

Salaat-ul-Layl (The Night Prayer)

It is also known as Salaat-ul-Tahajjud or Salaat-ul-Shab. There are several references to it in the Qur'an. Many hadith (sayings) of our Prophet and Imams highly emphasize it. Establishing the Salaat-ul-Layl is a mark of distinction for the Mu'mineen and Mu'minaat (i.e., true believers and followers of Ahl-ul-Bayt). Imam 'Ali (as) is reported to have said that the Holy Prophet (pbuh&p) urged him three times, "O 'Ali, do not miss the Salaat-ul-Layl!" Imam Ja'far as-Sadiq (as) is reported to have said, "Do not disregard praying the Salaat-ul-Layl, for verily the one who is denied the Salaat-ul-Layl is in great loss."

It is a Sunnah (highly recommended) prayer offered anytime after midnight and before the onset of Fajr time. It consists of eleven Rak'aat, offered in cycles of two, with the last prayer being one Rak'aat.

Method:

- ❖ The first four Salaat (two Rak'aat each) are prayed like Fajr, with the intention being, "*Salaat-ul-Layl Qurbatan Ilal-Lah* (seeking nearness to Allah)"
- ❖ The fifth Salaat (two Rak'aat) is also prayed like Fajr, but the Qunoot is omitted in this Salaat. The intention is, "*Salaat-ul-Shaf'a Qurbatan Ilal-Lah*"
- ❖ The final Salaat is one Rak'aat, prayed with the intention of, "*Salaat-ul-Witr Qurbatan Ilal-Lah.*" In this Salaat, one should recite the following:
 - Surah *Al-Fatihah* once;
 - Surah *Al-Ikhlaas* three times,
 - Surah *Al-Falaq* once; and,
 - Surah *An-Naas* once.

Then in the Qunoot, one should recite the following:

- *Astaghfirullah Rabbi Wa'atoobu Ilayh* (I seek forgiveness of Allah, my Lord, and to him I turn repentant) either 70 or 100 times;
- Then seek forgiveness for forty (40) Mu'mineen or Mu'minaat by saying "*Allah hummaghfirli...*" and then mention them by name. They may be alive or dead. If one cannot remember or recite the names of 40 individuals, it is sufficient to say "*Allah hummaghfirli-l-mu'mineen wal Mu'minaat* (O Allah, forgive the believing men and women)"; and,
- Finally, recite "*Al-'Afw*" (O Pardoner) three hundred (300) times.

After Qunoot, finish the Salaat in the usual way with Ruku', two Sajdah, Tashahud, and Salaam.

Note: If occasionally one finds it difficult to offer eleven Rak'aat, then one may offer five Rak'at (i.e., two Rak'aat Salaat-ul-Layl, two Rak'aat Salaat-ul-Shaf'a, and one Rak'aat Salaat-ul-Witr). If even that is not possible, then offer at least two Rak'aat Salaat-ul-Layl. If one has not memorized all the Surahs then he/ she may use the help of the Qur'an to recite the Surah during the Salaat.

If Salaat-ul-Layl was missed, then it may be offered later. Make intention of *Qurbatan Ilal-Lah* without saying "*Qazaa.*" Remember, we have not truly established the Salaat unless we offer it regularly.

Allah (swt) says:

"And during (a part of) the night, forsake sleep for prayer, in addition to (obligatory prayers); maybe your Lord will exalt you to a praised position." (Al-Qur'an 17:79 – Translation by Agha Mirza Mahdi Puya / Mir Ahmad Ali)