

SUMMER IMMERSION

PREPARATION FOR PROPHETHOOD



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SESSION 6

Ayah 20

- **إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ تَقُومُ أَدْنَىٰ مِنْ ثُلُثَيِ اللَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهُ** (Inna rabbaka ya'lamu nnaka taquumu adna mina thuluthayil layli a nisfahu wa thuluthahu) — Indeed, your Lord knows, [O Muhammad], that you stand [in prayer] almost two thirds of the night or half of it or a third of it:
 - In the beginning, Allah commanded the Prophet (ﷺ) to pray Tahajjud, stating its varying duration. While it was obligatory on the Prophet (ﷺ), it was encouraged for the Companions before the mandate of the fard prayers.
 - In the final verse, Allah confirms that He knows the Prophet (ﷺ) acted upon each of His commands, praying Tahajjud two-thirds of the night, half of it or a third of it. Ibn Abbas affirmed that the Prophet (ﷺ) adhered to this command of Allah.
 - Praying during the last third of the night is the most virtuous and rewarding time for Tahajjud.
 - Narrated `Abdullah bin `Amr bin Al-`As: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) told me,

هـ " أَحَبُّ الصَّلَاةِ إِلَى اللَّهِ صَلَاةُ دَاوُدَ - عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ - وَأَحَبُّ الصَّيَامِ إِلَى اللَّهِ صِيَامُ دَاوُدَ، وَكَانَ يَنَامُ نِصْفَ اللَّيْلِ وَيَقُومُ ثُلُثَهُ وَيَنَامُ سُدُسَهُ، وَيَصُومُ يَوْمًا وَيُفْطِرُ يَوْمًا ."

"The most beloved prayer to Allah is that of David and the most beloved fasts to Allah are those of David. He used to sleep for half of the night and then pray for one third of the night and again sleep for its sixth part and used to fast on alternate days."(Sahih al-Bukhari)

- How to divide the night based on Dawud's nightly schedule:
 - First half (3/6 of the night): Sleep to rest the body and gain energy.
 - Middle portion (2/6 or 1/3 of the night): Wake up and stand in Tahajjud / Qiyam al-Layl.
 - Final portion (1/6 of the night): Sleep again during the last sixth to refresh before Fajr.
- وَطَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ مَعَكَ (Wa ta'ifatun minal ladhina ma'ak) — And a group of those with you:
 - Allah acknowledges that he did not pray alone, but along with his Companions who acted upon the Sunnah.
 - Based on this verse, a minority state that in the first ten years of Prophethood, Tahajjud was considered fard upon the believers.
 - Ibn Abbas clarified that Tahajjud remained strictly voluntary for the community, and Companions woke up for it out of desire to follow the Prophet (ﷺ).
 - Mujahid, early Quranic commentator (mufasssir) and student of Ibn Abbas, explained that when Allah uses the plural form for prayer, it emphasizes community worship, collective devotion, and the spiritual strength found in praying together (jama'ah).
 - The focus is on the shared strength of people standing in prayer together at the same time. This specific meaning does not refer to performing Tahajjud in a formal group setting.
 - Tahajjud remains an individual act essential for personal spiritual growth; it is not a communal worship. Solitary worship builds the inner strength of a believer.

- وَاللَّهُ يُقَدِّرُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ (Wallahu yuqaddiru al-layla wannahar) — And Allah determines [the extent of] the night and the day:
 - Allah has measured the exact hours of night and day precisely for human beings. This divine regulation relates to the flexibility and ease He has granted in performing Tahajjud.
- عَلِمَ أَنَّ لَنْ تُحْصُوهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ (Alima al-lan tuhsoohu fataba alaykum) — He has known that you will not be able to do it, so He has turned to you in forgiveness:
 - Allah knows people cannot keep up with the exact required hours of prayer, so He shows mercy if they make tawbah.
 - Lan tuhsoohu: Some say this specifically addresses praying Tahajjud, while others say it refers to prayer in general.
 - Prayer is a vital part of a believer's life, and the five daily prayers are essential duties that cannot be skipped.
 - Buraidah reported: Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

"العهد الذي بيننا وبينهم الصلاة، فمن تركها فقد كفر"

"That which differentiates us from the disbelievers and hypocrites is our performance of Salat. He who abandons it, becomes a disbeliever." (Jami' At-Tirmidhi)

- فَاقْرَأُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ (Faqra'oo ma tayassara min al-Qur'an) — So recite what is easy [for you] of the Qur'an:
 - Similar to how the Surah began, Allah tells the Prophet (ﷺ) to recite whatever portion of the Qur'an is easy during prayers or daily life.
 - It teaches us to focus on regular, manageable reading, whether large or small portions of the same Surah, rather than feeling overwhelmed.
 - Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools hold that reciting Surah Al-Fatihah is obligatory (wajib/arkan) in every rak'ah of Salah.

- Hanafi school holds that reciting any easy portion or verse of the Qur'an is sufficient, though reciting Al-Fatihah is still preferred.
- This refers to reciting, not memorizing or understanding the Qur'an. Each holds a different reward, although reading the Qur'an is a core part of being its companion.
 - Narrated Muhammad bin Ka'b Al-Qurazi: "I heard 'Abdullah bin Mas'ud saying: 'The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

" مَنْ قَرَأَ حَرْفًا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ فَلَهُ بِهِ حَسَنَةٌ وَالْحَسَنَةُ بِعَشْرِ أَمْثَالِهَا لَا أَقُولُ الْم حَرْفٌ وَلَكِنْ أَلِفٌ حَرْفٌ وَلَا مٌ حَرْفٌ وَمِيمٌ حَرْفٌ "

"[Whoever recites a letter] from Allah's Book, then he receives the reward from it, and the reward of ten the like of it. I do not say that Alif Lam Mim is a letter, but Alif is a letter, Lam is a letter and Mim is a letter." (Jami' At-Tirmidhi)

- عَلِمَ أَنْ سَيَكُونُ مِنْكُمْ مَّرْضَى (Alima an sayakoonu minkum marda) — He has known that there will be among you those who are ill:
 - Allah shows mercy by pairing His commands with practical ease, knowing human weakness. He offers leniency for three categories of individuals.
 - Allah offers an explicit excuse for the sick to forgo Tahajjud.
- وَآخَرُونَ يَضْرِبُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَبْتَغُونَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ (Wa akharoona yadriboona fee al-ardi yabtaghoona min fadlillah) — And others traveling through the land seeking of Allah's bounty:
 - ضرب (Daraba) has many meanings in Arabic. While its most frequent literal meaning in daily speech is "to hit," its meaning changes completely based on the words that follow it. Here, it means "to travel."
 - Meaning, people who are busy traveling to seek Allah's reward are excused from standing for Tahajjud.

- وَأَخْرُونَ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ (Wa akharoona yuqatiloona fee sabeelillah) — And others fighting for the cause of Allah:
 - Allah offers leniency to those engaged in defense or struggle, fighting in His path.
 - Imam Malik explained that "fee sabeelillah" also includes traveling for Hajj or seeking knowledge.
 - Ibn Abbas emphasized the virtue of Tahajjud: "Allah puts those who pray Tahajjud in the same category as the Mujahideen."
 - Companions held different views on this verse:
 - Abu Hurairah: Prioritized spreading religious knowledge and teaching hadith through the night, considering it a continuous benefit for the Ummah.
 - Khalid ibn al-Walid: Valued fighting for Allah's cause over spending the entire night in voluntary prayer.
- فَأَقْرَأُوا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ (Faqr'a'oo ma tayassara minhu) — So recite what is easy from it:
 - This encourages keeping a steady, comfortable routine of Qur'an reading anything easy rather than stopping.
- وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا (Wa aqeeemus salaata wa aatuz zakaata wa aqridul laaha qardan hasanaa) — And establish prayer and give zakah and loan Allah a goodly loan:
 - It highlights three core Islamic duties:
 - 1. Praying to Allah
 - The act of praying is also attached to performing Tahajjud.
 - Iqamat as-salah (establishing the prayer): It denotes observing the prayer completely and attentively.
 - Example: When the time for prayer arrived, Ali ibn Abi Talib would tremble and the color of his face would turn pale. When people asked him why he looked this way, he explained that it was time to fulfill the Amanah; standing before Allah.

- Iqama (إقامة) in Arabic comes from the root qama قام (qama), meaning to stand or to make straight/upright.
- Scholars explain that it represents making one's life upright, straightening one's life.
- 2. Helping the poor through charity
 - The act of zakat doesn't refer to the mandatory zakat as this was institutionalized as a legal state obligation in Madinah not Makkah.
 - This refers to general voluntary charity, caring for the poor, showing financial devotion to Allah.
 - زَكَا (Zaka) signifies burning impurities; refining gold removes impurities. Zakat literally means to purify as it acts as a spiritual and financial purification for a person's wealth.
- 3. Spending for Allah's sake
 - A loan given directly to Allah consists of spending one's wealth sincerely in voluntary charity completely for His sake, without expecting anything.
 - The Jewish community in Madinah mocked or questioned this verse by asking if Allah was poor and needed to borrow money from His servants.
 - Allah is completely self-sufficient and does not need material wealth. Instead, the loan represents a promise of a manifold reward, where the benefit returns entirely to the giver.
- وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنْفُسِكُمْ مِّنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ (Wa ma tuqaddimoo li-anfusikum min khayrin tajidoohu indallah) — And whatever good you put forward for yourselves, you will find it with Allah:
 - Every good action put forward in this life; charity, prayer etc. is not lost. We will find its full reward waiting for us with Allah on the Day of Judgment.

- Abu Huraira reported: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

يَقُولُ الْعَبْدُ مَالِي مَالِي إِنَّمَا لَهُ مِنْ مَالِهِ ثَلَاثٌ مَا أَكَلَ فَأَفْنَى أَوْ لَبَسَ فَأَبْلَى أَوْ أَعْطَى فَأَقْتَنَى
وَمَا سِوَى ذَلِكَ فَهُوَ ذَاهِبٌ وَتَارِكُهُ لِلنَّاسِ

"The servant says: My wealth, my wealth! Verily, he only gets three from his wealth: he eats and it perishes, or he wears clothes and they degrade, or he gives in charity and it is stored for him. Whatever is beyond this will depart him and be left behind for people." (Sahih Muslim)

- We have to shift our perspective from the dunya to the akhirah. Whatever charity given in the sight of Allah are not "gone." They are safely stored as eternal rewards in the akhirah. That is what truly "remains" for a person forever.
 - 'Aishah reported: Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had slaughtered a sheep and distributed major portions of its meat. Then he (ﷺ) asked,

"ما بقى منها؟" قالت: ما بقى منها إلا كتفها، قال: "بقى كلها غير كتفها"

"Is there anything left?" She replied, "Nothing, except the shoulder." Thereupon he said, "All of it is left except its shoulder." (Jami' At-Tirmidhi)

- هُوَ خَيْرٌ وَأَعْظَمُ أَجْرًا (Huwa khayran wa a'dama ajra) — It is better and greater in reward:
 - Meaning, whatever good deeds we send ahead is better and greater in reward than worldly gains.
- وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ (Wastaghfirullah) — And seek forgiveness of Allah:
 - This is a reminder to those who strive to obey Allah's commands like prayer, charity, reciting the Qur'an, and any acts of goodness to seek forgiveness. This acknowledges any shortcomings in those actions.
 - Imam Al-Ghazali notes two reasons we do istighfar after every action:
 - 1. Recognizing our inability to worship Allah as He truly deserves.

- 2. Admitting hidden mistakes or lack of full focus during the deed.
- Imam Ata' ibn Abi Rabah stated that seeking forgiveness (Wastaghfirullah) serves as a means to magnify rewards (a'dama ajra) despite the shortcomings in our deeds.
- The Prophet (ﷺ) was sinless (ma'sum) yet sought forgiveness one hundred times daily to teach his ummah how to repent or to rectify shortcomings in his worship.
 - Al-Agharr Al-Muzani said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said,

"إنه ليغان على قلبي، وإني لأستغفر الله في اليوم مائة مرة"

"Sometimes I perceive a veil over my heart, and I supplicate Allah for forgiveness a hundred times in a day." (Sahih Muslim)

- إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ (Innallaha ghafoorur raheem) — Indeed, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful:
 - Allah ends by saying this to comfort the believers about their shortcomings, acknowledging their struggles, and offering reassurance that their flaws in worship are met with mercy.