academic problems; very often recollecting during prayers, topic which were forgotten by him completely and when he returns to himself discovers that the prayer is over. Even if in between he pays attention towards prayer he deviates immediately.

It is indeed sad and one must feel sorry about it! What should we do to dominate over this rebellious and playful self? How should we keep these scattered thoughts away from us during the prayer and keep our attention exclusively to remember God–Almighty.

Those who have traveled this path and were able to receive Divine special favors can better guide us, and it would be better if the pen would have been in their hands. But, this helpless and veiled servant too would like to describe some points which may be useful in achieving heart's presence during prayer as follows:

Secluded Place

If one has to offer individual compulsory prayer or recommended prayer it is better to select an isolated free from noises and interference. The prayer's place should be free from pictures or any other object which might attract prayer offer's attention; should not be a public place, rather a secluded corner inside the home should be selected and prayer should always be offered over there.

While, offering prayer, one should look at the place of prostration or may close his eyes, and among these two whichever he thinks is more useful for heart's presence should be practiced. It is advisable to offer prayer in a smaller room or near the wall so that the prayer offerer's view is restricted. While, offering congregational prayers one should look at the place of prostration and listen attentively to the recital of Qur'anic verses, if the congregational leader (*Imam*) is reciting them loudly.

Removal of Obstacles

Before the prayer all obstacles in attaining heart's presence must be removed and only then one should engage himself into prayer. e.g. If the prayer offerer needs to go to toilet, he must relieve himself first, and after performing required ablutions should engage himself into prayer. If he is not comfortable because of severe hunger and thirst, first he must satisfy his hunger and thirst by eating and drinking and then should offer his prayers.

Also, if because of over-eating he lacks the mood, he should wait a while till he feels ready for prayer. Similarly, if because of being extremely tired and exhausted or feeling sleeplessness, if he does not have the mood to offer prayer, he should first rest and sleep, and then should offer his prayer. If he is busy investigating something or is disturbed and agitated because of a tragic occurrence, he should try within the bounds of possibilities to eliminate the causes of concern before prayer.

One of the greatest obstacles is intense attachment to worldly allurements namely: Wealth and property, power and position, and woman and children. Severe attraction of these things causes prayer offerer's attention turns towards these things deviating from God–Almighty, during prayer. Therefore, the prayer offerer must seriously endeavor to cut off these attractions, so that heart's presence and attention towards God–Almighty become easier for him.

Strengthening of Faith

Man's attention towards God–Almighty depends in proportion to his knowledge and enlightenment relative to Him. If the faith has reached to the degree of certainty, has completely comprehended God's Majesty, Power, Presence, Dominion, and Knowledge, naturally will show humility and humbleness in front of him, and there would be no room left for negligence and forgetfulness.

Some one who sees God's existence everywhere as his overseer, regards himself continuously before His presence, while standing in prayer –a place of talking with Him, will never be negligent from His remembrance.

Suppose, if one has to speak before a powerful king, he will naturally control all his senses, would know exactly what is he supposed to do, and what is he going to speak? So, if one recognizes God–Almighty with Splendor and Majesty, he would never be negligent of Him during prayer.

Therefore, a human being should endeavor for strengthening his faith and attaining perfect

enlightenment so that he may achieve maximum heart's presence during his prayer. The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وآله: اعبد الله كانت تراه فان كنت لاتراه فانه يراك.

*“Worship God–Almighty as though you are actually seeing Him, and even if you do not see Him, He sees you.”*²¹

Aban bin Toghlab said that I said to Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.):

ابان بن تغلب قال قلت لابي عبدالله عليه السلام: اني رايت على بن الحسين عليه السلام اذا قام فى الصلاة غشى لونه لون آخر. فقال لي: والله ان على بن الحسين كان يعرف الذى يقوم بين يديه.

*“I saw ‘Ali Bin al–Husayn (a.s.) offering prayer in such a manner that the color of his face changed. Please explain the reason. ‘Yes! Because he recognized completely God–Almighty in front of whom he was standing in prayer.’ Replied the Imam.”*²²

Remembrance of Death

One thing which might be useful in achieving heart's presence is –remembrance of death. If a person thinks about death, and pays attention to the fact that neither timings nor the circumstances of death's arrival are known, it may occur at any time, under any situation, even it is quite possible that this prayer might be the last one. In that case he would not offer prayer with negligence.

It is recommended that a prayer offerer should think about death before the prayer; should imagine that the moment of death has arrived; the death angel Israel for receiving the soul has already arrived, and it is only a limited time, say, an hour or few minutes have been left for him, after which his deeds' register will be closed forever, and he will be transferred to Eternal World.

Over there, his deeds will be scrutinized and the result would be either eternal prosperity and happy living near God's favorites or adversity, cruelty, punishment, and torture inside the Hell. By imagining and picturing dying one may better concentrate, may witness himself standing in front of God–Almighty, and thus may offer prayer with more humility and humbleness as his farewell prayer. Before beginning prayer create such conditions for yourself and then prolong it during entire length of prayer. Imam Al–Sadiq (a.s.) said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: إذا صليت صلاة فريضة فصلها لوقتها صلاة مودع يخاف أن لا يعود إليها أبدا. ثم اصرف ببصرك إلى موضع سجودك, فلو تعلم من عن يمينك وشمالك لأحسنت صلاتك, واعلم أنك بين يدي من يراك ولا تراه.

“Offer compulsory prayer during its time, like someone who is offering his farewell prayer, and is afraid that after this he will never have the opportunity to offer the prayer again. While offering the prayer, look at the place of prostration. If one realizes some one nearby is watching his prayer –he becomes more careful in offering his prayer. Know ! that you are standing in front of some one who sees you but is not seen by you.”²³

Readiness

After removing all obstacles around him, the prayer offerer should make himself ready for prayer by retiring into a suitable isolated place. Before standing he must remind himself about the Majesty and Infinite power of God–Almighty and his own weakness and incompetence. He must realize that he is standing in front of the Lords of worlds and is speaking to him. He is standing in front of such a Magnificent Power which surrounds everything even is aware of most secret affairs.

Imagine and manifest dying, accounting of deeds, Paradise, and Hell in your mind's eye; assign a higher probability that death might occur very soon, and even this very prayer could be the last prayer of his life. Prolonged these reflections until self became completely tamed and is in a mood to pay attention. Then with attention and hearts' presence recite the call for prayer– (adhan) and (aqameh) respectively, recite the following supplication and during its recital pay attention to its meaning.

اللهم اليك توجهت ومرضاتك طلبت وثوابك ابتغيت بك آمنت و عليك توكلت
اللهم صل على محمد وآل محمد وافتح مصامع قلبي لذكرك وثبتني على دينك
ولا تزغ قلبي بعد اذ هديتني وهب لي من لدنك رحمة انك انت الواهب.

(Allahumma elaika tawwajahato wa marzateka talabato wa thawabaka ibtaqhazzito wa beka amanto wa elaika tawwakalto allahuma salle ala Muhammadin wa aley Muhammad waftoh masamea qalbi lezekreka wa sabbatni ala deneka wa deney Nabiyehe wala tuzqe qalbi bada is hadeytani wa habli min ladunka rahamate inneka antal wahab.)

“Oh God! I seek Your refuge; desire whatever pleases Thou. Aspire to receive Your reward have faith in Thee and trust and rely upon You. Oh God! send salutations upon Muhammad (S) and his Holy progeny

(a.s.), open my heart's esoteric ears to Your invocation,. make me steadfast upon Your religion, and the religion of Your Prophet (S). Don't make my heart deviate after being blessed with Your guidance, and bestow upon me Your favors and blessings, verily! You are the most benevolent.”

Then recite the following prayer:

يا محسن قد اتاك المسيء, يا محسن أحسن الى.

(ya Mohsin qadatak al masiyee ya Mohsin ehsan al ati.)

“Oh Beneficent, verily bless me –the sinner;

Oh Beneficent! bestow your favors upon me.”

If after that one feels like having proper attention and humility he may say Takbirateh al–Ahram by proclaiming, “God is Great” (Allahu Akbar) and may begin his prayer. But, if he feels that he is not yet ready, does not feel any change in his mood, should seek refuge²⁴ in God–Almighty from Satanic whispers and should repeat the earlier program till he gets ready.

At this moment with due attention and heart's presence should say Takbirateh al–Ahram while paying attention towards its meanings and may begin his prayer. But, he must pay attention as to whom is he talking and what is he saying?

Be careful that tongue and heart coordinate each other and do not lie. Does he know the meanings of “God is Great” (Allahu Akbar) i.e. God is Greater than –that He could be described. He must pay attention correctly what is he saying? Does he really believe in it? Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

قال الصادق عليه السلام: اذا استقبلت القبلة فانس الدنيا وما فيها والخلق وما هم فيه واستفرغ قلبك عن كل شاغل يشغلك عن الله وعاین بسرک عظمة الله واذكر وقوفك بين يديه يوم تبلو كل نفس ما أسلفت وردوا إلى الله مولاهم الحق. وقف على قدم الخوف والرجاء فإذا كبرت فاستصغر ما بين السموات العلى والثرى دون كبريائه: فإن الله تعالى إذا اطلع على قلب العبد وهو يكبر وفي قلبه عارض عن حقيقة

تكبيره ، قال : يا كاذب أتخدعني ؟ وعزتي وجلالي لأحرمك حلاوة ذكري ،

وَأَحْبَبُنَّكَ عَنْ قَرِيبِي وَ الْمَسَارَّةَ بِمَنَاجَاتِي .

“When you stand facing Holy Mecca (Qiblah)²⁵ with prayer intention –forget the world and whatever it contains, people, and their affairs absolutely, make your heart free from every thing which prevents you from God's Remembrance and with esoteric eyes witness God's Majesty and Splendor. Recollect your stoppage in front of Him on the Day of Resurrection when each human being will make his earlier deposited deeds manifested, thus, returning towards God–Almighty.

'During prayer be in a state of fear and hope, after making your proper intention and saying (Takbirateh al–Ahram, i.e. Allahu Akbar), whatever, the earth and sky may contain, consider it as small and insignificant, because when prayer offerer says it, God–Almighty looks in his heart, thus, if he had not paid attention towards the reality of Takbirateh al–Ahram He says to him:

'Oh liar! Do you want to deceit me ?' swear to my splendor and majesty that will deprive you .from My invocations pleasure and enjoyment of having private communications with Me.”²⁶

Of course preparation and getting readied before the prayer, during making intention and saying Takbirateh al–Ahram are extremely effective in achieving heart's presence, but still more important than that, is the continuation of this state through out the prayer. If a slight negligence is shown, self immediately starts his action of flying from one side to another one, thus, breaking heart's presence and concentration.

Therefore, prayer offerer must watch his self carefully all along the prayer. He must tightly closed his hearts entrance towards all other than God and must prevent entries of scattered thoughts and memories should consider himself always standing in God's presence, should offer prayer as though he is actually talking with God–Almighty, bows down and prostrates in front of him; while reciting Qur'anic verses and invocations must pay attention towards their meanings; must realize what is he saying; with what Majestic Power is he speaking and should maintain this condition until the prayer is over. It is a difficult task but with efforts, endeavors, and seriousness it becomes easier. God–Almighty has promised in the Holy Qur'an:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

“And those who strive in Our (cause) –We will certainly guide them to Our paths. (29:69)

If one does not succeed in the very first attempt instead of getting disappointed, he should become more determined and serious in trying again, until attaining domination over self gradually. The heart should be cleansed thoroughly from scattered thoughts and should be motivated to pay attention towards God–

Almighty. If such thing is not possible within one day, few weeks and few months, he should not be disappointed because after all such a thing is possible.

There were and still are many distinguished personalities who were able to achieve absolute heart's presence from the beginning till the end of prayer, and during prayer did not pay any attention towards other than God.

We would not be disappointed either from attaining such distinguished position and if achieving absolute perfection is not possible, we must try to attain at least whatever is attainable within the bounds of possibilities and should consider even this much as a great bounty.²⁷

Second: Supererogatory Prayers (Nawafil)

Earlier it was mentioned that the Prayer happens to be the best means of spiritual migration, invocation, and God's Nearness. God–Almighty, who is absolutely more knowledgeable, as compared to any other person, about the special human creation, and their path of perfection, has defined prayer, and by means of prophets have handed it over to human beings –so that they may utilize it for their salvation and attaining perfection.

The path of utilization from this means is always open. The prayer has not been limited to a certain fixed time, rather one may utilize from it at any time, any where and under all circumstances. Generally, the prayer may be classified into following two categories:

1. Mandatory or Compulsory Prayers (*Wajib*).
2. Supererogatory or Recommended Prayers (*Nawafil*).

There are six types of Mandatory or Compulsory Prayers:

1. Daily Prayer (*salat wajib*).
2. Sign Prayer (*salat ayat*), to be recited at the solar or lunar eclipse
3. Death Prayer (*Mayyit*).
4. Circumambulation Prayer during Hajj pilgrim (*Towwaf*).
5. Prayer which become mandatory upon one's taking an oath or making a solemn promise to God (*Nazr*).
6. Make up Prayer (*Qadha*). Daily prayers not offered by father become compulsory upon his eldest son, after his demise.

Daily prayers are compulsory upon all adult Muslims after attaining puberty, but other compulsory

prayers become compulsory during certain periods under special circumstances. A person who desires to achieve salvation and perfection, as a very first step must perform all compulsory obligations strictly in their prescribed manner, and if performs them with heart's presence and devotion, become best means of achieving God's favor.

Quitting compulsory obligations and instead indulging into performance of recommended deeds will never result in achieving God's favor. If someone thinks, that by quitting compulsory obligation and by means of some recommended deeds, invocations, and incantations, he may complete his journey towards perfection and attaining higher spiritual positions—certainly he is making a mistake.

But after performance of compulsory obligations, he may seek God's nearness by means of supererogatory prayers and other recommended deeds for attaining sublime spiritual positions. There are plenty of supererogatory prayers (*nawafil*), and overall may be divided into two categories: Daily supererogatory prayers (*nawafil*) and other recommended prayers.

Daily Supererogatory Prayers consists of thirty four units (Rakats):

1. Supererogatory Prayer Noon (*Dhohr*) –8 units, (before compulsory (*Dhohr*) prayer, 4 times –2 units).
2. Supererogatory Prayer After–Noon (*Asr*) –8 units (before compulsory (*Asr*) Prayer, 4 times –2 units).
3. Supererogatory Prayer Evening (*Maghrib*) –4 units (after compulsory (*Maghrib*) Prayer, 2 times –2 units).
4. Supererogatory Prayer Night (*Isha*) –2 units (in sitting position, after compulsory (*Isha*) Prayer, and is regarded equivalent to one unit of standing prayer).
5. Supererogatory Prayer Morning (*Fajr*) –2 units (before compulsory (*Fajr*) Prayer).
6. Night Prayer (*Namaz al–Shab* or *Salat al Lail*) –11 units.

Tradition books describe the importance of recital of daily supererogatory prayers; their effects and rewards have also been specified, and have been introduced as complimentary to compulsory prayers. But other than daily supererogatory prayers other recommended prayers during certain special periods, places, and circumstances as well as their relevant rewards have also been described.

The readers may study the details of different kinds of supererogatory prayers and recommended prayers and their advantages and rewards in the books of traditions and supplications ²⁸and may utilize them in your spiritual journey and attainment of self–perfection.

Apart from that prayer is desired and recommended at any time, every place and under all circumstances and a wayfarer may take its advantage. The path of taking advantage from this means remains always open. A human being at any time, any place, and under all conditions may be benefited

from this great blessing and may establish a quick communication with God–Almighty. The Commander of the Faithful Imam .’Ali (a.s.) has said:

عن ابي الحسن عليه السلام قال: صلاة النوافل قربان كل مؤمن.

*“Supererogatory Prayer (Nafilah) results in a believer’s becoming near to God–Almighty.”*²⁹

Imam al–Sadiq (a.s.) said:

قال ابو عبدالله عليه السلام: إن العبد ليرفع له من صلاته نصفها أو ثلثها أو ربعها أو خمسها فما يرفع له إلا ما أقبل عليه بقلبه وإنما أمرنا بالنافلة ليتم لهم بها ما نقصوا من الفريضة..

*“Truly sometimes one half; or one third, or one fourth, or one fifth of prayer ascends upward (i.e. is accepted by God); only those portions of prayer ascend upwards which are accompanied by heart’s presence; and because of this reason. We are assigned to recite supererogatory prayers so that through their means the shortcomings of daily prayers could be compensated.”*³⁰

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: قال رسول الله صلى عليه وآله: قال الله تعالى: ما تحبب إلي عبدي بشئ أحب إلي مما افترضته عليه، وإنه ليتحجب إلي بالنافلة حتى أحبه، فإذا أحببته كنت سمعه الذي يسمع به، وبصره الذي يبصر به، ولسانه الذي ينطق به، ويده التي يبطش بها، ورجله التي يمشي بها، إذا دعاني أجبتة، وإذا سألني أعطيته، وما ترددت في شئ أنا فاعله كترددني في موت المؤمن: يكره الموت وأنا أكره مساءته.

“In order to become my beloved, my servant does not have any thing better than performing compulsory obligations– Through performance of recommended obligations (Nawafil) he becomes so much intimate with me that I become like his ears through which he hears; become as his eyes through which he sees; become as his tongue through which he talks,– become as his hands through which he finds things,–

and become as his feet through which he moves.

If he beseech me I accept; if he desires some thing I bestow it upon him, I have never contradicted anything like contradiction in taking a believer's soul, – he is disgusted with death and I become disgusted seeing him unhappy.”³¹

Third: Night Prayer (Salatul-Layl)

Among various recommended deeds (*Nawafil*) the Night Prayer carries special distinction, and the Holy Qur'an and traditions have made lots of emphasis and recommendations for its performance. God-Almighty says to Holy Prophet (S):

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

“And some part of the night awake for it, a largess for thee. It may be that thy Lord will raise thee to a praised estate. (17:79)

And in praise of God's Special Servants says:

وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَامًا

“And who spend the night before their Lord prostrate and standing. (25:64)

And in defining believers characteristics says:

تَتَجَافَىٰ جُنُوبَهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ
فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

“Who forsake their beds to cry unto their Lord in fear and hope, and spend of what we have bestowed up on them. No soul knoweth what is kept hidden for them of joy, as a reward for what they used to do. (32: 16–17)

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: ان الله جل جلاله اوحى الى الدنيا: أن أتعبني من خدمك و اخدمي من رفضك. وإن العبد إذا تخلى بسيده في جوف الليل المظلم وناجاه أثبت الله النور في قلبه فإذا قال: يا رب يا رب! ناداه الجليل جل جلاله: لبيك عبدي, سلني أعطك و توكل عليّ أكفك ، ثم يقول جل جلاله لملائكته: يا ملائكتي انظروا إلى عبدي فقد تخلى بي في جوف الليل المظلم والباطلون لأهون والغافلون ينامون. اشهدوا أنني قد غفرت له.

“God–Almighty send revelation to world asking it to be indifferent towards its admirers and to be in service to its forsakers. When a God’s servant in the darkness of night engages himself in humming communications with his Creator, God–Almighty enlightens his heart.”

“When he says: Oh God! Oh God! (Yarab! Yarab!) God–Almighty responds by replying –‘yes my servant! Whatever you desire I will bestow it upon you, rely upon Me so that I make you self–sufficient’. Then God–Almighty says to His angels –‘Look at my servant! How in the darkness of night is he busy in humming private communications with Me, while lovers of nonsense amusements are busy in pursuing their carnal desires and the ignorant ones are busy in sleep. Be you witness that I have forgiven my servant.”³²

The Holy Prophet (S) has said:

قال رسول الله (ص): اشرف امتي حملة القرآن واصحاب الليل.

“The nobles of my nation (Ummah) are –the carriers of Holy Qur’an and night vigilants.”³³

And said:

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وآله: ما زال جبرئيل يوصيني بقيام الليل حتى ظننت ان خيار امتي لا يناموا

“Angel Gabriel has made so much recommendation about night prayer to me, that I assume the righteous one of my nation (Ummah) will not sleep during night.”³⁴

And said:

انس بن مالك قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله يقول: ركعتان في جوف الليل احب الى من الدنيا وما فيها.

“Two units of prayer in the middle of night is more beloved to me than the world and whatsoever it may contain.”³⁵

Imam al-Sadiq (a.s.) has said:

عن ابي عبدالله عليه السلام قال: صلاة الليل تحس الوجه وتحس الخلق وتطيب الريح وتدر الرزق وتقضى الدين وتذهب بالهم وتجلوا البصر.

“Night Prayer makes face beautiful, conduct righteous, and (prayer offerer’s) body performed; increases sustenance; pays debts; removes grief and increases shining of eyes.”³⁶

The Holy Prophet (S) said:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وآله: صلاة الليل مرضاة الرب وحب الملائكة وسنة الأنبياء ونور المعرفة وأصل الإيمان، وراحة الأبدان وكرهية الشيطان وسلاح على الأعداء وإجابة للدعاء وقبول الأعمال وبركة في الرزق وشفيع بين صاحبها وبين ملك الموت وسراج في قبره وفراش تحت جنبه وجواب منكر ونكير ومؤنس وزائر في قبره إلى يوم القيامة، فاذا كان يوم القيامة كانت الصلاة ظلا فوقه وتأجا على رأسه ولباسا على بدنه ونورا يسعى بين يديه وسترا بينه وبين النار وحجة للؤمنين بين يدي الله تعالى وثقلا في الميزان وجوازا على الصراط ومفتاحا للجنة. لأن الصلاة تكبير وتحميد وتسبيح وتمجيد وتقديس وتعظيم وقراءة ودعاء وان أفضل الاعمال كلها الصلاة لوقتها.

“Night Prayer is a means of pleasing God–Almighty and achieving friendship of His angels. It is a tradition and way of prophets; a light of seeing God and root of the faith (because it strengthens faith). Makes body relaxed and Satan agitated, it is arsenal against enemies; is a means for acceptance of prayer and deeds; increases Divine–Bounties for a human being; acts as an intercessor between prayer offerer and death’s angel; it is the light and floor covering inside the grave as well as the defender to the questioning of two angels (Munkir and Nakir).

“Inside the grave it will become a companion and pilgrim of the prayer offerer till the Day of Resurrection. On the Judgment Day, it will provide a shadow for head; will become a crown upon head; a dress for body, a front light; and a barrier between prayer offerer and Hell's .fire. It will be a solid argument before God–Almighty for the believer, a means for making deeds heavier; a pass for crossing over the Sirat and a key of Paradise.

Because, prayer consists of proclamation of God's Greatness (Takbir), Praise, Adoration, Worship, to show humility and humbleness in front of Him, respect, recital of the Holy Qur'an, and supplication. Indeed the prayer offered at its right time –is the most superior deed.”³⁷

There are many traditions and Qur'anic verses which describe the special importance assigned to Night Prayer. Its recital has been the traditions of prophets and God's favorite saints. The Holy Prophet (S) and the Infallible Imams (a.s.) of his Holy Progeny have shown special interests and paid attention towards Night Prayer. God's favorite saints and mystics through their continuous engagements into Night Prayer, invocations, and supplications at dawn were able to attain exalted spiritual positions.

How beautiful and pleasing it is that a God's servant wakes up from sleep; leaves his soft and comfortable bed; makes ablutions, and in the darkness of night, while the others are busy in deep sleep, stands up before the Lord of the worlds; engages into humming communications with Him; and through this spiritual journey ascends towards Upper Heavens, thus, joining the angels of Celestial Kingdom in praising, worshipping, and adoring God–Almighty.

At this moment, his heart becomes center of illumination of Divine light and with a heart fully saturated with God's desire ascends towards the most sublime spiritual position of God's Nearness.

1. Details of Night Prayer

The Night–Prayer consists of all together eleven units (Rakats) of prayer. The first eight units are offered as two units prayer (exactly like 2 units of Morning Prayer), repeated four times with the intention of Night–Prayer. After finishing these eight units, make intention for the (Prayer of Shafa) ³⁸and offer two units of prayer.

In the end make intention of (Prayer of Witr)³⁹ and offer are unit of prayer with special instructions. There are special etiquettes and supplications for the Night Prayer that may be found in the books of traditions and supplications.⁴⁰

2. Etiquette of Night Prayer

The time of Night Prayer begins after midnight and the more nearer it gets to dawn the better it is. Whenever you are awakened for night prayer first of all relieve yourself from the call of nature, clean your teeth, make ablutions (*wadhu*), and make yourself perfumed.

The night prayer consists of 11 units (Rakats) as follows:

8 Rakat (4 times 2 rakat) Night Prayer

2 Rakat Prayer of Shafa

1 Rakat Prayer of Witr

The first eight rakats should be offered like 2 rakats of Morning prayer repeating four times with a salutation offered after every two Rakats. In the first Rakat recite Surah Opening:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِیْنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ مَا لَكَ یَوْمَ
الدِّیْنِ اِیَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَاِیَّاكَ نَسْتَعِیْنُ اِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِیْمَ صِرَاطَ الَّذِیْنَ اَنْعَمْتَ
عَلَيْهِمْ غَیْرَ الْمَغْضُوْبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّیْنَ

(Bismillah ar Rahman nir Rahim; alhamadu lillahi Rab al alimin; ar Rahman nir Rahim,' Malike yom iddin,' iyyaka nabudu wa iyyaka nastayeen, ahede nassratal mustaqeem saratal lazina,' anamta aleyhim,' gharyil maqdhubeh alehim waladh dhuallin).

“In the Name of God the Beneficent and the Merciful”, “Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds,’ the Beneficent, the Merciful,” Owner of the day of Judgment,’ Thee (alone) we worship, Thee alone we ask for help,’ show us the straight path,’ The path of those whom Thou hast favored,’ Not (the path) of those who earn thine anger nor of those who go astray. (1:1-7),

After reciting Surah Opening the prayer offerer may recite any other surah whatever he likes or may recite Surah “Sincerity” in all 8 Rakats:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ قُلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ اَحَدٌ اللّٰهُ الصَّمَدُ لَمْ یَلِدْ وَلَمْ یُوْلَدْ وَلَمْ یَكُنْ لَهٗ
كُفُوًا اَحَدٌ

(Bismillah ar Rahman nir Rahim,. qul ho wallahu ahad Allahus samad,. lam yalid walam yulad,' walam ya kun lahu kufu one ahad),

In the Name of God, the Beneficent and the Merciful

“Say: He is God, the One! God, the eternally besought of all! He begeteth not nor was begotten, And there is non comparable unto Him. (112: 1-4)

In the second rakat of prayer like all others prayers, Qunoot is optional and recital of the following, three times is sufficient.

سبحان الله

Subhan Allahi

“Glory to God”

Prayer of Shafa

After finishing eight Rakat of Night Prayer as described above, make intention of two rakats of prayer of Shafa as follows:

In the first Rakat after recital of Surah Opening recite Surah Nas (Mankind) as follows:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ اِلٰهِ النَّاسِ مِنْ شَرِّ
الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ الَّذِي يُّوسْوِسُ فِي صُدُوْرِ النَّاسِ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ

(Bismillah ar Rahman nir Rahim;

Qul auzu bi Rab bil nas,. Malik in nas ilahin nas,. Min sharril waswasil Khannas, Allazi yo vis viso fi sudoorin nase,” Min al jinnate onenas.)

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful”

“Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind; The King of mankind,” The God of mankind,” from the evil of the sneaking whisperer; who whispereth in the hearts of mankind; of the jinn and of mankind. (114: 1-6)

In the second Rakat after recital of Surah Opening recite Surah Day Break as follows:

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ قُلْ اَعُوْذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ
اِذَا وَقَبَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّٰثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّٰثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ

(Bismillah ar Rahman nir Rahim,” Qui a uzu bi Rab bil falaq; min, sharrin ma khalaq, wa min sharre

ghasiqin eza waqab, wa min sharrin naffasate fil uqad)

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.”

“Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of Daybreak, from the evil of that which He created; from the evil of the darkness when it is intense; and from the evil of malignant witchcraft and from the evil of envier when he envieth. (113: 1-5)

Prayer of Witr

After finishing two rakat of Prayer of Shaf'a, make intention of one Rakat of Witr Prayer as follows:

After recital of Surah Opening recite Surah Sincerity one time. Or, one may recite Surah Sincerity three times, Surah Day-Break one time and Surah Mankind one time, after Surah Opening. Having finished recital of the above raise your hands upward for Qunoot, and recite whatever you prefer or you may recite the following:

رَبَّنَا آتِنَا فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَفِي الآخِرَةِ حَسَنَةً وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ

(Rabana atena fid dunia hasaneh wa fil akhre hasanah wa qena aza bin nar).

“Our Lord! Give unto us in the world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which is good, and guard us from the doom of Fire. (2:201)

or, recite the following:

اللهم كن لوليك الحجة بن الحسن صلواتك عليه وعلى ابائه في هذه الساعة وفي كل ساعة وليا وحافظا وقائدا وناصرا ودليلا وعينا حتى تسكنه أرضك طوعا وتمتعه فيها طويلا.

(Allahumma Kulle Waliyak al Hujjat ibnal Hasan Salawatoka aleyhim wa ala abahe fi hazes saat wafi kulle saat walian wa hafiza wa qaiden wa nasera wa dalilan wa ayena hatta tuzkenahu arzaka toa wa tamatteahufiha tavila, be rahameteka ya ar hamar rahimin.)

“Oh God! Protect Your Vicegerent (Vali al-Asr), and send salutations upon him, and his Holy ancestors at this time as well as at all the times, (as our) Imam, guardian, supporter, and guide until such time; when you bestow upon him the honor of heading the (Divine) Government. And let the people be delighted in his reign, by bestowing success, and by extending his reign (as maximum as possible).”

Or recite the following:

رَبَّنَا أَفْرِغْ عَلَيْنَا صَبْرًا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

(Rabana afrigh aleyna sabran wa sabbit iqdamana wa unurna alal qomal kafiriin)

“Our Lord! Bestow on us endurance, make our foothold sure; and give us help against the disbelieving folk. (2:250)

It is recommended that in the state of Qunoot one should try to cry and shed tears because, of remembering his past sins and transgressions, God–Almighty Day of Judgment and the Hell's fire. According to Islamic traditions, if one prays for forty believers God–Almighty grants his supplications.

Therefore, in Qunoot it is recommended to ask God's forgiveness for at least forty believers, (including your parents, relatives, neighbors, colleagues, scholars, martyrs etc.) in the following manner:

اللهم اغفر.

(Allahummaghfir)

Oh God! forgive (Mention the name of person, and repeat it for forty people) it has been narrated that the Holy Prophet (S) used to seek God is forgiveness seventy times. Therefore, while still maintaining your left hand in the state of Qunoot, and holding a rosary in your right hand recite the following seventy times:

استغفر الله ربي واتوب اليه.

(Astagh.frullahi rabi wa atubo elahe)

“Oh God! Forgive me and accept my repentance.” The Holy Prophet (S) used to recite the following sentence seven times:

هذا مقام العائذ بك من النار.

(Haza maqamal aize beka minan nar)

“Here is some one who has sought your shelter from the Hell's fire.”

It has been narrated that Imam al-Sajjad (a.s.) used to seek God's forgiveness three hundred times by reciting the following sentence:

العفو.

(Al afoo)

“(Oh God!) Please Forgive!”

Therefore, while still holding left hand in the state of Qunoot, crying, shedding tears of regret and shame for past sins with the rosary in right hand, recite the above sentence three hundred times. After finishing it recite the following supplication only one time:

ربنا اغفر لي وارحمني واتوب اليه انك انت التواب الغفور الرحيم.

(Rubbe naqhfirli warhamni watoubli innaka antal tawwabul ghafoor urrahim.)

“Oh God! Please forgive me, be kind to me and accept my repentance. Indeed you are the one who accepts repentance, forgiver, and the most Merciful.”

This completes the Qunoot of Witr prayer. After finishing Qunoot bow down into genuflection and prostration and finish the prayer in the usual manner like all other prayers with the recital of witnessing (*Tashahud*) and salutation (*salam*). Those readers who are not familiar with these Prayer rituals may refer to the Book: Profundities of Prayer written by: Ayatullah Sayyid ‘Ali Khamenei; Translated by S.H. Alamdar and Published by Ansariyan Publications, Qum.

1. al-Ka.fi, vol. 3, p-265.

2. al-Kafi, vol. 3, p-264.

3. al-Kafi, vol. 3, p-264.

4. Prostration: Regarding prostration it is narrated that during one's entire life if one succeeds during a single prostration to achieve a real union with the Creator, it will compensate for all the past omissions. He would receive Divine blessings and would become immune from the satanic temptations forever.

On the contrary if during prostration, which is the state of renunciation if his heart is preoccupied with any thing other than Him, he will be listed among the group of hypocrites and the misled.

5. al-Kafi Vol. 3, p-265.
6. al-Kafi, vol. 3, p-265.
7. al-Kafi, vol. 3, p-265.
8. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-260.
9. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-241.
10. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-239.
11. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-244.
12. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-248.
13. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-248.
14. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-250.
15. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-258.
16. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-258.
17. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p.258.
18. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-265.
19. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-248.
20. In his book "Sirr-us-Salat" (the Mysteries of Prayers), Imam Khomeini, describes the presence of heart, as follows:

"During prayers one must try to completely cut off the heart's preoccupation with worldly affairs. If a person is submerged in love and desires of this world, naturally his heart is busy continuously from one involvement to another. The heart behaves like a bird jumping from one branch to another. So for we have this tree of worldly ambitions or desires ("Hubb-e Duniya") in our heart, it will behave restless.

If by struggle, practice, efforts, and thinking about the severe consequences and losses, if one could succeed in cutting this tree of worldly ambitions or desires, then the heart will become reposed and peaceful. It will achieve spiritual perfection. At least the more one tries to free himself from worldly charms and temptations the more he succeeds in cutting the various branches of that tree in his heart, with the result, the presence of heart will be achieved in the same proportion."

Imam Khomeini further explains the term 'love of this world' (Hubb al-Duniya). "There are people who do not possess anything at all of this moral world, but still they could be the persons totally submerged in the love of this world.

While on the contrary, one maybe be like Prophet Sulaiman bin Dawood, (Solomon son of David) king of kings and possessing all the treasurers of this universe, but at the same time may not be a man of this world, completely detached from the lure of the world." [Tr].

21. Nahjal-Fasahath, p-65.
22. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-236.
23. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-233.
24. One should recite Istiadha:

اعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم

"I seek refuge in God-Almighty from .Satan -the damned one."

25. Direction to which Muslims turn their face for Prayer. [Tr.]
26. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 84, p-230.
27. In order to attain heart's presence during prayer we may utilize books which have been written about Mysteries of Prayer, like the book "Sirr-us-Salat" (Mysteries of Prayer) written by Divine Scholar and Great Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini (r.a.) [Author].
28. Refer to Kulliyat Mafatteh al-Jinan of (late) Haj Sheik Abbas Qummi [Tr].
29. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-36.
30. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-28.
31. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-31

32. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-137.
33. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-138.
34. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-139.
35. the Bahar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-148.
36. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-153.
37. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 87, p-161.
38. وَالشُّعْبُ وَالْوَتْرُ

“By the Even and Odd (contrasted).” (89:3) [Tr].

39. Ibid.

40. For the convenience of our readers the [Tr] has prepared “Etiquettes of Night-Prayer” abstracted from supplication books.

Source URL: <https://www.al-islam.org/self-building-ayatullah-ibrahim-amini/some-righteous-deeds>