

Salat Al-Ghufaylah

Salat Al-Ghufaylah, History, Philosophy, In Depth Analysis Of Its Contents



**And The Methods Of Performance -
Saleem Bhimji**

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This text explains the importance of Salat Al-Ghufaylah and its method of performance. It also highlights the meaning behind the verses and supplications recited during this prayer. Human beings are prone to mistakes and sin, but the path to repentance remains open.

The Qur'an portrays God as the Most Merciful and Oft-Forgiving, showing that it is never too late to seek His forgiveness. Through the story of Prophet Yunus, this text emphasizes how Salat Al-Ghufaylah serves as a powerful means to turn back to God, overcoming spiritual heedlessness and seeking His favour and proximity.

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Dedication

The publication of this book was made possible through the generous support of our donors in the memory of their departed family and friends.

Surah Al-Fatiha

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful” (1:1).

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds” (1:2).

الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

“The Beneficent the Merciful” (1:3).

مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ

“The Master of the Day of Judgement” (1:4).

إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ

“You alone we worship, and from You alone we seek help” (1:5).

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

“Guide us to the straight path” (1:6).

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

“The path of those upon whom Thou hast bestowed favours, not of those inflicted by Thy wrath, nor of those gone astray” (1:7).

Please recite *surah Al-Fatihah* and ask Allah (SwT) for the Divine reward (*thawab*) to be conferred upon the souls of the deceased in whose memory their loved ones have contributed graciously towards the publication if *Salvation Through Patience and Perseverance: Salat Al-Ghufaylah*

The publication of this book was made possible through the generous support of our donors in the memory of their dearly departed family and friends.

Dua Al-Faraj

دُعَاءُ الْفَرَجِ

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

O' God, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad.

اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لَوْلِيكَ الْحُجَّةِ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ

O' God, be for Your representative, the Hujjat (proof), son of AlHasan,

صَلِّوَاتِكَ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آبَائِهِ

Your blessings be on him and his forefathers,

فِي هَذِهِ السَّاعَةِ وَفِي كُلِّ سَاعَةٍ

In this hour and in every hour,

وَلِيًّا وَحَافِظًا، وَقَائِدًا وَنَاصِرًا، وَدَلِيلًا وَعَيْنًا

a guardian, a protector, a leader, a helper, a proof, and an eye

حَتَّى تُسَكِّنَهُ أَرْضَكَ طَوْعًا، وَتُمَتِّعَهُ فِيهَا طَوِيلًا.

until You make him live on the earth, in obedience (to You), and cause him to live in it for a long time.

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

O' God, bless Muhammad and the family of Muhammad.

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Foreword By Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Allahumma Salli 'ala Muhammad wa Aali Muhammad

Just doing a good deed by itself does not guarantee its acceptance by Almighty Allah; it is the intention which gives value to a deed:

....قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ

“.... He said: Verily Allah accepts [the good deeds] from the righteous people” (5:27).

In the case of the ritual prayers (*salat*), intention as well as attentiveness is necessary for its acceptance.

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir said:

إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لِيرْفَعُ لَهُ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ نَصْفُهَا أَوْ ثُلُثُهَا أَوْ رُبُعُهَا أَوْ خُمْسُهَا فَمَا يَرْفَعُ لَهُ إِلَّا مَا أَقْبَلَ عَلَيْهِ بِقَلْبِهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَمْرُنَا
بِالنَّافِلَةِ لِيَتِمَّ لَهُمْ بِهَا مَا نَقَصُوا مِنَ الْفَرِيضَةِ.

A person's ritual prayer is indeed, raised [to the level of acceptance] – either one-third of it or half of it or a quarter of it or one-fifth of it, because nothing will be raised [to the level of acceptance] except the parts in which one's mind is attentive. Verily people have been urged to do the supererogatory prayers in order to compensate for what they have missed [in attentiveness] from the obligatory prayers.

Abu Hamzah ath-Thumali once saw Imam 'Ali Ibn Al-Husayn performing the prayers while his outer robe had dropped from his shoulders. The Imam ('a) did not pull the robe up until he had finished his prayer and so Abu Hamzah asked him why he did not pull the robe up to which the Imam ('a) replied, “Woe to you! Do you realize in whose presence I was? The prayer of a person is not accepted (by the Almighty) except the part in which one has full concentration!”

Abu Hamzah then remarked, “[If this is the case, then] we are doomed!” The Imam (‘a) replied, “Verily Allah will compensate the (deficiency in obligatory prayer) with the supererogatory prayers.”¹

In this light, the *nawafil* prayers become an important way of making up for the lack of attentiveness in the obligatory prayers – and *salat Al-Ghufaylah* is one of the highly recommended *nafileh* prayers. I commend Shaykh Saleem Bhimji for his endeavour in promoting this *salat* and educating people about it, and pray that may Almighty Allah accept this work.

Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi

20 September 2016

1. The text of this hadith can be found in Tahdhib al-Ahkam, vol 2, page 342, trad 1415, and is as follows:

عَنْهُ عَنْ حَمَادَةَ بْنِ عَيْسَى قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي بَعْضُ أَصْحَابِنَا عَنْ أَبِي حَمَزَةَ الثَّمَالِيِّ قَالَ: رَأَيْتُ عَلِيَّ بْنَ الْحُسَيْنِ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلَامُ يُصَلِّي فَسَقَطَ رِدَاؤُهُ عَنْ مَنْكِبَيْهِ. قَالَ: فَلَمْ يُسَوِّهُ حَتَّى فَرَغَ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ. قَالَ: فَسَأَلْتُهُ عَنْ ذَلِكَ فَقَالَ: وَيْحَكَ أَتَدْرِي بَيْنَ يَدَيَّ مِنْ كُنْتِ؟ أَنْ الْعَبْدَ لَا تَقْبَلُ مِنْهُ صَلَاةٌ إِلَّا مَا أَقْبَلَ مِنْهَا. فَقُلْتُ: جَعَلْتَ فِدَاكَ هَلْكَنَا! فَقَالَ: كَلَّا إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى يُتِمُّ ذَلِكَ بِالنَّوَافِلِ.

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Introduction By The Author

When we glance through the spiritual regiment of a Muslim, we see that it is composed of various acts of devotion towards Allah (SwT). Some of these are obligatory and must be performed – such as the fast of the month of *Ramadhan*, the ‘religious tax’ (*khums*) on one's net excess savings, the five daily canonical prayers (*salat*) and the major pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca. Some other acts are highly recommended and have been emphasized by the leaders of the faith – actions such as the minor pilgrimage (‘*umrah*), recommended charity (*sadaqah*), and the optional (*mustahab*) prayers – of which *salat Al-Ghufaylah* is one of these highly recommended and ‘easy’ to perform – for those who have earned the Divine providence (*tawfiq*) to adopt it into their spiritual program.

This book, *Salvation Through Patience and Perseverance: Salat alGhufaylah*, is our latest endeavour to elucidate upon the jurisprudence of Islam in the realm of the *salat*, while striving to present such acts of worship in a clear and easy to understand language,¹ and at the same time, expounding on the philosophy, wisdom and etiquette of these acts of worship, which we sometimes perform out of habit or ritual without studying their spiritual aspects.

What follows in this book is the first ever comprehensive analysis in English about one of the most

important recommended prayers in Islam – *Salat Al-Ghufaylah* – a joint recommendation from at least two of the Infallibles. The final Messenger, Muhammad Al-Mustafa (S) taught us the importance of recommended prayers in general, and specifically the ones between *Maghrib* and *'Isha*; and it was the 6th Imam, Ja'far Ibn Muhammad as-Sadiq, born on the same day as Prophet Muhammad – the 17th of Rabi' Al-Awwal – but 72 years later, who taught us one of the specific methods of *Salat Al-Ghufaylah* which not only carries with it a high reward, but also a profound way to change the course of our lives – when done with a thorough understanding.

Although the prayer itself is only two *rak'at* and can be performed in five minutes or less, there is truly an ocean of spiritual benefit and lessons that one can learn and practise, when we take the time to study the contents of what is being recited and the deeper understanding of every word that is uttered. Therefore, one needs to carefully read, study and reflect over the commentary of the verses used in this prayer (as presented in this book and also as have been described in various other authoritative works), and also study the life history of one of Allah's prophets, Yunus ('a), if we truly wish to turn our own lives around and turn back to complete servitude of Allah – like this great prophet of Allah did.

This book will take the reader through a journey into various areas of Islamic teachings which may at first seem trivial. However, when looked at from a holistic point of view, one will realize that the performance of any act of worship in Islam actually requires learning and understanding multiple disciplines. These acts of worship are not given to us in a vacuum. They are multi-dimensional.

It is for this reason that before we even begin to discuss the method of its performance, we need to educate ourselves with the underlying concept of *salat*, and from there the importance of spending time on personal development through acts of worship which are not obligatory upon us, but highly recommended (*mustahab*) – such as the optional prayers.

Once we have understood the importance of going above and beyond what is required from us, we are then able to better appreciate what *Salat Al-Ghufaylah* is, how it was taught to us, how to perform it and all of the periphery discussions in this regard.

This prayer is formulated around two main concepts – the forgiveness of Allah (SwT) in our lives, and the all-encompassing knowledge of Allah (SwT). We will thus also delve into the commentary of the two verses recited in this *salat* because without knowing what Prophet Yunus ('a) went through in his mission and what form his repentance took, it will be difficult for us to appreciate our life challenges and how we can work on altering our conditions. In addition, we also need to delve into the comprehensive knowledge of Allah (SwT) to better appreciate our role as servants and how vast His forgiveness is.

We then present two other prayers which are highly recommended to be recited between *Salat Al-Maghrib* and *'Isha*, and some general jurisprudential issues regarding the recommended prayers.

We conclude by recounting some final points on the life of Prophet Yunus ('a) which give us further inspiration for our own struggles then present a response regarding an issue which has circulated within

some communities that orators have been inappropriately attributing to the Infallibles ('a) in relation to the spiritual power of *salat Al-Ghufaylah* and how it relates to the perpetrators of the tragic events of Karbala' and the role of the guilty individuals in the massacre of Imam Husayn Ibn 'Ali ('a) and his family and companions.

To round up this work, we quote the entire section of the Bible (the Old Testament) and the Book of Jonah for the readers to be able to compare and contrast the Qur'anic and Islamic narrative with that is found in the Bible.

As human beings, we are only here for a limited duration, and we realize that we have very little time at our disposal. We may generously assume that an average person lives for 70 years in the period of being *baligh*². If we subtract an average amount of hours spent at work or school, and the amount of time spent on sleeping, eating and all of the other vicissitudes of life, then we are left with a little over 23 years of actual "available time" – to engage in recreation, pleasure, entertainment – and of course the specific acts of worship.

Average life duration (<i>post-baligh</i>)	70 years
Total number of days	25,500 days
Total number of hours	613,200 hours
Time spent at work/school, sleeping and other activities	409,200 hours
Total hours remaining	204,000 hours
Equivalent in days	8,500 days
Equivalent in years	23.29 years

With such a short duration of time available at our disposal to work to earn the pleasure of Allah (SwT) and towards the attainment of paradise, we see that time is truly 'flying by' and 'slipping away' from us. Thus, we need to make the most of the 'spare time' in our lives, rather than drowning ourselves in other activities since before we know it, we will be gone from this world – and forgotten.

Thus, we need to ensure that we make the most of the time that we have available to build our next life. Therefore, let us ensure that if we are not able to spend that limited number of years in 'prescribed worship', that we make the most of whatever time we have in our lives before that too withers away – not only quantitatively but more importantly, qualitatively.

We are humbled for the opportunity to have his eminence, Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi, write a concise

introduction for this book – while maintaining his busy schedule – may Allah reward him amply for his services to Islam.

This work was accomplished with the support and encouragement of my family – my wife and editor, Arifa Hudda, for her hard work on this project; and in addition, our dear daughter, Muhadditha, for her assistance. Indeed, their rewards are also with Allah (SwT) for their devotion in helping to spread the teachings of Islam as taught by Prophet Muhammad (S) and his Noble Family ('a).

The funding for this project was done primarily via our Kickstarter campaign³ and in an astounding three days, we managed to secure donations from generous contributors around the world to help publish this book – we are truly humbled to receive such support in such a short period of time.

In addition to all of the online donations, many other anonymous individuals approached us personally with their contributions for which we are eternally grateful.

Last but not least, we would like to acknowledge the generous and continuous support of the Academy for Learning Islam (www.AcademyofIslam.org [8]), and the Mohsin and Fauzia Jaffer Foundation towards the publication of this work. Our gratitude is also extended to the World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna–Asheri Muslim Communities (www.world-federation.org [9]) for their contribution towards the printing and distribution of this work within the United Kingdom.

We would also like to recognize the valuable assistance from the Organization of North American Shia Ithna–Asheri Muslim Communities better known as NASIMCO (www.nasimco.org [10]) towards the shipping expenditures and assistance of their office staff to ensure that ample copies of this book, distributed free of charge, make their way to the respective member communities across Canada and the United States of America.

We ask Allah to reward all of the donors and institutions, and to bless their families and loved ones and to shower their deceased family and friends with His special mercy.

Keeping the readership of this book in mind, we have done our best to maintain English terminology for the Islamic terms used, but have also used their Arabic equivalent in parenthesis in order to further acquaint the readers with these terms. When it comes to the names of the prophets and saints, we have maintained their Arabic names and have included a glossary at the back of the book providing their Anglicized equivalents.

We ask the readers to overlook any spelling or typographical errors in this book and to inform us via e-mail if you find any of the same so that these may be corrected for an online version or future printings.

Finally, when you – the reader – are given the Divine providence to recite this beautiful *salat*, we request that you remember everyone who was instrumental in completing this project –including the author, editor, reviewers, donors and their families and everyone else. May Allah accept all of our prayers, and

grant us that which we have prayed for others – with no reduction in what anyone is given, for surely with Him are the treasures of the heavens and the earth, and He does not tire in giving to His servants in abundance, nor do His bounties ever decrease by Him bestowing upon His creations.

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

“... There is no Allah save Thee. Be Thou Glorified! Lo! I have been a wrong-doer” (21:87).

Saleem Bhimji

Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

June 27th, 2016 CE • *Ramadhan* 21st 1437 AH

Anniversary of the martyrdom of the

Commander of the Faithful ‘Ali Ibn Abi Talib (‘a)

1. Our first project was Salat al-Ayat – the special prayers performed during the occurrence of natural events such as earthquakes, solar and lunar eclipses, etc. Published by the Islamic Humanitarian Service (www.al-haqq.com [11]) and co-published by the Islamic Publishing House (www.iph.ca [12]).

2. What is termed as baligh or the beginning of maturity, for girls this is 9 years of age and for boys approximately 12–15 years of age.

3. <https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1357654719/salvation-through-patience> [13]and-perserverance

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The Daily Prayers

The most important act of worship and method of connection to Allah are the canonical prayers, which a Muslim is obligated to perform from the day one becomes of age until one leaves this world. These are the five daily prayers, which must be performed every day in their allotted time span.

In the traditions, Prophet Muhammad (S) has told us that if the *salat* is accepted, then all of the other acts of worship will also be accepted. However, if the *salat* is rejected, then all of the other acts of worship will also be rejected. The Prophet has also described the prayers as being the pillar of religion, the means of spiritual ascent (*mir'aj*) of a believer, and other such beautiful metaphors. Indeed, while in

the state of prayer, a believer is in direct communion with one's Lord and it is the time when one is the 'closest' to Allah (SwT).

The process of gaining spiritual proximity to the Beloved is not limited only to the five daily prayers, which are performed at specific times within a 24-hour period. Rather, we are told that we can and should speak to Allah in this way at any time – not only when we need something, but even to simply thank Him for all of the countless blessings and favours that He has showered upon us, just as the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali has beautifully stated:

إِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ رَغْبَةً، فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةٌ لِتُجَارٍ، وَإِنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ رَهْبَةً فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةٌ أَلْعَبِيدِ، وَأَنَّ قَوْمًا عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ شُكْرًا فَتِلْكَ عِبَادَةٌ أَلْأَحْرَارِ

Verily, some people worship Allah being desirous (of His reward) – so this is the worship of traders; and some people worship Allah fearing (His punishment) – so it is the worship of the slaves, and a group worship Allah in gratitude (to Him) – so this is the worship of the free ones. [1](#)

Therefore, we have also been encouraged to engage in the recommended prayers which have been taught to us by Prophet Muhammad (S) and his noble family, the *Ahl Al-Bayt* ('a) – not so that we may 'buy' our way into paradise; nor that we ensure our salvation from the hell-fire, but rather, simply for the fact that Allah (SwT) deserves to be worshipped and cherished for all that He has done, continues to do and will continue to do for us – in this life and in the next.

Some of these prayers are designated to be performed specifically on a certain day or night within the Islamic lunar calendar – such as the 1,000 units of *salat*, which we are recommended to perform in the blessed month of *Ramadhan*[2](#); while others take place on special events in specific months – such as on the day of the completion of the fast on the day of 'Eid Al-Fitr or the completion of the pilgrimage to Mecca on 'Eid Al-Adha, or on the birth anniversaries of the Fourteen Infallibles.

However, if we draw our attention to a tradition from Imam Hasan Al-'Askari and the five signs of a true follower, we see that we have been encouraged to perform a minimum of 51 *rak'at* within each 24-hour period which is outlined below:

عَلَامَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنِ خَمْسٌ: صَلَاةٌ إِحْدَى وَخَمْسِينَ، وَزِيَارَةٌ أَلْأَرْبَعِينَ، وَالتَّخْتَمُ بِأَلْيَمِينِ، وَتَعْفِيرُ أَلْجَبِينِ، وَأَلْجَهْرُ بِ بَسْمِ
اللَّهِ أَلرَّحْمَنِ أَلرَّحِيمِ

The signs of a believer are five: praying fifty-one *rak'at* [including mandatory and optional prayers], *Ziyarat Al-Arba'in*, wearing a ring on the right hand, prostration on dirt, and saying *Basmallah*[3](#) in a raised voice [in the *salat*].[4](#)

Salat	Number of Rak'at
Pre-Fajr	11 rak'at known as <i>Salat at-Tahajjud</i> (also known as <i>Salat Al-Layl</i> or <i>Namaz-e-shab</i>)
Fajr	2 rak'at before Fajr prayer 2 rak'at of Fajr obligatory prayer
Dhuhr	8 rak'at before Dhuhr prayer 4 rak'at of Dhuhr obligatory prayer
'Asr	8 rak'at before 'Asr prayer 4 rak'at of 'Asr obligatory prayer
Maghrib	3 rak'at of Maghrib obligatory prayer 4 rak'at after Maghrib prayer (other than the 2 rak'at of <i>Salat Al-Ghufaylah</i> , but it can be intended as combined according to some of the <i>Maraji' Taqlid</i>)
'Isha	4 rak'at of 'Isha obligatory prayer 2 rak'at sitting after 'Isha prayer (counted as 1 rak'at standing)
Total Daily Rak'at	Obligatory (<i>wajib</i>) prayers = 17 rak'at + Recommended (<i>mustahab</i>) prayers = 34 rak'at Total = 51 rak'at

Thus, we see that the recommended prayers are even greater in number (in fact double) than the minimum which Allah desires from us, and these are more beloved to Him because their performance shows our devotion and commitment to the faith and its sacred teachings as we are going 'above and beyond' the call of duty to cherish our Creator.

In this regard, there are numerous traditions from Prophet Muhammad (S) and the infallible Imams ('a) in which they have accentuated on the significance of engaging in recommended prayers. Below are ten such traditions.

[1.](#) Nahj Al-Balagha, Short saying #228.

[2.](#) Details can be found in various major books of worship, however Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi has mentioned the following in this regard:

The special nawafil (recommended or supererogatory prayers) for the month of Ramadhan are to be recited as follows:

1st to 20th day: 20 rak'at (2 rak'at x 10) each night.

19th ,21st and 23rd: 100 rak'at (2 rak'at x 50) on each of the three eves.

21st to 30th: 30 rak'at (2 rak'at x 15) on each of the ten nights.

The total numbers of the special nawafil of Ramadhan comes to 1,000 rak'at. However, it is important to note that these nawafil prayers, from the Shi'a Islam's perspective, are not allowed to be performed in congregational form (jama'at) and

can only be performed individually (furada).

3. The Arabic phrase at the beginning of each chapter of the Qur'an. The English meaning is "In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful".

4. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 72, page 75, sect. 24, trad. 7.

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Recommended Prayers In The Ahadith

Tradition 1: Perfecting The Obligatory Prayers

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ الْبَاقِرُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: إِنَّ الْعَبْدَ لَيَرْفَعُ لَهُ مِنْ صَلَاتِهِ نَصْفُهَا أَوْ رُبْعَهَا أَوْ خُمْسَهَا، وَمَا يَرْفَعُ لَهُ إِلَّا مَا أَقْبَلَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْهَا بِقَلْبِهِ، وَإِنَّمَا أَمَرْنَا بِالنَّوَافِلِ لِيَتِمَّ لَهُمْ بِهَا مَا نَقَصُوا مِنَ الْفَرِيضَةِ

Imam Al-Baqir ('a) has said: Indeed, sometimes one-half, one-third, one-quarter or even one-fifth of (the total) of the prayers that a servant performs ascends [to the heavens], because it is only that amount of prayer in which there is focus and presence of heart that will soar, and it is for this reason that the people have been advised to (perform) the recommended prayers so that through this, any deficiencies that exist in their obligatory prayers will be compensated for. [1](#)

Tradition 2: One's Scale Of Deeds

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: الصَّلَاةُ مِيزَانٌ، فَمَنْ وَفَى اسْتَوْفَى

Prophet Muhammad (S) has said: The *salat* is the scale [which will be used to weigh one's deeds], and therefore a person who performs more [*salat*], will benefit more. [2](#)

Tradition 3: Follow Your Heart

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ حَسَنُ الْعَسْكَرِيِّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: أَنَّ لِلْقُلُوبِ إِقْبَالَاً وَادْبَاراً فَإِذَا أَقْبَلَتْ فَاحْمِلُوهَا عَلَى النَّوَافِلِ وَإِذَا أَدْبَرَتْ فَافْتَصِرُوا بِهَا عَلَى الْفَرَائِضِ

Imam Al-Hasan Al-'Askari ('a) has said: Indeed, the hearts [go into a state] of acceptance and rejection; therefore, when your heart is [in a state of] consenting, then urge it towards the recommended [*salat*],

and when it is [in a state of] rejection, then suffice it with only the obligatory [*salat*].³

Tradition 4: True Followers (Shi'a) Of Imam 'Ali ('A)

... قَالَ الْإِمَامُ مُحَمَّدُ الْبَاقِرُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: إِنَّمَا شِيعَةُ عَلِيٍّ . . . كَثِيرَةٌ صَلَاتُهُمْ كَثِيرَةٌ تَلَاوُتُهُمْ لِلْقُرْآنِ

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir ('a) has said: Indeed, the true followers (*Shi'a*) of 'Ali ... [are known by their] abundance in prayers and their abundance in recitation of the Qur'an...⁴

Tradition 5: Keeping Away From Laziness

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ جَعْفَرُ الصَّادِقُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْكَسَلَ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ رَحِيمٌ يَشْكُرُ الْقَلِيلَ أَنَّ الرَّجُلَ لِيُصَلِّيَ الرَّكَعَتَيْنِ تَطَوُّعًا يُرِيدُ بِهِمَا وَجْهَ اللَّهِ فَيَدْخُلُهُ اللَّهُ بِهِمَا الْجَنَّةَ

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq ('a) has said: I advise you to keep away from laziness as indeed, your Lord is The Most-Merciful and He accepts the minimal. Indeed, a person may perform a two-*rak'at* prayer solely seeking the pleasure of Allah and because of this [short two *rak'at* prayer], Allah will enter that individual into Paradise.⁵

Tradition 6: Preparing One's Self

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ جَعْفَرُ الصَّادِقُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: إِنَّ الْقَلْبَ يَحْيَى وَيَمُوتُ، فَإِذَا حَيٌّ فَأُدْبِهِ بِالتَّطَوُّعِ، وَإِذَا مَاتَ فَأَقْصِرْهُ عَلَى الْفَرَائِضِ

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq ('a) has said: Indeed, the heart [of a person] can be (spiritually) alive and it can also be (spiritually) dead; so when it is (spiritually) alive, then coach it with the recommended [prayers]; and when it is (spiritually) dead, then keep it content with only the obligatory [prayers].⁶

Tradition 7: Alleviation Of Tribulations

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ جَعْفَرُ الصَّادِقُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: مَا يَمْنَعُ أَحَدَكُمْ إِذَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهِ غَمٌ مِنْ غَمُومِ الدُّنْيَا أَنْ يَتَوَضَّأَ ثُمَّ يَدْخُلَ ﴿الْمَسْجِدِ فَيَرْكَعُ رَكَعَتَيْنِ يَدْعُو اللَّهُ فِيهِمَا أُمَّا سَمِعَتْ اللَّهُ يَقُولُ﴾ ﴿وَأَسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ﴾

Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq ('a) has said: What prevents any of you that when a sorrow from the distresses of the transient world visits you – that you perform ablution (*wudhu*), enter the masjid and perform a two *rak'at* prayer in which you call upon Allah in these two [*rak'at*]?! Haven't you heard Allah says [in the

Qur'an]: **“And seek assistance [with Allah] through patience and prayer” (2: 153)** [7](#)

Tradition 8: Total Daily Prayers Should Be Fifty–One Rak’at

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ عَلِيٌّ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: . . . وَكَانَتْ الْأُمَّمُ السَّالِفَةُ قَدْ فَرَضَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ خَمْسِينَ صَلَاةً فِي خَمْسِينَ وَقْتًا وَهِيَ مِنَ الْأَصَارِ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَرَفَعَتْهَا عَنْ أُمَّتِكَ وَجَعَلْتَهَا خَمْسًا فِي خَمْسَةِ أَوْقَاتٍ وَهِيَ إِحْدَى وَخَمْسُونَ رَكْعَةً وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُمْ أَجْرَ خَمْسِينَ صَلَاةً . . .

Imam 'Ali ('a) has said: [Allah, the Most High said to His Prophet]. ‘I made it an obligation upon the nations which came before (you) that they were to perform fifty prayers during fifty times (of the day) and this was one of the exertions which was placed upon them, however I have lifted this weighty load off your nation, and I have given them five prayers in five times, and [including the obligatory and the recommended prayers], there are a total of fifty–one *rak'at* and I will give them a reward [if they perform these] as if they have performed fifty prayers [as the previous nations had obligatory upon them].’[8](#)

Tradition 9: Effects Of Reciting A Large Number Of Prayers

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: أَكْثَرُكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ أَكْثَرُكُمْ صَلَاةً فِي الدُّنْيَا

The Messenger of Allah (S) has said: Those of you who will have the most number of spouses in Paradise are those of you who performed the greatest number of [recommended] prayers while in this world.[9](#)

Tradition 10: In Order For The Recommended Prayers To Be Accepted

قَالَ الْإِمَامُ مُحَمَّدُ الْبَاقِرُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ: وَإِنَّا لَمْ يُؤَدِّ الرَّجُلُ الْفَرِيضَةَ لَمْ تَقْبَلْ مِنْهُ النَّافِلَةُ

Imam Muhammad Al–Baqir ('a) has said: If a person does not perform the obligatory [prayers], then the recommended [prayers] will not be accepted from him.[10](#)

[1.](#) Bihar al–Anwar, vol. 87, page 28.

[2.](#) Furu' al–Kafi, vol. 3, page 267.

[3.](#) Mustadrak al–Wasa'il, vol. 1, page 177.

[4.](#) Sifat ash–Shi'a, page 436.

[5.](#) Wasa'il ash–Shi'a, vol. 3, page 30; Usul al–Kafi, vol. 2, page 61.

6. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol 1, page 177.
7. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. 5, page 263.
8. Jami' Ahadith ash-Shi'a, vol. 4, page 40.
9. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il, vol. 1, page 175.
10. Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. 3. page 20.

[1] [1]

SHARES

Benefits Of The Stories Of The Qur'an

When making one's way through the Qur'an, the reader is brought face to face with stories of nations and communities that lived thousands of years ago. Some may question the wisdom behind the narration of events that took place so far in the past and which seem to be entirely unconnected from our contemporary lives.

Indeed, there are numerous 'stories' mentioned in the Qur'an. However, we must appreciate that all of them reflect real-life incidents that have transpired over the course of the history of the world and have affected countless individuals. Far from being recounted simply as a passing account or narrative, the scholars of the Qur'an have gone to great lengths to analyse each and every single story and have enumerated at least fifteen benefits which these 'stories' hold, including the following:

Point 1: Bringing Tranquillity To The Heart

وَلَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَصَبَرُوا عَلَىٰ مَا كُذِّبُوا وَأَوَدُوا حَتَّىٰ أَنفُسُهُمْ نَصَرْنَا وَلَا مَبْدَلَ لِكَلِمَاتِ اللَّهِ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَكَ مِنْ نَّبِيِّ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

“And certainly, messengers before you were rejected, but they were patient on being rejected and persecuted until Our help came to them; and there is none to change the words of Allah, and certainly there has come to you some information about the messengers” (6:34).

Point 2: Consoling The Soul

فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمْ إِنْ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوا بِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَسَفًا

“Then maybe you will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do not believe in this announcement” (18:6).

Point 3: Fulfilment Of The Divine Proofs

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَأَصْحَابُ الرَّسِّ وَثَمُودُ

“(Others) before them rejected (prophets): the people of Nuh and the dwellers of ar-Rass and Thamud” (50: 12).

وَعَادٌ وَفِرْعَوْنُ وَإِخْوَانُ لُوطٍ

“And ‘Ad and Firawun and Lut’s brethren” (50: 13).

وَأَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ وَقَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ كُلٌّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيدِ

“And the dwellers of the grove and the people of Tuba; all rejected the messengers, so My threat came to pass” (50: 14).

Point 4: Spiritual Fortitude And Determination

ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْقُرَى نَقِصُهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنْهَا قَائِمٌ وَحَصِيدٌ

“This is an account of (the fate of) the towns which We relate to you; among them are some that stand and (others) destroyed” (11: 100).

فَاسْتَقِمُّ كَمَا أُمِرْتَ وَمَنْ تَابَ مَعَكَ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا إِنَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

“Continue then in the right way as you are commanded, as also he who has turned (to Allah) with you, and be not inordinate, surely He sees what you do” (11: 112).

Point 5: A Reminder

وَكُلًّا نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَجَاءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَذِكْرٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And that all we relate to you of the accounts of the messengers is to strengthen your heart therewith; and in this has come to you the truth and an admonition, and a reminder to the believers” (11: 120).

Point 6: A Means To Reflect And Ponder

وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ الَّذِي آتَيْنَاهُ آيَاتِنَا فَانْسَلَخَ مِنْهَا فَاتَّبِعَهُ الشَّيْطَانُ فَكَانَ مِنَ الضَّالِّينَ

“And recite to them the narrative of him to whom We give Our communications, but he withdraws himself from them, so the Satan overtakes him, so he is of those who go astray” (7: 175).

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَرَفَعْنَاهُ بِهَا وَلَكِنَّهُ أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ فَمَثَلُهُ كَمَثَلِ الْكَلْبِ إِنْ تَحْمَلَ عَلَيْهِ يَلْهَثَ أَوْ تَتْرُكُهُ يَلْهَثَ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَاقْصُصِ الْقَصَصَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

“And if We had pleased, We would certainly have exalted him thereby; but he clung to the earth and followed his low desire, so his parable is as the parable of a dog; if you attack him he lolls out his tongue; and if you leave him alone he lolls out his tongue; this is the parable of the people who reject Our communications; therefore relate the narrative that they may reflect” (7: 176).

Point 7: A Greater Wisdom

وَإِنَّكَ لَتُلْقَى الْقُرْآنَ مِنْ لَدُنْ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ

“And most surely you are made to receive the Qur'an from the Wise, the Knowing Allah” (27:6).

إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِأَهْلِهِ إِنِّي آنستُ نَارًا سَاتِيكُمْ مِنْهَا بِخَبْرٍ أَوْ آتِيكُمْ بِشِهَابٍ قَبَسٍ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ

“When Musa said to his family: Surely I see fire; I will bring to you from it some news, or I will bring to you from there a burning firebrand so that you may warm yourselves” (27:7).

Point 8: Truthfulness Of Prophet Muhammad

فَلَمَّا فَصَلَ طَالُوتُ بِالْجُنُودِ قَالَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مُبْتَلِيكُمْ بِنَهَرٍ فَمَنْ شَرِبَ مِنْهُ فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي وَمَنْ لَمْ يَطْعَمْهُ فَإِنَّهُ مِنِّي إِلَّا مَنِ اغْتَرَفَ غُرْفَةً بِيَدِهِ فَشَرِبُوا مِنْهُ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِّنْهُمْ فَلَمَّا جَاوَزَهُ هُوَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ قَالُوا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا الْيَوْمَ بِجَالُوتَ وَجُنُودِهِ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يَظُنُّونَ أَنَّهُمْ مُلَاقُوا اللَّهَ كَمِ مِّنْ فِتْنَةٍ قَلِيلَةً غَلَبَتْ فِتْنَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

“So when Talut departed with the forces, he said: Surely Allah will try you with a river; whoever then drinks from it, he is not of me, and whoever does not taste of it, he is surely of me, except

he who takes with his hand as much of it as fills the hand; but with the exception of a few of them they drank from it. So when he had crossed it, he and those who believed with him, they said: We have today no power against Jalut and his forces. Those who were sure that they would meet their Lord said: How often has a small party vanquished a numerous host by Allah's permission, and Allah is with the patient” (2:249).

فَهَزَمُوهُم بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَقَتَلَ دَاوُدُ جَالُوتَ وَآتَاهُ اللَّهُ الْمُلْكَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَعَلَّمَهُ مِمَّا يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللَّهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَفَسَدَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

“So they put them to flight by Allah's permission. And Dawud slew Jalut, and Allah gave him the kingdom and wisdom, and taught him of what He pleased. And were it not for Allah's repelling some people with others, the earth would certainly be in a state of disorder; but Allah is Gracious to the creatures” (2:251).

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ تَنْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

“These are the communications of Allah: We recite them to you with truth; and most surely you are (one) of the messengers” (2:252)

Point 9: Truthfulness Of The Day Of Resurrection

وَكَذَلِكَ أَعْتَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَأَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا إِذْ يَتَنَازَعُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوا عَلَيْهِمْ بُنْيَانًا رَبُّهُمْ أَعْلَمُ بِهِمُ قَالَ الَّذِينَ غَلَبُوا عَلَىٰ أَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِم مَّسْجِدًا

“And thus did We make them to get knowledge of them that they might know that Allah's promise is true, and that as for the hour there is no doubt about it. When they disputed among themselves about their affair and said: Build an edifice over them – their Lord best knows them. Those who prevailed in their affair said: We will certainly raise a masjid over them.” (18:21)

Point 10: Knowing Allah (SwT)

وَنَبِّئُهُمْ عَنِ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

“And inform them about the guests of Ibrahim” (15:51).

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْمُتَوَسِّمِينَ

“Surely in this are signs for those who examine” (15:75).

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“Most surely there is a sign in this for the believers” (15:77).

Point 11: Making Others Understand Realities

فَوَرَبِّ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْكُمْ تَنْطِقُونَ

“And by the Lord of the heavens and the earth! It is most surely the truth, just as you do speak” (51:23).

هَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ

“Has there come to you information about the honoured guests of Ibrahim?” (51:24).

Point 12: Learning Lessons

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلًا أَصْحَابَ الْقَرْيَةِ إِذْ جَاءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ

“And set out to them an example of the people of the town, when the messengers came to it” (36: 13).

إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِتَالِثٍ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ مُّرْسَلُونَ

“When We sent to them two, they rejected both of them, then We strengthened (them) with a third, so they said: Surely we are messengers to you” (36: 14).

قَالُوا مَا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا وَمَا أَنْزَلَ الرَّحْمَنُ مِن شَيْءٍ إِنَّا أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَكْذِبُونَ

“They said: You are naught but mortals like ourselves, nor has the Beneficent Allah revealed anything; you only lie” (36: 15).

قَالُوا رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ إِنَّا إِلَيْكُمْ لَمُرْسَلُونَ

“They said: Our Lord knows that we are most surely messengers to you” (36: 16).

وَمَا عَلَيْنَا إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ

“And nothing devolves on us but a clear deliverance (of the message)” (36: 17).

قَالُوا إِنَّا تَطَيَّرْنَا بِكُمْ لَئِن لَّمْ تَنْتَهُوا لَنَرْجُمَنَّكُمْ وَلَيَمَسَّنَّكُم مِّنَّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

“They said: Surely we augur evil from you; if you do not desist, we will certainly stone you, and there shall certainly afflict you a painful chastisement from us” (36: 18).

قَالُوا طَائِرُكُم مَّعَكُمْ أَئِن ذُكِّرْتُم بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ

“They said: Your evil fortune is with you; what – if you are reminded! Nay, you are an extravagant people” (36: 19).

وَجَاءَ مِنْ أَقْصَى الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ يَسْعَى قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِينَ

“And from the remote part of the city there came a man running, he said: O my people follow the messengers!” (36:20).

Point 13: Admonition And Exhortation

وَكُلًّا نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الرُّسُلِ مَا نُثَبِّتُ بِهِ فُؤَادَكَ وَجَاءَكَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَذِكْرٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And all we relate to you of the accounts of the messengers is to strengthen your heart therewith; and in this has come to you the truth and an admonition, and a reminder to the believers” (11: 120).

Point 14: Servitude To Allah (Swt)

وَلَمَّا جَاءَ عِيسَى بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالَ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَلِأُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي تَخْتَلِفُونَ فِيهِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا

“And when 'Isa came with clear arguments he said: I have come to you indeed, with wisdom, and that I may make clear to you part of what you differ in; so be careful of (your duty to) Allah and

obey me” (43:63).

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

“Surely Allah is my Lord and your Lord, therefore serve Him; this is the right path” (43:64).

Point 15: A Means To Further Knowledge

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ وَإِن كُنْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ لَمِنَ الْغَافِلِينَ

“We narrate to you the best of narratives, by Our revealing to you this Qur’an, though before this you were certainly one of those who did not know” (12:3).

Let us now turn our attention to a specific prayer which is highly encouraged to perform nightly – known as *salat Al-Ghufaylah*.

[1] [1]

SHARES

Salat Al-Ghufaylah

Meaning Of The Term Al-Ghufaylah

Each prayer in the religion of Islam has its own specific name which is in some way related to that particular prayer – for example we refer to the five daily obligatory prayers based on names which denote the time in which they are performed – *Fajr*, *Dhuhr*, *'Asr*, *Maghrib* and *'Isha*. However, above and beyond that, each 'Arabic word for these five times also has other unique meanings – such as *fajr* which literally means the starting point and also means an explosion – and the same holds true for the remainder of the daily prayers and the meaning of their names.

The prayers on the first of *Shawwal* are known as *salat Al-'Eid* – the meaning of *Al-'Eid* being to 'return' and last but not least, the prayers during an earthquake or other natural occurrence are called *salat Al-Ayat* – the meaning of *Al-Ayat* being 'the signs [of Allah]'

Lexically, the word *ghufaylah* comes from the Arabic root word "غَفَلَ" which means 'to fall into complete and total heedlessness or negligence'. However, in its current structure, it is the diminutive" [1](#) & [2](#) form of the word *ghaflah* which means negligence or neglect. Thus, the word “*ghufaylah*” means one who has

fallen into a complete and utter state of heedlessness; the “ة” at the end on the word "الغفيلة" (Al-ghufaylah) does not denote that this word is of the feminine tense, rather, it denotes an emphasis on this trait being present in a person.

As we will see later on in this discussion, Prophet Muhammad (S) and his successors have, for reasons known to them alone, referred to the duration between *Maghrib* and *'Isha* as the period of 'negligence'. Thus, in order for us to take ourselves out of that phase or to ensure that we don't fall into such a state of neglect of ourselves, this prayer has been advised. Certain key verses and an important historical figure, Prophet Yunus ('a), his trials and tribulations and his response to them are remembered at this specific time of the night in this prayer, as well as the reality of all comprehensive knowledge of Allah (SwT).

The "Time Of Negligence"

It has been narrated from Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq ('a) going back to his fore-fathers who narrate from the noble Prophet Muhammad (S) in regards to this recommended prayer that:

صَلُّوا فِي سَاعَةِ الْغَفْلَةِ وَلَوْ رَكَعَتَيْنِ خَفِيفَتَيْنِ فَإِنَّهُمَا تُوردَانِ دَارَ الْكِرَامَةِ

Recite a salat in the 'time of negligence' even if it be a two-unit prayer and this will permit you to enter into the Abode of Munificence (Paradise).[3](#)

In another tradition from Prophet Muhammad (S) we read the following:

تَنْفَلُوا فِي سَاعَةِ الْغَفْلَةِ وَلَوْ رَكَعَتَيْنِ خَفِيفَتَيْنِ فَإِنَّهُمَا تُوردَانِ دَارَ الْكِرَامَةِ. قِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا سَاعَةُ الْغَفْلَةِ؟ قَالَ ﷺ بَيْنَ الْمَغْرِبِ وَالْعِشَاءِ

Perform a voluntary prayer during the 'time of negligence', even if it is a small two rak'at prayer because these two (rak'at) will permit you to enter the Abode of Munificence (Paradise). It was said, 'O Messenger of Allah and what is the 'time of negligence'? The Prophet (S): [The time period] between Maghrib and 'Isha.[4](#)

In a final tradition, Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq ('a), quoting his forefathers, quotes the Messenger of Allah as saying:

لَا تَتْرُكُوا رَكَعَتِي الْغَفِيلَةَ وَهَمَّا بَيْنَ الْعِشَاءَيْنِ

Do not abandon the two rak'at of [salat] Al-Ghufaylah – and this is (the prayer) performed between the two 'Isha (Maghrib and 'Isha).[5](#)

It should be noted that the time between the start of *Fajr* (what is referred to as *Fajr as-Sadiq*) and the actual rising of the sun is also a time of heedlessness – *ghaflah*, however the traditions have not referred to the early morning period with this name nor have we been instructed to perform any specific recommended prayers at that time of the day.

Therefore, whenever we read the term *ghufaylah*, it refers specifically to ANY recommended prayer which is performed between the time of *Maghrib* and *'Isha*. However, in order to truly benefit from this special period of the night and to gain the maximum reward and spiritual ascent which has been spoken about in the traditions, a believer should perform the prayer taught by Imam Ja'far As-Sadiq ('a), which we will explain shortly.

In addition, it is clear from the traditions that Prophet Muhammad (S) used to perform *Maghrib* and *'Isha* prayers right when the prime time set in; and since in his region the time difference between these two prayers was roughly one hour, we are told that this is a time in which Satan and his legion of followers spread themselves upon the Earth, and try to make the believers fall into heedlessness in regards to Allah (SwT). Thus, during this period of negligence towards Allah (SwT) it is the best time for a believer to perform this prayer to keep alive His remembrance when others may be falling into the pit of heedlessness of their Creator.

There are some other names which have been used for this period of time and the recommended prayers to be performed, and these include:

1. The two *rak'at* of *Al-Ghufaylah*;
2. The two *rak'at* of *Al-Ghaflah*;
3. The two *rak'at* at the time of negligence;
4. *Nashiat Al-Layl* which is actually a specific salat performed in this time frame;
5. *Nafilah Al-Maghrib* – which is a total of four *rak'at* of which the two *rak'at* which are discussed in this book have been highly emphasized to be performed, and 'combined' with the intention of the optional prayers of *Maghrib*.

As we can see, we have been encouraged to perform at least two *rak'at* of *salat* between the *Maghrib*

and 'Isha prayers, but there are multiple recommended prayers which can be performed at that time of the evening. However, there is one specific two-*rak'at* prayer which we have been highly encouraged to perform that has been advised by the sixth Imam and successor of Prophet Muhammad (S) namely Imam Ja'far Ibn Muhammad As-Sadiq ('a)

A Particular Form Of Salat Al-Ghufaylah

A Particular Form of Salat Al-Ghufaylah⁶

In regards to the method of performing this prayer, we relate the following tradition:

عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ يُونُسَ عَنْ أَحْمَدَ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سَلْمَانَ الزَّرَّارِيِّ عَنْ أَبِي جَعْفَرٍ الْحُسَيْنِيِّ مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْحُسَيْنِ الْأَشْتَرِ عَنْ عَبَّادِ بْنِ يَعْقُوبَ عَنْ عَلِيِّ بْنِ الْحَكَمِ عَنْ هِشَامِ بْنِ سَالِمٍ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الصَّادِقِ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ قَالَ : مَنْ صَلَّى بَيْنَ الْعِشَاءَيْنِ رَكَعَتَيْنِ قَرَأَ فِي الْأُولَى الْحَمْدَ وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴾ (87) فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ (88) ﴿ وَفِي الثَّانِيَةِ الْحَمْدَ وَقَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى ﴿ وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبُرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴾ (59) ﴿ فَإِذَا فَرَغَ مِنَ الْقِرَاءَةِ رَفَعَ يَدَيْهِ وَقَالَ : اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِمَفَاتِحِ الْغَيْبِ الَّتِي لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ إِنْ تُصَلِّيَ عَلَيَّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَإِنْ تَفَعَّلَ بِي كَذَا وَكَذَا – ثُمَّ تَقُولُ : اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ وَلِيُّ نِعْمَتِي وَالْقَادِرُ عَلَيَّ طَلَبْتَنِي تَعَلَّمَ حَاجَتِي فَأَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ لِمَا قَضَيْتَهَا لِي وَيَسْأَلُ اللَّهُ جَلَّ جَلَالُهُ حَاجَتَهُ أَعْطَاهُ اللَّهُ مَا سَأَلَ فَإِنَّ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ قَالَ : لَا تَتْرَكُوا رَكَعَتِي . الْعَفْلَةَ وَهَمَّا بَيْنَ الْعِشَاءَيْنِ .

It has been narrated from 'Ali Ibn Muhammad Ibn Yusuf from Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Sulayman alZurari from Abi Ja'far Al-Husayni Muhammad Ibn Al-Husayn alAshtar from 'Abbad Ibn Ya'qub from 'Ali Ibn Al-Hakam from Hisham Ibn Salim from Abi 'Abdillah As-Sadiq ('a) that he said: A person who recites a two rak'at prayer between the two 'Isha (Maghrib and 'Isha) and in the first (rak'at) he recites [Surah] Al-Hamd and then His [Allah's] words [from the Qur'an], the Most High:

“And the Man of the Fish (Prophet Yunus), when he left in a rage, thinking that We would not put him to hardship. Then he cried out in the darkness, 'There is no god except You! You are immaculate! I have indeed, been among the wrongdoers!'” (21:87).

“So We answered his prayer and delivered him from the agony; and thus do We deliver the faithful” (21:88).

And then in the second [rak'at] one recites (Surah) Al-Hamd followed by His words, the Most High:

“With Him are the treasures of the Unseen; no one knows them except Him. He knows whatever there is in the land and the sea. No leaf falls without Him knowing it, nor is there a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything fresh or withered but it is in a manifest Book” (6:59).

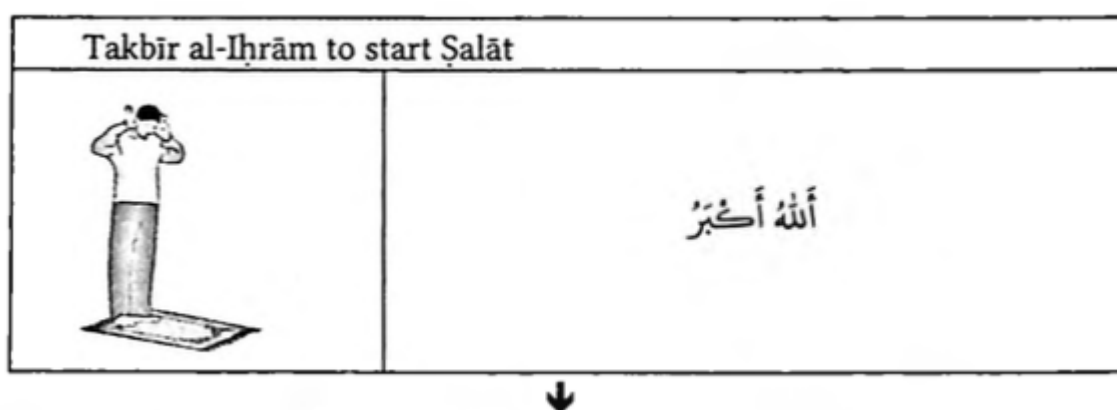
After finishing this recitation, one should lift the hands [in the position of *Qunut*] and say: 'O Allah, I beseech You in the name of the Keys of the Invisible (world) that no one knows except for You; send blessings upon Muhammad and his Household and then mention one's needs and then one should conclude by saying: 'O Allah, You are the source of the graces that I have, You have the power to respond to my request, and You know my needs; I therefore beseech You in the name of Muhammad and his Household, peace be upon him and them, to grant me my needs; and if a person [sincerely] asks Allah, Grandeur and Greatness be to Him, his requests, then Allah will grant that person whatever one asks for as indeed, the Prophet (S), has said, 'Do not refrain from [performing] the two *rak'at* of *Al-Ghafflah* and this is between the two *'Isha* (*Maghrib* and *'Isha*).'⁷

Thus, the methods and the importance of this specific prayer which the believers are highly encouraged to perform every evening come directly to us from the seat of the Divine mission; the ones to whom the Angels turn to; the destination of the Divine revelation; the originating source of mercy; the treasures of knowledge (of the Prophet); the ultimate in forbearance; the foundation of generosity and the leaders of the entire world – namely the *Ahl Al-Bayt* ('a).

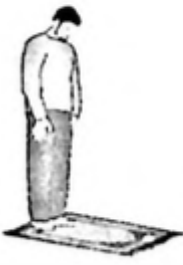
Salat Al-Ghufaylah – Step By Step

The method for performing *salat Al-Ghufaylah* is identical according to the rulings of all of the senior scholars of Islam (*maraji' taqlid*) and what we present here are the step-by-step details on how to perform this prayer.

After completing the *Maghrib* prayers (ideally right when the time for it set in) and its *ta'qibat*, one should stand up, make an intention for performing the *naflah* of *Maghrib* and within that, the *salat Al-Ghufaylah*, and perform the following steps:



First Rak'at – Sūrah al-Fātiḥa



﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿١﴾ أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢﴾
 الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣﴾ مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٤﴾ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ
 نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٥﴾ إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ
 أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧﴾﴾

First Rak'at – Chapter 21, Verses 87 and 88⁴²



﴿وَدَا الثُّورِ إِذْ دَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ
 فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ
 مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ
 نُنَجِّي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾﴾

Recitation of designated verses⁸.



First Rak'at - Takbīr before Rukū'



اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ



First Rak'at – Rukū'



سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

Or one may say:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ

First Rak'at – Standing Before Sajdah



سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ



First Rak'at – Takbir Before Sajdah



اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ



First Rak'at – First Sajdah



سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

Or one may say:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى وَبِحَمْدِهِ



First Rak'at - Jalsa



اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ. أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ. اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ



First Rak'at – Second Sajdah



سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

Or one may say:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى وَبِحَمْدِهِ

Completion of First Rak'at



اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ



Standing up to start the Second Rak'at



Recite as you stand up:

يَحُولِ اللَّهُ وَ قُوْتِهِ أَقُوْمُ وَ أَقْعُدُ



Second Rak'at – Sūrah al-Fātiha



﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿١﴾ أَلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢﴾
الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣﴾ مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٤﴾ إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ
نَسْتَعِينُ ﴿٥﴾ إِهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ ﴿٦﴾ صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ
أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ ﴿٧﴾﴾



Second Rak'at – Chapter 6, Verse 59



﴿وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ
وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظُلْمَاتٍ
الْأَرْضِ وَلَا زَنْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٥٩﴾﴾



Second Rak'at – Takbir before going into Qunūt



اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ

Second Rak'at - Qunūt - Part One



اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِمَقَاتِحِ الْغَيْبِ الَّتِي لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا أَنْتَ
أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ وَأَنْ تَفْعَلَ بِي...



Second Rak'at - Qunūt - Part Two



At this stage, ask your legitimate wishes and desires from Allah in ANY language you wish.



Second Rak'at - Qunūt - Part Three



اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ وَرِيٌّ نِعْمَتِي وَالْقَادِرُ عَلَى ظَلِيمَتِي تَعْلَمُ
حَاجَتِي فَأَسْأَلُكَ بِحَقِّ مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَيْهِمْ
السَّلَامُ لِمَا قَضَيْتَهَا لِي



Second Rak'at - Takbir before going into Rukū'



الله أكبر



Second Rak'at – Rukū'



سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

Or one may say:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْعَظِيمِ وَبِحَمْدِهِ

Second Rak'at – Standing before going into Sajdah



سَمِعَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ حَمِدَهُ



Second Rak'at – Takbīr before going into Sajdah



اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ



Second Rak'at – First Sajdah



سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

Or one may say:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَى وَبِحَمْدِهِ



Second Rak'at - Jalsa



اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ. أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ. اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ



Second Rak'at – Second Sajah



سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ

Or one may say:

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّيَ الْأَعْلَىٰ وَيَحْمَدِيهِ

Second Rak'at – Takbīr before Tashahhud and Salām



اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ



Second Rak'at – Tashahhud



أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ
مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ. اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ.

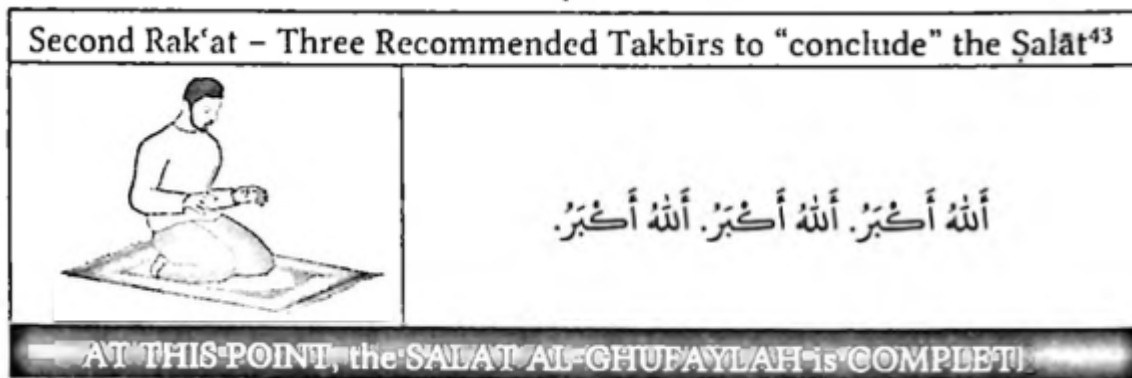


Second Rak'at – Salām



السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ. السَّلَامُ
عَلَيْنَا وَعَلَىٰ عِبَادِ اللَّهِ الصَّالِحِينَ. السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ
رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ.





Completion of Salat.[9](#)

[Salat Al-Ghufaylah: A Brief Window Of Opportunity](#)

One of the thought-provoking aspects of *salat Al-Ghufaylah* is the fact that the time window in which this salat needs to be performed is quite brief, and when we look at all of the other obligatory and recommended prayers, we see that we have the shortest time available to perform this specific one. Scholars state that the actual time for *salat Al-Ghufaylah* begins right after the completion of *Salat Al-Maghrib* (when performed as the time sets in) and the time for it "ends" when the redness from the sun completely leaves the western sky.

Therefore, if a person recites the *adhan* and *iqamah* and then performs *salat Al-Maghrib* right when the time sets in and then continues with the minimum *ta'qibat* – such as the *tasbih* of Fatimah az-Zahra ('a), and if all of these take around 15 minutes, then one will have approximately 10 minutes to complete the entire performance of *salat Al-Ghufaylah*.

It is possible that the time is so short in performing this prayer because it is one in which a believer is seeking one's salvation and in such a precarious situation, naturally the time is limited to save oneself. If a believer delays in saving oneself, then one will naturally fall into complete darkness and disarray, and therefore one must ensure that one strives to perform this prayer during its limited and specific time frame.

However, we should note that if one does not have the opportunity to perform it at its specified time, this does not mean that one should not perform it at all! As long as one performs this salat between *Maghrib* and *'Isha*, he will, without a doubt, receive its reward and even if one was to delay in its performance, he would still be granted a share in the rewards.[10](#) In addition, if those who are not able to perform it between *Maghrib* and *'Isha* are also advised to perform it after *'Isha* for attaining its rewards and blessings.

Salat Al-Ghufaylah And The Dhikr Yunusiyyah

As with all acts of worship, we know that they are not just movements to perform and check off the list of tasks being "done"; rather they are means to a higher goal – spiritual proximity to Allah and to earn His pleasure. Such an ambitious objective cannot be reached if we do not understand what we are doing and why we are doing it. Allah (SwT) tells us in the Qur'an:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْرَبُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْتُمْ سُكَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَعْلَمُوا مَا تَقُولُونَ

“O you who have faith! Do not approach prayer when you are intoxicated, [not] until you know what you are saying” (4:43).

One of the interpretations given for not performing prayers while *'intoxicated until we know what we are saying'* is to ensure that not only are we fully awake, but also that we are aware and understand what we are saying, and this knowledge of what is being said and done cannot be fully appreciated until we actually comprehend the meanings behind what is being recited.

Perhaps one of the proofs for why the performance of *salat alGhufaylah* has been recommended and why grand rewards have been mentioned for it is because in it, the *Dhikr Yunusiyyah* – the prayer of Prophet Yunus Ibn Mittai – has been mentioned. It was this Prophet who, for one brief instance, fell into a state of heedlessness and separated away from his community and in the end, his outcome was that he was placed into the tumultuous waters, and eventually ended up in the belly of a massive fish.

It was only after his remorse and repentance towards Allah the Gracious, that he finally found salvation. Perhaps due to this life-changing event in his life, the *Ahl Al-Bayt* have stated that due to the minor and major periods of spiritual negligence which we fall into on a daily basis, we should seek salvation from the outward and inward forms of spiritual gloom through remembering these poignant verses of the Glorious Qur'an.

Yunus – A Prophet Of Many “Exceptions”

Born around the year 825 BCE and buried in the northern Iraqi city of Moul, Prophet Yunus (‘a) was, by all accounts, a prophet of many “exceptions”. A *masjid* and burial site for this great prophet of Allah stood for thousands of years in this city until its destruction at the hands of “*Daesh* (also known as ISIS/ISIL/IS) around July 25th, 2014.

Some historians have mentioned that he was a prophet from the Children of Israel and came after Prophet Sulayman to the people of Nineveh (Naynawa). He is spoken about in the Book of Jonah in the Old Testament of the Bible¹¹, and has been mentioned on five occasions in the Noble Qur'an.

In the Qur'an he is mentioned alongside a host of Prophets who received revelation:

إِنَّا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْكَ كَمَا أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى نُوحٍ وَالنَّبِيِّينَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ
وَعِيسَى وَيُؤُسَ وَهَارُونَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ زَبُورًا

“We have indeed, revealed to you (Muhammad) as We revealed to Nuh and the prophets after him, and (as) We revealed to Ibrahim and Isma'il and Ishaq and Ya'qub and the Tribes and 'Isa and Ayyub and Yunus and Harun and Sulayman and We gave Dawud the Psalms.” (4:163)

In chapter 6 (Surah Al-An'am), verses 84 to 87, he is referred to alongside other prophets as being 'rightly-guided':

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ كُلًّا هَدَيْنَا وَنُوحًا هَدَيْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ دَاوُدَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ وَأَيُّوبَ وَيُوسُفَ وَمُوسَى
وَهَارُونَ وَكَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“And We gave him Ishaq and Ya'qub and We guided each one of them. And Nuh We had guided before, and from his offspring. Dawud and Sulayman and Ayyub and Yusuf and Musa and Harun - and thus do We reward the virtuous” (6:84).

وَزَكَرِيَّا وَيَحْيَى وَعِيسَى وَإِلْيَاسَ كُلٌّ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ

“And Zakariyya and Yahya and 'Isa and Ilyas - each of them among the righteous” (6:85).

وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَيُوسُفَ وَلُوطًا وَكُلًّا فَضَّلْنَا عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

“And Isma'il and Yasa'a and Yunus and Lut - each We graced over all of the nations” (6:86).

وَمِنْ آبَائِهِمْ وَذُرِّيَّاتِهِمْ وَإِخْوَانِهِمْ وَاجْتَبَيْنَاهُمْ وَهَدَيْنَاهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ

“And from among their fathers, their descendants and their brethren - We chose them and guided them to a straight path” (6:87).

From another verse in the Qur'an, it seems that Prophet Yunus's community was the only one who was spared the Divine retribution due to their repentance:

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةً آمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَا آمَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَعْنَاهُمْ

إِلَى حِينٍ

“Why has there not been any town that might believe, so that its faith might benefit it, except the people of Yunus? When they believed, We removed from them the punishment of disgrace in the life of this world, and We provided to them for a while” (10:98).

The last mention of him in the Qur'an reads as follows:

وَإِنَّ يُونُسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

“And indeed, Yunus was one of the messengers” (10: 139).

إِذْ أَبَقَ إِلَى الْفُلِكِ الْمَشْحُونِ

“When he fled toward the laden ship” (10: 140).

فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ

“Then he drew lots with them and he was the one to be refuted” (10: 141).

فَالْتَقَمَهُ الْحُوتُ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ

“Then the fish swallowed him while he was blameworthy” (10: 142).

فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ

“And had he not been one of those who praise God's glory” (10: 143).

لَلْبَيْتِ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

“He would have surely remained in its belly until the day they will be resurrected” (10: 144).

فَنَبَذْنَاهُ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيمٌ

“Then We cast him on a bare shore, and he was sick” (10: 145).

وَأَنْبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ يَّفْطِينٍ

“So, We made a gourd plant grow above him” (10: 146).

وَأَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ يَزِيدُونَ

“We sent him to a [community of] a hundred thousand or more” (10: 147).

فَأَمَّنُوا فَمَرَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

“And they believed [in him]. So, We provided for them for a while” (10: 148).

Amongst all of the prophets mentioned in the Qur'an, Prophet Yunus is the only one who has many 'exceptions' within his life. Although all the messengers of Allah exemplified different traits, led unique lives and had inimitable experiences, Prophet Yunus is seen as one of the 'exceptions' to all the prophets which we have been told about for the following reasons:

1. He is perhaps the only Prophet who has been 'rebuked' by Allah (SwT) twice in his life. The first instance is seen in Surah as-Saffat, verses 143 and 144 in which we are told that if he had not been among those who praise Allah (SwT), then he would have remained in the belly of the fish until the Day of Resurrection. In the second instance we read in Surah Al-Qalam, verse 49 that if he had not experienced the Divine blessings from his Lord, then he would have been expelled onto a dry, deserted island. Scholars state that this shows that two different penalties have been stated, and he was reproached by Allah on two separate occasions.
2. His people are also an 'exception' just as this prophet was because they are the only community which we can find in the Qur'an that were spared of the Divine punishment and were given another chance at servitude.

Another 'exception' which exists in the life of Prophet Yunus ('a) is that despite the fact that there is an entire chapter of the Qur'an named after him, there is actually no mention of him in this chapter! When we look at other chapters of the Qur'an, its name – in almost all cases – reflects a theme, topic or word found in that chapter; and when we reflect on the chapters named after prophets or the inspirational men and women of the Qur'an, they are always spoken about and some aspect of their lives is covered in that chapter. However, looking at Surah Yunus, there is just one reference in which his community has been mentioned – and that too, it speaks about them when he was not even among his community. It says:

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ آمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَا آمَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ
إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

“Why has there not been any town that might believe, so that its faith might benefit it, except the people of Yunus? When they believed, We removed from them the punishment of disgrace in the life of this world, and We provided to them for a while. (10:98).

4. Another ‘exception’ which this prophet had in his life is the form of ‘punishment’ which he was subjected to. Despite the fact that the prophets of Allah which came before and after him all suffered untold horrors, none of them were ever subject to being thrown into the tumultuous waves and being swallowed by a large fish and spending time, imprisoned, in the belly of such a beast.

5. We also see that an approximate number of people who were a part of his community is expressly mentioned in the Qur'an – something not seen for any other prophet. Allah tells us in Surah as-Saffat:

وَأَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ يَزِيدُونَ

“We sent him to a [community of] a hundred thousand or more” (37: 147).

Even more than this is the fact that Allah (SwT) also tells us the number of people who believed in him – again, something not seen for any other prophet in the Qur'an, as we read in the verse which follows:

فَأَمَّنُوا

“And they believed [in him]” (37: 148).

1. In language structure, a diminutive or diminutive form is a formation of a word used to convey a slighter degree of the root meaning, smallness of the object or quality named, encapsulation, intimacy, or endearment. It is the opposite of an augmentative. Diminutives are often used for the purpose of expressing affection. In many languages, the meaning of diminution can be translated as "tiny" or "wee"; and diminutives are used frequently when speaking to small children. Adults sometimes use diminutives when they express extreme tenderness and intimacy by behaving and talking like children. In English the alteration of meaning is often conveyed through clipping, either alone or combined with an affix, and English diminutives tend to be shorter and more colloquial than the basic form of the word. (Wikipedia – with modifications).

2. "In his book, al-Mujiz fi at-Tasrif, vol. 2, page 397, Ali Abdur-Rasheed writes that in Arabic, the diminutive noun signifies smallness or a reduction in size, body or mass – such as "رجل" 'rajulu' (man) and "رجيل" 'rujaylu' (small man). He also mentions that at times, it can signify insignificance – for example "عبد" 'abd' (servant) and "عبيد" 'ubayd' (humble servant). It can also signify something which is few in quantity, such as "درهم" 'dirham' or coin and "درهيمات" 'durayhimat' or a few coins. Also, the diminutive can signify shortness of time and nearness of a place. Yet another usage is to denote compassion and sympathy and lastly, he writes that there are rare examples where it is used to demonstrate greatness.

3. Falah as-Sa'il, Sayyid Ibn Tawus, page 244.

4. Falah as-Sa'il, Sayyid Ibn Tawus, page 245.

5. Falah as-Sa'il, Sayyid Ibn Tawus, page 246.

6. A video produced by the Islamic Publishing House in English on how to perform this prayer can be found at: [youtube.com/watch?v=TkZOaeznNsg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkZOaeznNsg) or by simply typing in the word 'ghufaylah' in the YouTube search box.

7. Mustadrak al-Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, vol. 6, page 304, tradition 6875.

8. The tradition does not mention that we need to start the recitation of this verse and the verse in the second rak'at with the basmalah. In addition, there is no recommendation of starting such recitations of individual verses with the basmalah and as such, although it is permissible to be done, if one does so with the intention of it beginning the recitation of the Qur'an and for earning His pleasure, then one should not do so with an intention of it being a part of the religious teachings of Islam.

9. In the teachings of Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), the salat is completed with the recitation of the salam. However, it is highly recommended to finalize the salat with three takbirs and then continue with the recitation of ta'qibat of the salat.

10. Based on the reply from the office of Ayatullah al-Uzma al-Hajj al-Sayyid 'Ali alHusayni al-Sistani via www.najaf.org [14] on July 4, 2016.

11. The passage in reference has been quoted at the end of this book in Appendix III.

[1] [1]

SHARES

Exegesis Of The First Verse Of Salat Al-Ghufaylah

Exegesis of the First Verse of Salat Al-Ghufaylah¹

In order to better appreciate this *salat* and ensure that the spiritual powers of this prayer are completely realized, we need to fully understand the two verses of the Qur'an which we recite in this prayer.

Therefore, let us now delve into their commentary, as explained by the contemporary exegete of the Qur'an, Ayatullah Al-Uzma Shaykh Nasir Makarim Shirazi, in his work, *Tafsir Namuna*.

وَذَا النُّونِ إِذْ ذَهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ نَقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

“And the Man of the Fish (Prophet Yunus), when he left in a rage. thinking that We would not put him to hardship. Then he cried out in the darkness, 'There is no god except You! You are immaculate! I have indeed, been among the wrongdoers!’” (21:87).

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْعَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“So, We answered his prayer and delivered him from the agony; and thus do We deliver the faithful ones” (21:88).

Salvation Of Prophet Yunus (‘A) From The Frightening Agony

These two verses offer us a glimpse into the outcome of this great man of God, Prophet Yunus (‘a) where we first read, **“And the Man of the Fish (Prophet Yunus [a]), when he left in a rage...” (21:87).**

The meaning of the word “نون” – "nun" (translated as fish) in this verse is a large fish – something such as a whale – and therefore the meaning of the phrase “ذان النون” – ‘dha’n nun’ is literally "The Man of the Fish" and the choice of this name for Prophet Yunus is due to the event which we will soon relate.

The verse continues: *“...thinking that We would not put him to hardship².”*

Prophet Yunus (‘a) believed that he had fulfilled his responsibility of propagation towards his disobedient community and that his leaving the society would not even be considered as an act which is referred to as *Tark Al-Awla*.³ He also thought that there was absolutely nothing wrong with him leaving his people in the state that they were in (of disbelief) and in turn, parting from his region. However, what would have been "better" in this circumstance was that he should have stayed among them and displayed the best form of patience and fortitude, yearning that perhaps his community will spiritually awaken and make their way towards Allah (SwT).

In the end, it is due to this act of *Tark Al-Awla* which he performed that he fell into the predicament and found himself inside the belly of a mighty fish who ended up swallowing him alive; and while he was in the multiple layers of darkness, he made the passionate and famous prayer:

“Then he cried out in the darkness, ‘There is no god except You! You are immaculate! I have indeed, been among the wrongdoers!’ (21:87).

Through this supplication, Prophet Yunus (‘a) testified that not only had he been unfair to his own self, but also to his community. Had he only continued to endure their attitude and bore a few more difficulties, then the community may have joined his path. Allah (SwT) then says,

“So We answered his prayer and delivered him from the agony; and thus do We rescue the faithful ones.” (21:88).

This supplication is not merely an agenda for change that was limited to Prophet Yunus (‘a), rather it is both a prayer and a state of mind – which any individual who considers himself to be a believer, and realizes that he has fallen short in his responsibilities – should make and seek to enter. Thus, every believer should ask Allah to overlook his lapses and shortcomings, and seek assistance and mercy from His pure essence, for surely Allah has guaranteed that He will answer the supplications and alleviate the grief of anyone who turns towards Him sincerely.

Points Of Reflection

The Outcome Of Prophet Yunus (‘A)

We will leave the detailed discussion of Prophet Yunus (‘a) to the commentary of Surah as-Saffat⁴. In summary, this discussion is as follows:

Prophet Yunus (‘a) spent many years with his community in Nineveh in present day ‘Iraq, busy inviting them to the true religion and propagating the correct faith. However, no matter how much he tried, his guidance fell on deaf ears, and because of this, he became infuriated and left them to go towards the sea.

When he reached his destination, he boarded a ship and set sail. In the middle of the journey, a huge storm began to form – creating large waves on the water – and within a short time, it became apparent to the ship's captain and all on board that if they did not do something soon, everyone on the boat would perish.

The captain of the ship said, “I think that from among you all, there is a run-away slave who needs to be thrown into the sea (to remove this curse from us).” Other reports mention that he may have stated: “The boat has become too heavy with so many people on it, and thus we need to remove one person – we will determine who this is by drawing lots.”

They drew lots numerous times and every time, the name of Prophet Yunus (‘a) came up and from this the Prophet understood that a hidden message [from Allah (SwT)] was being conveyed to him. He promptly submitted to the outcome and jumped off of the ship. When he landed into the water, a large fish swallowed him up. However, Allah (SwT) allowed him to remain alive in the belly of the fish through a miracle.

Eventually, Prophet Yunus realized that he had performed an act which was deemed as a *Tark Al-Awla* and he turned back towards Allah in repentance, submitted to Him and acknowledged his culpability; and because of this, Allah (SwT) accepted his supplication and saved him from the belly of the fish.⁵

It is possible that some people may consider this event as something which is not scientifically possible and state that this was carried out through an act that defies the normal laws of the world. Although it may not be something logical, it is similar to all other acts of the prophets of Allah – for example the dead being brought back to life by Prophet ‘Isa (‘a), or the parting of the sea by Prophet Musa (‘a) and other such miracles by various saints of Allah (SwT). All such things are possible with His permission.

Therefore, what occurred to Prophet Yunus in this story is also considered to be something out of the ordinary. However, it is not something which is outside of the intellect as being possible. In other words, such actions are not possible to be done under normal circumstances; but with help from the universal power of the Sustainer, it is absolutely probable and possible. For more details on this event, please

refer to the commentary found in Surah as-Saffat [in Appendix I].

What Is The Meaning Of "Darkness" In This Passage?

This phrase may refer to the collective darkness of the sea, the depth of the water, the darkness experienced in the belly of the fish, and the darkness of the night. We have a tradition from Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir that states:

لَبِثَ يُونُسَ فِي بَطْنِ الْحُوتِ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ، وَتَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ ظُلْمَةَ بَطْنِ الْحُوتِ، وَظُلْمَةَ اللَّيْلِ، وَظُلْمَةَ الْبَحْرِ ﴿أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ﴾ فَاسْتَجَابَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ

Yunus (‘a) remained in the stomach of the fish for three days and he called out from the ‘darknesses’: the darkness of the stomach of the fish, the darkness of the night; and the darkness of the waters that, ***“There is no god except You, You are immaculate! I have indeed, been among the wrongdoers!”(21:87), and therefore, His Lord answered his prayer. ”6***

What Is The Tark Al-Awla That Prophet Yunus (‘A) Committed?

Undeniably, the term “مَغَاضِبًا” – ‘*mughadhiban*’ or "when he (Yunus [a]) left in a state of rage" refers to the anger that Prophet Yunus (‘a) exhibited towards the unbelieving people of his community; and such a form of anger and disappointment in these instances in which a prophet of God spends countless years in trying to guide his erroneous community – however in response to his good-willed intention of guiding them they refuse to accept it – is something which is completely natural.

From another angle, Prophet Yunus (‘a) knew that shortly the punishment of Allah (SwT) will come down upon his people, and thus him leaving the city or village was not considered as a sin; however for a great prophet such as Yunus (‘a) it would have better that he stayed with them until the last minute – just before the punishment of Allah (SwT) descended upon them and not to leave them alone; or that he should have waited for the specific time when Allah commanded him to leave.

It is for this reason that his haste was considered as a *Tark Al-Awla*, and Prophet Yunus (‘a) was held culpable by Allah (SwT). This is the same understanding which can be gleaned from the story of Prophet Adam (‘a) in which it was stated that such actions are not considered as an absolute sin, but rather they are considered as relative offenses; or to employ another phrase, we can state that they are an epitome of the understanding:

حَسَنَاتُ الْأَبْرَارِ سَيِّئَاتُ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ

Good deeds of the righteous ones are considered as sins for those in close proximity (to Allah) [7](#)

A Fateful Lesson Learnt

The very meaningful portion of this verse which reads, “... **and thus do We deliver the faithful ones**”, clearly shows us that whatever happened to Prophet Yunus (‘a) – both the challenge he found himself in and also his deliverance and salvation – is not something that is specifically limited to him. Rather, by preserving the hierarchy of the event and everything which transpired within it, we understand that this is something that affects everyone equally.

Many of the grief-initiating events, heart-rending life trials, and difficult tribulations that we encounter on a day-to-day basis are brought about through our own sins. These are metaphorical lashings which are inflicted upon us to awaken our spiritually asleep souls, or sometimes they are like a high temperature furnace which is used to cleanse metal from its impurities.

Any time an individual finds himself in such a situation, he should sit back and reflect on the following three points which Prophet Yunus (‘a) found himself in, then the person can rectify his own actions and realize that salvation will definitely come:

1. Paying close attention to the reality of *tawhid* and that there is not a single creation, nor any anchor which can be relied upon other than Allah (SwT).
2. One must consider Allah (SwT) to be free from all sorts of defects and deficiencies, and that He does not commit any act of oppression against His servants, and one must never have a bad estimation of Allah (SwT).
3. One must confess one's sins only to Allah and not to anyone else, and seek His forgiveness.

These points can be better understood in light of a tradition mentioned in the exegesis of the Noble Qur'an, *Durr Al-Manthur* which has been narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) where he said:

اسْمُ اللَّهِ الَّذِي إِذَا دُعِيَ بِهِ أَجَابَ وَإِذَا سُئِلَ بِهِ أُعْطِيَ دَعْوَتَ يُونُسَ بْنِ مَتَّى. قِيلَ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ هِيَ لِيُونُسَ خَاصَّةٌ
أَمْ لِجَمَاعَةِ الْمُسْلِمِينَ؟ قَالَ: هِيَ لِيُونُسَ خَاصَّةٌ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوا بِهَا أَلَمْ تَسْمَعْ قَوْلَ اللَّهِ: ﴿وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ﴾ فَهُوَ شَرْطٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِمَنْ دَعَاهُ

“One of the names of Allah which if anyone calls upon Him through it, will be given a response; and which if anyone requests anything from Him through it, will be granted one's wish is the ‘dhikr of Yunus,

the son of Matta'." A person said, 'O Messenger of Allah! Was that (dhikr) restricted solely to [Prophet] Yunus ('a) or does it include all of the believing Muslims [meaning can we also recite it and be granted by Allah)?!' The Prophet replied, *"It is for both Yunus and also for all of the believers when they call upon Him (Allah) with that same recitation. Have you not read what Allah says in the Qur'an ... **"And thus do We grant deliverance to the believers" (21:88)? This is proof that anyone who calls upon Allah with this supplication, Allah will definitely answer that person, for surely He has guaranteed this!"***⁸

It goes without saying that this grand blessing of having anything granted to an individual does not mean that we simply 'recite' this passage, rather we must seek to practically implement its universal message within ourselves – meaning that in addition to its verbal declaration, our entire presence and essence must resonate with this supplication and its meaning in every stage of our lives.

It is vital for us to understand that the retributions of Allah (SwT) are of two types:

1. The first is considered as a 'concluding punishment' which results in a person's complete breakdown and which cannot be atoned for and as such, there is no supplication available which will benefit a person who is about to suffer this form of punishment. This is the case where before such a chastisement is warranted for an individual, the abovementioned program [of warnings] is repeated, and as such, an individual is given numerous chances to rectify oneself.
2. The second type is a 'punitive punishment' which has an aspect of spiritual training for the individual in it. In this instance, since the punishment is merely to internally awaken the individual and acquaint a person with one's negative actions, this category of retribution is also quick to be rescinded from a person if the individual fulfills all the prerequisites.

From these points of discussion, it becomes clear that the philosophy of tribulations and misfortunes, and other such upheavals which people go through in life is to spiritually awaken them and aide in their spiritual teaching and coaching.

The events which Prophet Yunus ('a) experienced in different areas offer warnings to all leaders – who guide people towards the truth – that they should never think that the propagation of the message which they are charged with will ever come to an end. These events also warn them that they must also never consider their struggles in this path as being insignificant, for such individuals carry a weighty responsibility upon their shoulders.

Lessons To Learn From The First Verse Of Salat Al-Ghufaylah

Lessons to Learn from the First Verse of Salat Al-Ghufaylah⁹

1. When conveying historical events, we should not only stick to narrating the pleasant and successful events that transpired. Rather we must balance it by also speaking about the bitter experiences and failures as well.
2. We must never feel that our Divinely ordained responsibility of conveying His message has come to an end, thus ever abandoning it.
3. Sometimes an action done in haste and without proper consideration and permission will result in retribution.
4. Allah is All-Knowledgeable about our thoughts, opinions and notions.
5. There are times when the Prophets of Allah (SwT) are not given access to the knowledge of what will transpire in the future.
6. One display of unwarranted anger can lead even a Prophet of Allah (SwT) into a precarious situation in his life.
7. There are times when an unjustified action can lead a person to go through various types of spiritual darkness.
8. When going forth to analyse tribulations that we go through in life, we must always remember that Allah (SwT) is blameless and faultless, and realize that we need to delve deep into our own actions to see where the problem lies.
9. In all of our actions, if our expressions of love and hate are not based on the orders of

Allah (SwT) and seeking His pleasure, then we will not reach a successful outcome in our lives.

10. Confessing one's sins solely before Allah (SwT) is in itself one form of perfection and is one of the etiquettes of supplication (*du'a*).
11. Those supplications which contain the professing of the Oneness of Allah (*tawhid*), expressing the immaculate nature of Allah and confessing one's mistakes, slips and sins are supplications which will be answered and accepted.
12. The transcendence of Allah (SwT) and our testifying of our sins is the secret of our salvation from self-inflicted spiritual afflictions and to acquire those things which we may have otherwise been prevented from attaining.
13. The only path towards salvation is through the will and wish of Allah (SwT).
14. The stories of the Qur'an are events that have no end to them – they are timeless – and present to us a perpetual custom (*sunnah*).
15. The salvation granted to the people of true faith (*iman*) is a custom (*sunnah*) and a universal legislation of Allah.
16. Whoever recites the *dhikr* of Prophet Yunus ('a) will be guaranteed salvation.

[1.](#) Tafsir Namuna by Ayatullah al-Uzma Shaykh Nasir Makarim Shirazi, vol. 13, pp. 484 – 489.

[2.](#) The word "نَقْدَرُ" or 'hardship' comes from the root "قَدَرُ" and it means to be strict or restraining, because anytime a person gets strict with someone or something, it means that at the same time, he is also constraining (that person or thing) and is not expanding nor taking account of things.

[3.](#) Loosely defined, this is when a Prophet does something which is not befitting of a man of his status – but this is never considered as a sin or a transgression against the laws of Allah – Rather, it is the case of choosing something which is "not too good" over something which is "better". (Tr.)

4. We have translated this passage and have included it in this book as Appendix 1.
5. Tafsir Fakhr al-Din al-Razi; Majma' al-Bayan; Nur al-Thaqalayn relating to the verse under discussion.
6. Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, vol. 3, page 450.
7. For further details, refer to volume six of Tafsir Namuna, page 122.
8. Durr al-Manthur, as narrated in al-Mizan fi Tafsir al-Qur'an under the verse in discussion.
9. Extracted from Tafsir Nur by Shaykh Muhsin Qara'ati.

[1] [1]

SHARES

Exegesis Of The Second Verse Of Salat Al-Ghufaylah

Exegesis of the second verse of Salat Al-Ghufaylah¹

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ

“And with Him are the treasures of the Invisible. No one knows them except for Him. And He knows whatever there is in the land and the sea. No leaf falls without His knowing it, nor is there a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything fresh or withered but it is in a manifest book” (6:59).

Knowledge Of The Unseen ('Ilm Al-Ghayb)

In the previous verses (of this chapter of the Qur'an), the discussion focuses on the knowledge and power of Allah (SwT) and the vastness of the domain of His commands. What is discussed in this verse, which was mentioned only in brief in preceding passages, is further elucidated upon here.

The first sphere of discussion is in regards to the knowledge of Allah (SwT) and we read, ***“And with Him are the treasures of the Unseen; no one knows them except for Him” (6:59).***

The word "مَفَاتِحُ" (*mafatih*) – meaning "keys" – is the plural of "مِفْتَاحٌ" (*miftah*) – meaning "key" and it is also possible that this word is the plural of "مَفْتَحٌ" (*maftah*) – meaning "treasury" – or the place where valuable things are kept.

In the first instance, the verse would mean that "all of the keys of the unseen are in His hands"; while in the second instance, the verse would mean, "all of the treasures of the unseen are with Him."

Another possibility also exists which states that both of these meanings are intended in this passage, just as we have proven in the Science of Islamic jurisprudence (*'Ilm Al-Usul*) that the usage of one phrase for multiple meanings is not a problem and, in both instances, these two meanings are dependent on one another. Often times when there is a treasure, it is necessary that there should also be a key (to safeguard it by having that treasure locked in a safe).

However, it is better to state that "مَفَاتِيح" (*mafatih*) used in the verse means "keys" and not a "treasury" as the goal of this verse is to expound upon the depths of the knowledge of Allah, and that is connected to 'keys' which are the means through which one gains an understanding of the various hidden mysteries.

It should be mentioned that in the two other instances in which the word "مَفَاتِيح" (*mafatih*) has been used in the Qur'an, the meaning of the word there is also "keys".⁴

In order to further elucidate upon and add emphasis to the extent of His knowledge we read, **"He knows whatever there is in the land and the sea" (6:59).**

The word "بَرٌّ" (*barr*) – meaning "land" – actually means an expansive area and is usually used for dry land; while the original meaning of the word "بَحْرٌ" (*bahr*) – meaning "sea" – also means an expansive area, however one which a large body of water covers over; and usually rivers or sometimes even large streams are referred to with this word in 'Arabic.

Therefore, the knowledge of Allah encompasses everything on the land and that which is in the seas – meaning that His knowledge basically encompasses everything in existence.

By keeping in mind the capacious meaning of this portion of the verse **"He knows whatever there is in the land and the sea" (6:59)**, this actually clarifies to us the expanse of His knowledge and by this we mean that He has knowledge of the millions of creations in existence; the smallest to the largest – whether they exist in the depths of the waters or on the land, such as the leaves on the trees which are in the forests and mountains; it includes the history of each bud of a blossom and every flower which blooms; it includes the gusts of wind over the land and those which move across the desert; it includes the number of cells in the body of each and every single human being and even the quantity of blood cells in each person; it includes the enigmatic movements of every single electron within the deep recesses of each atom; and ultimately it includes even the passing thoughts of each and every individual in existence and all of those which even impact upon the depths of our souls. Yes indeed, His knowledge equally covers these and many other areas!

In the next sentence, in order to further emphasize the comprehensive knowledge of Allah, we are directed towards a specific instance of His knowledge where He says, **"No leaf falls without His knowing it ..."**

From this we understand that the total number of these leaves and the precise instance in which they separate from the branches which they were once a part of, and their spinning in the air as they make

their way to the ground until they finally touch down, are all within the realm of His infinite knowledge.

The verse continues, “... ***nor is there a grain in the darkness of the earth...***” except that all of its specifics are also within Allah's knowledge. In this portion of the verse, we are able to identify two very precise and distinctive areas which no human being would ever be able to grasp, even if they were to live for millions of years and were to develop the most complete and amazing pieces of technology.

Who knows which seeds have been separated by the winds from the innumerable plants, which blow day and night around this planet, and where they will eventually settle down? Indeed, these could be seeds which may remain hidden deep within the recesses of the earth for many years, waiting for the sufficient amount of water be able to grow. Who knows how many seeds and from what kind of plants and on what point on this earth, in every hour of the day, are laid into this earth either by wild beasts or human beings walking around?

Which electronic device is capable of counting the number of leaves that fall from the trees in the deepest, darkest forests of the world? Just looking at one forest, especially in the fall season and that too after a heavy rain or a strong wind and the scene of the leaves which have fallen – will verify this reality and from all of this, we acknowledge that it is not possible for any human being to have access to such levels of knowledge!

In reality, the exact instance of a leaf falling from a tree is its actual 'death,' while the dropping of the seeds into the deep depressions of the earth is that seed's first stage in being brought into life, and it is only Allah (SwT) who is fully aware of all of these things within the system of life and death. Even the various stages of growth and progression that every single grain goes through in its life towards perfection and maturing, only He is aware of that.

By Allah (SwT) bringing up this discussion, there are two effects of it – one is a philosophical outcome; and the other relates to the aspect of nurturing and the objective of human development.

As for the philosophical effect, it removes the erroneous belief from a person's mind that the knowledge of Allah (SwT) is strictly limited to universal aspects and matters, and that Allah (SwT) does not have the knowledge of particulars meaning the details of issues which occur in the world. But this clearly tells us that He has complete knowledge of both the particular and the universal matters.

As for the human developmental and nurturing aspect, the faith in such a comprehensive knowledge of Allah (SwT) communicates to the human being that despite all of their hidden secrets, discourses, and even intentions and thoughts which run through one's mind – all of these are obvious and evident to Allah (SwT). When such an acceptance becomes firmly rooted in an individual, then how is it possible that a person does not make an effort to watch over himself and ensure that he has strict control over his actions, words and thoughts!?

At the end of this verse, we read “...***nor anything fresh or withered but it is in a manifest Book***”.

Though this verse is a very short passage, it presents the expansive and endless knowledge of Allah over all creation and communicates to us that there is nothing that is hidden from His knowledge.

The meaning of the words "fresh" and "withered" in this verse are not limited to their lexical definition – rather these words are used in their universal meaning.

The commentators of the Qur'an have offered various possibilities for what the phrase "manifest book" (*kitab al-mubin*) means. However, a majority of them state that this refers to the actual knowledge of Allah (SwT) – meaning that He encompasses knowledge in regards to all of His creations. It is also possible to say that the meaning of this is the "preserved tablet" (*lawh Al-mahfuz*) as it is probable that this is also a reference to the knowledge of Allah (SwT).

Another probability exists which is that the meaning of "manifest book" is the world of creation and the continuous chain of cause and effect and that all things are 'written' within that unending chain.

In other traditions that have been narrated from the *Ahl Al-Bayt* ('a) the meaning of "وَرَقَّةً" (*waraqah*) or 'leaf' are given of a foetus which has been aborted ; the "حَبَّةً" (*habbah*) or 'seed' refers to a child; the phrase "ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ" (*dhulumat Al-ardh*) or 'in the darkness of the earth' refers to a mother's womb; the word "رَطْبٌ" (*ratb*) or 'wet' refers to something wet; and "يَابِسٌ" (*yabis*) or 'dry' means something arid.

Therefore, in explaining the reality of the verse in this way, the infallible Imams from the family of the Prophet (S) wanted the Muslims to realize that they need to look at the verses of the Qur'an with a broad scope and not limit themselves with merely the lexical definitions of the words. Rather, whenever there is an indication that there can be a wide-ranging meaning to a verse, then one must look to analyse and understand each verse in an expansive fashion.

Thus, the above-mentioned tradition points to the fact that the meaning of the verse under discussion is not strictly limited to the seeds of vegetables and other crops – rather, it can and does refer to the seeds of human life and existence as well.

[Lessons To Learn From The Second Verse Of Salat Al-Ghufaylah](#)

Lessons to Learn from the Second Verse of Salat Al-Ghufaylah⁵

1. It is one of the proofs for the fact that the hastening of punishments which the disbelievers used to request (from their prophets) is not something that will come about [based on their own time schedule], because the knowledge of the unseen world is something which only Allah (SwT) possesses.

2. The rulings (*ahkam*) which the Divine implements are based on His knowledge which covers the unseen and seen realms.
3. The scope of the knowledge of the unseen is much wider than normal forms of knowledge, and it is for this reason that the Qur'an refers to it with specific phrases.
4. Contrary to what people may say that Allah (SwT) Himself possesses only a general knowledge of everything, we see in the Qur'an that Allah's knowledge actually spans over everything and also encompasses the particulars of the world of creation, and thus we need to be extra careful with each and every action that we commit.
5. Other than Allah (SwT), none (among the creations) have access to the knowledge of the unseen realm [without His permission].
6. In the world, there is a central repository for all knowledge.
7. The world of creation has been created according to a pre-formulated plan.

1. Tafsir Namuna, vol 5, pp. 268 –272.

2. Note the kasrah on the first letter. (Tr)

3. Note the fatha on the first letter. (Tr)

4. In the Qur'an, this word is also applied in these verses:

مَا إِنَّ مَفَاتِحَهُ لَتَنُوءَ بِالْعُصْبَةِ أُولِي الْقُوَّةِ

"...that their keys indeed, proved heavy for a band of proponents" (28:76).

أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتُمْ مَفَاتِحَهُ

"...or those whose keys are in your possession ..." (24:61).

5. Extracted from Tafsir Nur of Shaykh Muhsin Qara'ati.

The Importance Of The Qunut In The Prayers

The word *Qunut* is derived from the Arabic root letters "ق ن و" (*qa-na-wa*) and its lexical meaning is "to attain something by one's hands (working)"; it can also mean "a ripened bunch of dates". However, in the Islamic terminology, its meaning is "obedience and worship coupled with humility and unpretentiousness" and thus its meaning within the Islamic terminology is to attain humbleness in worship through the acts within the prayer including the standing (for the recitation of the two chapters of the Qur'an), genuflexion (*rukū'*) and prostration (*sajdah*).

Of course, in the definition that the jurists offer for this word in the realm of Islamic jurisprudence, this word refers to a specific form of reciting one's supplication (*du'a*) before Allah (SwT) – in a specific posture during the *salat* which has been prescribed, as the lifting of one's hands with the palms facing the sky in front of one's face – ideally being placed parallel to one's nose.

The beauty of the *Qunut* lies in the fact that a person offering his prayers – whether the obligatory or the recommended – is permitted at this juncture to make their requests and entreats known to Allah (SwT) in their own words and in their own language¹ – whether they be supplications for the good in this world or for the next.

As for the *Qunut* in *Salat Al-Ghufaylah*, it is truly a beautiful supplication, which we make to Allah (SwT). We begin by testifying to the ultimate power and knowledge of Allah (SwT) that He is aware of everything, and thus we are confirming the fact that we are about to ask for things which may not entirely be good for us to possess.

Since Allah (SwT) knows the unseen and the evident, whereas we are limited to only the knowledge of the evident [and that too based on our extremely constrained scope of understanding], there are times in which we may desire things from this temporary, transient world which are not entirely good for us. Sometimes people desire enormous amounts of wealth, or certain types of knowledge, or to win a spouse with certain qualities and characteristics, or to be blessed with copious children. But there is a strong possibility that what may seem "good" for us (in this life and the next) may not necessarily be so for us, or we may not be able to successfully manage and handle such things.

It is for this reason that we remind ourselves in the *Qunut* of *Salat Al-Ghufaylah* BEFORE we make our own appeals to Allah (SwT) in our own words and language that only HE knows the unseen world and that He should grant us based on this.

As is a common practice and habit in the teachings of the *Ahl Al-Bayt* ('a) before we actually make the request, we first ask Allah (SwT) to send His blessings upon Muhammad (S) and his immaculate family ('a). Taking their names as intercessors and intermediaries is the essence of monotheism (*tawhid*) as we recognize that they are merely creations of Allah (SwT) – albeit the best of creations – but they have the

ability to intercede for us by His permission.

We are then permitted to make our own supplications, which are already known to Allah (SwT), but this is where we need to consciously think about as to what it is that we want to ask from Allah. We need to ensure that our requests are legitimate, “possible” and are things that will benefit us – not only in this life, but more so in the next world. We should always keep in mind the less fortunate people in our society, our immediate family members, friends, neighbours, and community members, and should then beseech Allah (SwT) for our own personal needs.

We close the *Qunut* in *Salat Al-Ghufaylah* through a poignant supplication in which we once again turn our focus to the everlasting power and authority of Allah and confirm that there is no one other than Him who can grant our requests and this includes friends, family, colleagues at work or anyone else – and that He alone is the source of grace and bounty for all of us. We testify to the fact that He has the power to respond to our requests, and that even if we do not verbally utter our needs, He still knows what is in our hearts. However, as the *hadith* tells us, Allah ‘likes’ to hear His servant call out to Him and ask Him for one’s needs – even if it be as ‘minor’ as our shoelaces or a pinch of salt!

To complete the etiquette of *du’a*, we then end the *Qunut* by asking Allah (SwT) to once again send His blessings upon Muhammad (S) and his family (‘a), and that all of our needs are granted just as we have been told that we should begin and end all of our supplications by asking for Divine grace to be bestowed upon the best of creations – Muhammad (S) and his noble family, the *Ahl Al-Bayt* (‘a).

The believer concludes his *salat* in the normal process with confidence in one’s heart that Allah (SwT) has heard the supplications that were recited, and that if what we have asked for is good for us in this world and in the next then He will grant it to us; but if there is any danger or harm to one’s faith or conviction, then He delay that goodness and store the rewards of it for the next world.

As the recommended prayers are one of the ways that help a believer in his spiritual ascent to Allah (SwT), and we have seen how the time period between *Maghrib* and *Isha* is one of the most important for such acts of worship, we present two other recommended prayers which can be performed within this time frame for those who wish to go above and beyond the ‘minimal’ spiritual regiment.

1. Some scholars deem that in the obligatory daily prayers, only supplications in ‘Arabic are permitted, while others permit supplications in qunut to be performed in any language.

1. Ayatullah al-‘Uzma Sayyid ‘Ali Husayni Sistani, Ayatullah al-‘Uzma Shaykh Lutfullah Safi al-Gulpaygani, Ayatullah al-‘Uzma Shaykh Nasir Makarim asShirazi, Ayatullah al-‘Uzma Shaykh Wahid al-Khorasani state: “One’s prayers are correct, however they have not entirely fulfilled the prescription of performance of qunut by reciting it in a language other than ‘Arabic.”

2. Ayatullah al-‘Uzma Sayyid ‘Ali Husayni al-Khamene’i states: "According to precaution (obligatory precaution) one must recite the supplication of qunut in ‘Arabic, however one can refer to the next most knowledgeable scholar who has a ruling on this."

Recommended Prayer Between Maghrib And 'Isha - 1

Other than the specific form of *Salat Al-Ghufaylah* which has been discussed, we have been encouraged to recite other prayers between *Maghrib* and *'Isha* as well – specifically one which Prophet Muhammad (S) while on his death bed, recommended Imam 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib to perform.

It has been narrated in the traditions that when the Prophet (S) was about to pass away, Imam 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib asked him to give him some advice to which the Prophet replied:

أوصيكم بركعتين بين المغرب والعشاء الآخرة. تقرأ في الأولى الحمد وإذا زلزلت الأرض زلزالها ثلاث عشرة مرة،
والثانية الحمد وقل هو الله أحد خمسين عشرة مرة، فإنه من فعل ذلك في كل شهر، كان من المتقين، فإن فعل ذلك
في كل سنة كتب من المحسنين. فإن فعل في كل جمعة مرة كتب من المصلين، فإن فعل ذلك في كل ليلة زاحمني
في الجنة ولم يخص ثوابه إلا رب العالمين جل وتعالى

I advise you (all) to perform two rak'at of prayers between Maghrib and 'Isha – in the first rak'at, recite [Surah] Al-Hamd (once) followed by [Surah] Al-Zilzal thirteen times; and in the second [rak'at] recite [Surah] Al-Hamd (once) followed by [Surah] Al-Ikhlās fifty times; and anyone who does this once a month will be counted as being among the God-conscious (Al-muttaqin); and anyone who does this once a year will be counted as being among the doers of good (Al-muhsinin); and anyone who does this every night preceding Friday [meaning Thursday night] will be counted as being among those who devoutly pray (Al-musallin) and anyone who does this [prayer] every night, I will guarantee his entry into Paradise and no one know the rewards of this prayer except for Allah (SwT), the Lord of the Universe, Magnificent and Lofty is He. [1](#)

[1](#). Falah as-Sail, Sayyid Ibn Tawus, page 246.

Recommended Prayer Between Maghrib And 'Isha' – 2

It has been related in *Bihar Al-Anwar* and in *Falah as-Sa'il* in regard to the exegesis on the verse of the Qur'an which states:

إِنَّ تَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْئًا وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلاً

“Verily, getting up at night {for prayer} is the most effective means of subduing [one's self], and the most upright way to acquire firm control over one's actions and speech” (73:6).

that the “getting up at night” is a special two-*rak'at* recommended prayer which one should perform between *Maghrib* and '*Isha*'. In the first *rak'at* after the recitation of *Surah Al-Fatiha*, one should recite the first ten verses of *Surah Al-Baqarah* which are as follows:

الم

“Alif, Lam, Mim.” (2:1)

ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ ۚ هُدًى لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ

“That is the Book, there is no doubt in it, a guidance to the God-conscious” (2:2).

الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْغَيْبِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

“Who believe in the Unseen, and maintain the prayer, and spend out of what We have provided them with” (2:3).

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا أُنزِلَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ وَبِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

“And who believe in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down before you, and are certain of the Hereafter” (2:4).

أُولَئِكَ عَلَىٰ هُدًى مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

“Those who follow their Lord 's guidance, and it is they who are the felicitous” (2:5).

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أُنذِرْتَهُمْ أَمْ لَمْ تُنذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

“As for the faithless, it is the same to them whether you warn them or do not warn them, they will not have faith” (2:6).

خَتَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِهِمْ وَعَلَى سَمْعِهِمْ ۖ وَعَلَى أَبْصَارِهِمْ غِشَاوَةٌ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

“God has set a seal on their hearts and on their hearing. and there is a blindfold on their sight, and there is a great punishment for them” (2:7).

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَمَا هُمْ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ

“And among the people are those who say, 'We have faith in God and the Last Day,' but they have no faith” (2:8).

يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَمَا يَخْدَعُونَ إِلَّا أَنفُسَهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ

“They seek to deceive God and those who have faith, yet they deceive no one but themselves, but they are not aware” (2:9).

فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ فَزَادَهُمُ اللَّهُ مَرَضًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْذِبُونَ

“There is a sickness in their hearts; then God increased their sickness, and there is a painful punishment for them because of the lies that they used to tell” (2:10).

Following this, one should recite the verses known as as-Sakhrāh, which are as follows:

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

“Indeed, your Lord is God, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then assumed full authority. He draws the night's cover over the day, which pursues it swiftly, and [He created] the sun, and the moon, and the stars, [all of them] disposed by His command. Look! All creation and command belong to Him. Blessed is God, the Lord of all of the worlds” (7:54).

ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

“Supplicate to your Lord, beseechingly and secretly. Indeed, He does not like the transgressors” (7:55).

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا ۗ إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

“And do not cause corruption on the earth after its restoration, and supplicate to Him with fear and hope: indeed, God's mercy is close to the virtuous” (7:56).

Then one should recite *Surah Al-Ikhlās* (112), fifteen times.

In the second *rak'at*, one would recite *Surah Al-Fatiha* followed by *Ayat alKursi* and the two verses which follow it:

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَّةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ لَهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِنْدَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

“God, there is no god except Him—He is the Living One, the All Sustainer. Neither drowsiness befalls Him, nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that may intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows that which is before them and that which is behind them, and they do not comprehend anything of His knowledge except what He wishes. His seat embraces the heavens and the earth, and He is not wearied by their preservation, and He is the All-Exalted, the All-Supreme” (2:255).

لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

“There is no compulsion in religion: rectitude has become distinct from error. So, one who disavows the rebels and has faith in God has held fast to the firmest handle for which there is no breaking; and God is All-Hearing, All Knowing” (2:256).

اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُمْ مِنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

“God is the Master of the faithful: He brings them out of the darkness into the light. As for the

faithless, their patrons are the rebels, who drive them out of the light into the darkness. They shall be the inmates of the Fire, and in it they shall remain forever” (2:257).

After this, one should recite the end portion of Surah Al-Baqarah:

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبْدُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ فَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

“To God belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth; and whether you disclose what is in your hearts or hide it, God will bring you to account for it. Then He will forgive whomever He wishes and punish whomever He wishes, and God has power over all things” (2:284).

آمَنَ الرَّسُولُ بِمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ رَبِّهِ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ كُلٌّ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَمَلَائِكَتِهِ وَكُتُبِهِ وَرُسُلِهِ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ وَقَالُوا سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا غُفْرَانَكَ رَبَّنَا وَإِلَيْكَ الْمَصِيرُ

“The Apostle has faith in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, (and so do) all of the faithful. Each [of them] has faith in God, His angels, His scriptures and His apostles. [They declare,] ‘We make no distinction between any of His apostles.’ And they say, ‘We hear and we obey. Our Lord, forgive us, and towards You is the return’” (2:285).

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا لَهَا مَا كَسَبَتْ وَعَلَيْهَا مَا اكْتَسَبَتْ رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تَحْمِلْ عَلَيْنَا إِمْرًا كَمَا حَمَلْتَهُ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِنَا رَبَّنَا وَلَا تُحَمِّلْنَا مَا لَا طَاقَةَ لَنَا بِهِ وَاعْفُ عَنَّا وَارْحَمْنَا ۗ أَنْتَ مَوْلَانَا فَانصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ

“God does not task to any soul beyond its capacity. Whatever [good] it earns is to its benefit, and whatever [evil] it incurs is to its harm. ‘Our Lord! Take us not to task if we forget or make mistakes! Our Lord! Place not upon us a burden as You placed on those who were before us! Our Lord! Lay not upon us what we have no strength to bear! Excuse us and forgive us, and be merciful to us! You are our Master, so help us against the faithless people!’” (2:286).

Then one should recite *Surah Al-Ikhlās* fifteen times. Once the recitations are complete, perform the *Qunut* and in it recite any supplications that you want.

The tradition ends off by stating that whoever performs this prayer and continuously recites this two *rak'at* prayer, it will be written in the book of deeds as if one has performed 600,000 pilgrimages (*hajj*).

Some Points About Other Recommended (Mustabab) Prayers

Point 1: The *Maghrib nafilah* should be offered after Maghrib prayers, and one should make an effort to offer it immediately after the Maghrib prayers. However, if one delays offering the *Maghrib nafilah* until the redness in the western sky disappears, then it is better to offer the *'Isha* prayers in that circumstance first, and then conclude with the *Maghrib nafilah*.

Point 2: A recommended salat can be offered while one is walking, or riding (on an animal or in a motor vehicle – such as a car, bus, plane, train, etc.), and if a person offers recommended prayers in these two conditions, then it is not necessary for one to be facing the *qiblah*.

Point 3: Even if a person has obligatory (*wajib*) *salat* pending which have not been performed yet, one is still permitted to recite the recommended prayers – however, a believer should not delay in performing one's obligations.

[1] [1]

SHARES

Fourteen Differences Between The Obligatory And Recommended Prayers

1. All recommended prayers are performed as two *rak'at* prayers with the exception of *Salat Al-Witr* in the set of night prayers (which is only one *rak'at*), and *Salat Al-A'rabi* which comprises an individual two-*rak'at salat* followed by two sets of four *rak'at* prayers. [1](#)
2. In regard to the recommended prayers – with the exception of only some – it is not obligatory to recite a second chapter of the Qur'an (in the position of *qiyam* – meaning that one only needs to recite *Surah Al-Fatiha*. [2](#)

3. It is permissible to intentionally break a recommended prayer, even for no reason.[3](#)
4. Unintentionally performing an additional *rukn* (such as a *ruku'* or *sajdah*) does not invalidate the recommended prayer.[4](#)
5. While performing the recommended prayers, if a person begins to doubt whether they have performed one or two *rak'at*, then their prayers will not be invalidated and they are free to choose either doubt [either having performed one or two *rak'at*] and continue on in one's prayers [meaning that one can count it as being the first or second *rak'at*].[5](#)
6. It is permissible to pray the recommended prayers sitting down, however it is better that one counts two *rak'at* of recommended prayers performed sitting down as one *rak'at*.[6](#)
7. A person should not perform the recommended prayers for Dhuhr and 'Asr while on a journey, however recommended prayers for '*Isha'* can be performed with the intention that 'perhaps it is something good to perform'.[7](#) (The *nafilah* for *Fajr* and *Maghrib* prayers can be performed as these salat are not shortened.)
8. In regard to the obligatory prayers, it is better that a person performs them in the *masjid*, however when it comes to the recommended prayers, this same recommendation is not there.
9. If one unintentionally performs extra or less actions (which are required in the *salat*) during the course of the recommended prayers, then one is not obliged to perform the *sajdah* of *sahw*.
10. If a person was not able to perform the recommended prayers when their time set in, then one can still perform them after their time has lapsed.
11. Recommended prayers can be performed in any state – walking, riding (in a vehicle),

etc... and if a person performs them in this state, then one is not obligated (only for the recommended prayers) to face the *qiblah*.⁸

12. The recommended prayers can be performed standing, sitting, while walking, etc...and when doing so, the method of performing *ruku'* and *sajdah* can be simply indicating the action by a movement of the head, however as far as possible, one should make the best effort to face the *qiblah*.
13. In the recommended prayers. complete stillness and motionlessness of the body is not a condition.
14. A person can make a promise to Allah (*nadhr*) that they will perform a recommended prayer (if what they have asked for is fulfilled) and this prayer can be performed sitting or standing, while moving or stationary – however a person must be careful that when one makes the *nadhr*, one does not make an intention to perform the recommended prayer sitting [or in a specific position/format].

1. Al-'Urwat al-Wuthqa, vol. 2, page 111, ruling 6. In a tradition found in al-Misbah narrated from Zayd Ibn Thabit he says, "A man from the desert-dwelling community (a'rab) came to the Messenger of Allah (S) and said to him, 'May my father and my mother be ransomed for your sake O, Messenger of Allah! We live in a desert far away from Madina and we are not able to come to you every Friday (for the Friday prayers): therefore, can you guide us to an action which will entail the reward of Salat al-Jumu'ah, and so when I go back to my family, I can relate it to them?'

The Messenger of Allah (S) said to him, 'When the midday time starts, perform a two rak'at prayer – in the first rak'at. recite Surah al-Hamd once, followed by Surah al-Falaq seven times; and in the second rak'at, recite Surah al-Hamd once, followed by Surah al-Nas seven times; when you have completed this and performed the salam [to end the prayer], then recite Ayat al-Kursi seven times. Following this, stand and offer eight [more] rak'at of prayers with two salam [meaning two prayers of four rak'at each] – in the first rak'at of each prayer, recite Surah al-Hamd once, followed by Surah al-Nasr once and then Surah al-Ikhlās twenty-five times, and once you have completed your prayers, then say the following seven times:

سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيمِ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ

I swear by the One who chose me for Prophethood that there is not a single believing man nor believing woman who performs this salat on Friday just as I have instructed it to be performed, except that I guarantee them Paradise; and that person does not stand where they stand [to perform this prayer] except that they are forgiven their sins and (also) their parents are forgiven their sins."

2. Al-'Urwat al-Wuthqa, vol. 2, page 111, ruling 7.

3. Al-'Urwat al-Wuthqa, vol. 2, page 111, ruling 7.

4. Al-'Urwat al-Wuthqa, vol. 2, page 111, ruling 7.

5. Al-'Urwat al-Wuthqa, vol. 2, ruling 1167.
6. Al-'Urwat al-Wuthqa, vol. 2, ruling 766.
7. Al-'Urwat al-Wuthqa, vol. 2, ruling 767.
8. Al-'Urwat al-Wuthqa, vol. 2, ruling 781.

[1] [1]

SHARES

Appendix 1: Yunus ('A) In The Midst Of Divine Examination!

The sixth and final story of the prophets and previous generations which occurs in this *surah* (*Surah as-Saffat*) concerns Prophet Yunus ('a) and his repentant community. It is interesting to note that in regards to the five previously mentioned communities, namely those of: Prophet Nuh ('a), Prophet Ibrahim ('a), Prophet Musa ('a) and Prophet Harun ('a), Prophet Ilyas ('a) and Prophet Lut ('a), in the end none of their respective communities awoke from their spiritual slumber, and thus the Divine retribution of Allah (SwT) came over them and Allah (SwT) ended up saving these great prophets (and their few followers and believers) from experiencing the punishment.

However, in this narrative the outcome is quite the opposite as the disbelieving nation of Prophet Yunus ('a) by witnessing the impending signs of Divine punishment, woke from their spiritual negligence and turned back in repentance, and therefore Allah (SwT) covered them with His grace and allowed them to partake in the material and spiritual bounties. In addition, even Prophet Yunus himself, who due to his *Tark Al-Awla* by prematurely leaving his community fell into difficulties and grief such that with regard to him, the word which was used is: *ابق* (*ibq*) which is normally employed for a servant who flees [his master]!

This story is a lesson addressed to everyone to learn from – not only the polytheistic 'Arabs (at the time of the Prophet of Islam) – but all of humanity from the entire course of history – that do we want to end up like the five communities [which were previously spoken about in this chapter] or do we want to be like the community of Prophet Yunus ('a)? Are we seeking to attract the painful punishments of the previous generations or do we want to go after a good and blissful outcome? The choice is ours!

In any case, within various chapters of the Noble Qur'an, including *Surah Al-Anbiya'*, *Surah Yunus*, *Surah Al-Qalam* and this chapter (*Surah asSaffat*), the story of this great prophet (meaning Prophet Yunus) has been mentioned and in every portion [of his story as narrated in the Noble Qur'an], a unique portion of him and his condition is displayed. However, as for the account given in *Surah as-Saffat*, it primarily focuses on Prophet Yunus ('a) fleeing his community, the challenges he faced and his eventual

rescue.

First, just as with the previous stories, the narration begins by speaking about his station of messengership (*risalah*) and we read:

وَإِنَّ يُونُسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ

“And Yunus was most surely from among the messengers” (37: 139).

Just like the other prophets, Prophet Yunus (‘a) began his invitation by calling the people to the oneness of Allah (SwT) and to leave idol worshipping and from that point, his call went on to fight against the various corruptions which were taking place in his society.

However, his intolerant community whose spiritual eyes and ears were sealed and who were busy [blindly] following their elders refused to submit to his message.

In the way of a loving, caring and concerned father for his children, Prophet Yunus (‘a) continued to warn his community, however in the face of his logical discussions, he heard nothing other than sophistry from the detractors, and it was only a small number of people, which presumably was not more than two – one devout worshipper and one scholar – who ended up believing in him.

Prophet Yunus (‘a) carried out many efforts in propagation that he almost gave up hope in his people and it is mentioned in some of the *ahadith* that on the advice of the devout worshipper who accepted his message (and also through his own analysis of the situation of his misled community) that he decided to imprecate his community. [1](#)

This plan of his finally began to materialize and Prophet Yunus (‘a) imprecated against his people and it was at this stage of the narrative that it was revealed to him that 'at such and such a time, the Divine punishment will come down upon the people.'

When the promised time of the punishment began to approach, Prophet Yunus (‘a) along with the devout worshipper proceeded to leave the people of the community, while he was in a state of rage. They continued walking until they reached towards the seashore and saw a huge ship that was carrying both a large number of people and also cargo. So, they asked if they would be permitted to embark on the boat and they were given permission.

This is what the Qur'an refers to in the next verse and states:

إِذْ أَبَقَ إِلَى الْفُلِّ الْمَشْحُونِ

“When he ran away to a ship completely laden” (37: 140).

The word "أَبَقَ" (*abaqa*) which comes from the root "أَبَقَ" (*abaq*) means a slave who has run away from his master and thus. It being used here is a point of astonishment and it shows us as to what level the very minor act of *Tark Al-Awla* by one of the lofty-ranking prophets is taken extremely seriously and its reproach by Allah (SwT) is carried out – such that His own prophet is referred to as a slave who has run away from his master!

Without a doubt, Prophet Yunus (‘a) was infallible (*ma’sum*) and never did he commit any sin. However, it was better for him to still endure things and stay with his community until the last moments just before the punishment of the Divine comes down, as perhaps his community may have come out of their state of negligence.

It is true that according to some of the narrations, he worked on propagating the message for forty years, however still it would have been better for him to stay a few more days or months among his people (until Allah's command came to him), and because he did not do so, he is compared to a run-away slave.

In any case, Prophet Yunus (‘a) boarded a boat, and according to some narrations, an extremely large fish propped itself up directly in front of the boat with his mouth wide open – as if he was looking for food. Those who were on the boat said, 'It looks like there is a sinner in our midst! He needs to be the food for this fish. In order to determine who will go, we will draw lots.' When they ended up drawing lots, the results came that Prophet Yunus (‘a) was the one who had to go!

According to the traditions, the people on the ship drew lots a total of three times and each and every time, the name of Prophet Yunus (‘a) came up and therefore Prophet Yunus (‘a) had no other choice but to throw himself into the mouth of this massive fish.

In the verses under review, the Qur'an through employing one short sentence, refers to this entire event and states:

فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ

“So, he shared (with them), but was of those who were cast off” (37: 141).

The word "سَاهَمَ" (*sahama*) comes from the root "سَهَمَ" (*sahm*) and its original meaning is an arrow, while the word "مُسَاهَمَةٌ" (*musahamah*) means drawing lots (lottery) as at the time of drawing lots, they would write the names of each person on thin strips of wood [which resemble arrows] mix them up all together and then one of these thin strips of wood would be chosen and whoever's name was written on the stick would be the one who was chosen [to perform a certain task].

The word "مُدْحَضٌ" (*mudhidh*) comes from the word "إِدْحَاضٌ" (*idhadh*) and it means to nullify something, eroding something away and conquering something, and in this verse its meaning is the draw chose his

name.

Another explanation has also been given which states that the sea became very rough and the cargo in the ship seemed to be too much to bear and at every instant, there was a fear of everyone drowning and thus, they had no choice but to lighten the load that they were carrying and this meant to throw some people off of the boat into the sea. The one who was chosen, by way of drawing lots, was none other than Prophet Yunus ('a) and so they ended up throwing him into the sea, and it was right at this time that the giant fish came and swallowed him whole.

At this point the Qur'an states:

فَالْتَقَمَهُ الْحُوتُ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ

“So the fish swallowed him while he did that for which he blamed himself” (37: 142).

The word "إلتقمه" (*iltaqamahu*) comes from the word "التقام" (*iltiqam*) and it means to swallow; the word "مليم" (*mulim*) comes from the word "لوم" (*lum*) and it means to reproach or rebuke, and it conveys the meaning behind the word "لائم" (*la'im*) and in this passage it means: he reprimanded himself.

It is an established fact that this reprimanding and rebuking was not due to the performance of a major or minor sin – rather, it was due to the *Tark Al-Awla* that he had performed which was him having left his community prematurely.

However, the same God who can keep a flame burning under water and can protect a glass that is beside a rock, ordered this large aquatic mammal through His command over nature to ensure that not the least amount of harm reaches His servant, Prophet Yunus ('a) and that he must endure a period of unparalleled form of imprisonment so that he may realize his *Tark Al-Awla* and make amends for it.

It has been mentioned in a hadith that:

أَوْحَى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى إِلَى الْحُوتِ لَا تَكْسِرْ مِنْهُ عَضْمًا وَلَا تُقَطِّعْ لَهُ وَصْلًا

Allah, the Most High, revealed (communicated] to the fish that it must not break a single bone in his (Yunus's) body and that it must not sever a single connection of his [family connection – by killing him].²

Prophet Yunus ('a) very quickly realized what was happening to him and with his entire presence he turned back towards Allah [in repentance] from his *Tark Al-Awla* and sought forgiveness, and asked for clemency from His sacred presence.

It is at this point in the narrative that the famous and meaningful *dhikr* came forth from the mouth of Prophet Yunus ('a), which is narrated in surah Al-Anbiya':

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ

“... there is no god but You, glory be to You; surely, I am of those who make themselves to suffer loss” (21:87).

This sincere confession and his verbal declaration of glorification which was infused with true remorse fulfilled its goal and just as it is mentioned in next verse:

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذَلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

“So We responded to him and delivered him from the grief and thus do We deliver the believers” (21:88).

At this point, let us return to the verse under review and see what it says. In one short sentence, we read that had he [Prophet Yunus (‘a)] not been of those who glorified Him (Allah SwT), he would not have been saved.

فَلَوْلَا أَنَّهُ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِينَ

“But had it not been that he was of those who glorify (Us)” (37: 143).

Allah (SwT) continues by saying:

لَلْبَيْتِ فِي بَطْنِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

“He would certainly have tarried in its belly to the day when they are raised” (37: 144).

Here, Allah is telling us that this temporary prison term of Prophet Yunus (‘a) would have been transformed into a life-sentence and that this prison which would have been his permanent place of incarceration would have eventually been his final resting place!

At this point some may ask, if Prophet Yunus (‘a) was to remain in the belly of the fish until the Day of Resurrection (supposing that he did not glorify Allah (SwT) and ask forgiveness from Him), would he have remained alive [through the power of Allah (SwT)] or would have eventually died? Various commentators of the Qur'an have given the following possibilities to this question:

1. Both of them (meaning Prophet Yunus (‘a) and the fish) would have remained alive and Prophet Yunus (‘a) would have remained in the belly of the fish, imprisoned, until the Day

of judgement.

2. Prophet Yunus (‘a) would have been dead and his body would have remained in the belly of the fish as a freely moving graveyard, and the fish would have remained alive.
3. Both Prophet Yunus and the fish would have died and the stomach of the fish would have ended up being the grave of Prophet Yunus (‘a) while the earth would have been the grave of the fish – Prophet Yunus (‘a) in the stomach of the fish and the fish in the stomach of the Earth – and they would have remained like this until the Day of judgement.

We cannot use the verse under discussion to corroborate any of these opinions. However, various other verses do tell us that at the end of this world, everything which was created will cease to exist and this shows us that it is not possible for Prophet Yunus (‘a) or the fish to have remained alive until the Day of Judgement. Therefore, from the three commentaries given as possible answers, the third opinion is closer to what the reality is.³

Yet another possibility exists which is that this phrase used may have only been an allusion to a long period of time – meaning that he would have remained in this prison in the belly of the fish for a very long time, just as such phrases are sometimes used in our common daily usage when one says, "You're going to have to wait until the end of the world if you want to know that!"

However, we should not forget that all of this would have taken place had he not gone forth to glorify and turn back to Allah (SwT). However, this did not happen and therefore, under the shadow of his glorification of Allah (SwT) he was enveloped in His special forgiveness.

The Qur'an then states:

فَنَبَذْنَاهُ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيمٌ

“Then We cast him on to the vacant surface of the earth while he was sick” (37: 145).

This massive sea creature made its way towards the barren shoreline, and by the command of Allah (SwT) released whatever was inside of its belly, and it was seen that this amazing prison maintained the body of Prophet Yunus (‘a) and brought him back out alive – albeit ill and weak.

We don't actually know how long Prophet Yunus (‘a) spent in the belly of that fish. What is clear is that However, long it was, it was something which clearly affected him in many ways. It is correct that the

order of Allah (SwT) was given that Prophet Yunus (‘a) should not be devoured by a fish; However, this does not mean that he should not face any of the effects of being in such a prison and therefore, a group of commentators of the Qur'an have written that he made his way out of the belly of the fish just like a baby chick, weak and featherless, makes it's way out of an egg. He literally did not have the ability to even move!

Even at this point, the grace of the Divine goes in search of Prophet Yunus (‘a) as his sick and weakened body lie on the shores and the beating rays of the sun bore down on his body troubling him. He was in need of a thin covering over him so that his body could rest and recover under the heat of the sun and it is this point that the Qur'an states:

وَأَنْبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ يَقْطِينٍ

“And We caused to grow up for him a gourdplant” (37: 146).

The word “يَقْطِينٍ” (*yaqtin*), just as many of the scholars of the 'Arabic language and commentators of the Qur'an have stated, refers to any type of plant which has no stem or stalk and has open leaves, such as a melon, squash, zucchini, cucumber and other such plants. However, a majority of the commentators of the Qur'an and the narrators of hadith have reiterated that the specific meaning of this word used in the verse is that of pumpkin.

It must be noted that in the language of the 'Arabs, the word “شجرة” (*shajarah*) can be used both for vegetation that has stems or stalks, and those without these. In other words, it is a general word used for any type of tree or vegetation.

We see a *hadith* from the Noble Prophet of Islam in which it has been narrated that a person came to him and said:

إِنَّكَ تُحِبُّ الْقَرَع

Do you like [to eat] squash?

The Prophet (S) replied to this person:

أَجَلْ هِيَ شَجَرَةُ أَخِي يُونُسَ

Of course! That is the plant of my brother Yunus![4](#)

It has been stated that pumpkin plant has large, open leaves full of water. One can easily construct a

canopy from them and flies tend to not rest on them. Since the skin on Prophet Yunus' body had become thinned due to the time spent in the belly of the fish, when he would sit or lie down, he would feel pain throughout his entire body and therefore he covered himself in a bed of these large leaves from the pumpkin plant so that his body would be protected from the heat of the sun and also so that he would not feel the pain due to his frailty.

Perhaps Allah (SwT) wanted the lesson which Prophet Yunus ('a) learnt while he was in the belly of the fish to reach to its climax at this stage, by now having to bear the scorching heat of the sun on the thinned skin of his body, so that in the future when it comes to the station of guidance and leadership in seeking to save his own community from the burning fire of hell, he would work even harder and put in even greater efforts. Indeed, this is the same understanding which we are given from the narrations.[5](#)

At this point of the discussion, we leave aside Prophet Yunus ('a) and focus on his community and what was happening to them.

At the time when Prophet Yunus ('a) left his community, filled with anger and rage, the introductory stages of the punishment of the Divine began to manifest. The people began to feel the intensity of the tribulations and came to their senses. They ran towards the scholar who was in their midst and sought the means of repentance through his guidance and leadership.

In some of the *ahadith* it has been mentioned that they all went out together into the open desert, and got into groups – the women and children and the animals and their offspring, and then began weeping over their bad actions. The sound of their cries increased in intensity and they sincerely asked repentance for their sins and shortcomings in regards to how they treated the Prophet of God, Prophet Yunus ('a).

It was at this point that the curtains of punishment were pushed aside and some tumultuous event overtook the mountains in that region and this congregation of believers who had sincerely asked for repentance were saved by the grace of God.[6](#)

It was after this event that Prophet Yunus returned to his community to see what form of punishment had befallen his people. When he arrived, he was thrown into a state of bewilderment. How was it that on the day he left, they were all engaged in their idol worshipping, However, today they are all submitted to the Oneness of God and are worshipping God alone!?

At this point in the story, the Qur'an states:

وَأَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ مِائَةِ أَلْفٍ أَوْ يَزِيدُونَ

“And We sent him to a [community of a] hundred thousand, rather they exceeded [that number]” (37: 147).

Allah continues and He then states:

فَأَمَّنُوا فَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

“And they believed, so We gave them provision until a time” (37: 148).

Their outer acceptance of the true faith and turning back in repentance had taken place previously. However, the acceptance of the true faith in Allah (SwT) and His Prophet Yunus (‘a) and his teachings and ordinances only took a manifest reality after Prophet Yunus (‘a) returned back to them.

It should be noted that from the verses of the Qur'an we deduce that this renewed responsibility which he was given was towards his same community. The opinion which some scholars hold that his (Prophet Yunus' [a]) responsibility of guidance was directed towards a new community of people does not fit with the apparent reading of the verses of the Qur'an.

From one perspective, we may understand from the verse 37: 148 that this community – which Prophet Yunus (‘a) was tasked with guiding – were individuals who had [just] accepted true faith and that Allah (SwT) allowed them to reside on earth for an appointed period of time.

From another perspective, these same phrases have been mentioned in Surah Yunus in which we read the following about his community:

فَلَوْلَا كَانَتْ قَرْيَةٌ آمَنَتْ فَنَفَعَهَا إِيمَانُهَا إِلَّا قَوْمَ يُونُسَ لَمَّا آمَنُوا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخُرِّي فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَتَّعْنَاهُمْ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ

“And wherefore was there not a town which should believe so that their faith should have profited them but the people of Yunus? When they believed, We removed from them the chastisement of disgrace in this world's life and We gave them provision until a time” (10:98).

Therefore, from this it becomes clear that the meaning of the phrase "إلى حين" (*'ila hin*) – 'until a specific time' means the end of their natural life. As for why is it that in the above-mentioned verses we read, 'one hundred thousand, or more' and what is the meaning or measure of 'more', the various commentators of the Qur'an have offered differing commentaries on this point. However, what is clear is that such phrases are employed to show emphasis and vastness of something – not to bring about further doubts and confusions. [7](#)

Points To Consider

[Brief History About The Life Of Prophet Yunus \(‘A\)](#)

Prophet Yunus (‘a) was the son of Mittai and his nickname was *Dhu Nun* (the Companion of the Fish) and this title was given to him due to the historic event that was mentioned previously about him being swallowed whole by a fish.

He is one of the well-known prophets who apparently came after Prophet Musa (‘a) and Prophet Harun (‘a) and some scholars consider him to be from the progeny of Prophet Hud (‘a). His responsibility was to guide those who remained from the people of Thamud [who had been destroyed previously], and he was born and brought up in 'Iraq in the region of Naynawa (Nineveh). [8](#)

Some have stated that he came on the scene around 825 years before the birth of Prophet 'Isa (‘a) and even today, close to the city of Kufa in 'Iraq, near the river bank, there is a grave which is commonly believed to be that of Prophet Yunus (‘a).

It has been mentioned in some books that he was a prophet from the Tribes of Israel and was brought forth as a prophet after Prophet Sulayman (‘a) for the people of Naynawa.

In the Book of Jonah in the Old Testament (Torah) there is a detailed discussion with regards to Prophet Yunus (‘a).[9](#)

According to this narration he was entrusted with going to the large city of Naynawa and to stand up to the wicked people of this city. From here the story takes a different turn which closely resembles that which has been mentioned in the Qur'an with this difference that according to the Islamic narrations, Prophet Yunus (‘a) accepted the invitation of the people and fulfilled his responsibility in this regards and after he saw that the people were rejecting his invitation, he then imprecated against them and left them and from there, the story of the ship and the fish take form.

However, in the Old Testament, there are some very harsh words used against him which states:

But Jonah ran away from the **Lord** and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the **Lord**.

Even more astonishing than this is that we see the Torah states the following:

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened. But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. He prayed to the **Lord**, "Isn't this what I said, **Lord**, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, **Lord**, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live." But the **Lord** replied, "Is it right for you to be angry? [10](#)

From other parts of the story mentioned in the Torah we see that Prophet Yunus ('a) was once again given the responsibility of guidance. During the first instance, he refrained from fulfilling his obligations and was thus faced with his painful outcome [of being imprisoned in the belly of a fish]; while on the second round of his responsibility to go back to the same people of Naynawa, he found the people of the city had awoken from their spiritual slumber and negligence of God, and that they had finally brought about true faith in Allah and that they had turned back to Him from their sins and were thus enveloped in the forgiveness of the Divine, Prophet Yunus ('a) got upset at Allah for why He forgave them so!?

If we compare that mentioned in the Qur'an and the Islamic traditions with that contained in the present day Torah (Old Testament), it becomes explicitly clear to what extent textual changes have occurred in the Old Testament as they have brought down the level and status of such a lofty Prophet of God. As we have seen, at times they attribute the sin of him refusing to fulfil his responsibility of propagating a message to his people; in another instance he is shown as being angry and upset at the forgiveness and mercy of Allah (SwT) over his repentant nation – this should be a clear indication of the status of the Old Testament in our eyes and that nothing of it can be trusted or relied upon [as being the word of God].

In any case, he is without a doubt one of the major Prophets which the Qur'an has spoken about in glowing terms.

How Did Yunus ('A) Remain Alive In The Belly Of The Fish?

As we have stated that we do not have any clear proof at hand to state exactly how long Prophet Yunus ('a) remained in the belly of the fish. Was it merely a few hours, a few days or maybe a few months – it is not clear at all. However, what we see in some of the traditions are a few opinions including that he was in the belly for only about nine hours. Other traditions mention three days, while other *hadith* point to more than that. There is even one opinion which states that he was in the belly of the fish for a period of forty days. However, we have no definite proof for any of these varied opinions.

The only thing that we have in hand which is contained in the commentary of the Qur'an of 'Ali Ibn Ibrahim is a hadith from the Commander of the Faithful 'Ali ('a) in which he states that the period of Prophet Yunus' ('a) stay in the belly of the fish was nine hours.¹¹ It should be noted that some of the commentators of the Qur'an from among the *Ahl Al-Sunnah* have mentioned that he was in the belly of the fish for only one hour.¹²

However, regardless of the duration, this stay in the belly of a fish was undoubtedly something quite extraordinary as we know that a human being cannot live in an environment which has no oxygen for more than a few minutes, and when we see that a foetus resides in the womb of its mother for months it owes to the fact that the baby's respiratory system has not yet been fully developed and is not functional, and therefore whatever oxygen it needs to sustain itself comes from the blood of the baby's mother.

Therefore, we can state that the exceptional event of Prophet Yunus ('a) is nothing short of a miracle,

but of course this is not the first miracle that has been mentioned in the Qur'an. That same God who protected Prophet Ibrahim ('a) from the depths of the fire; the same God who saved Prophet Musa ('a) and the Tribes of Israel by making a dry path through the sea and saved them from drowning; the same God who granted security to Prophet Nuh ('a) through the means of a simple ark which he made and was protected from the great deluge and allowed him to disembark on the dry land – is the same God who has the power to put one of His chosen servants in the belly of a massive fish for a protracted period of time and protect him while he was in there.

Of course, the presence of such an enormous fish is not something uncommon. Even today we see the massive fish known as the whale, can exceed 30 meters in length and is perhaps one of the largest creatures on the face of this Earth – and the weight of its liver alone can exceed one tonne!

This same *surah* contains the stories of the previous prophets in which they found salvation through the most miraculous of ways from the grips of tribulations and Prophet Yunus ('a) is merely the last of them in the chain of prophets mentioned.

A Grand Lesson In A Small Story!

We know that the rationale for such stories contained within the Noble Qur'an are for [our] training and education because the Qur'an is not simply a book of stories – rather, it is a book sent to spiritually build the human being and train them.

From the remarkable outcome [of the story of Prophet Yunus ('a)] we are able to derive many major lessons.

1. Any sort of disobedience [to the orders of Allah (SwT)] – even if it is a *Tark Al-Awla* – by a major prophet before Allah (SwT) is a serious act and will result in a retribution. However, as the station of prophethood is something extremely lofty, one minor slip of spiritual negligence in regard to such individuals can be considered to be a major sin [although it is not a sin] that would emanate by another person (that is not a prophet). It is for this reason that we have seen that in this story, Allah has referred to him as a run-away slave. In addition, it has been mentioned in the traditions that others who were in the boat with him stated, 'There is one sinner amongst us!' Eventually, Allah (SwT) made him enter (the terrifying) prison of the stomach of the fish and it was only after his remorse and repentance and turning back towards Allah (SwT) that with a pain-filled and sickened body, was he freed from that prison. All of this was carried out so that everyone may come to know that such disobedience will not be tolerated from anyone and that even the lofty status of the prophets and close friends of Allah (SwT) is subject to this rule that they too must be obedient servants to His commands and that if they are not, then we are

made to realize that Allah (SwT) shares no relationship or bond with anyone. This also shows the high status of this great prophet that Allah (SwT) even deals with him in such a strict fashion.

2. In this same story, in the portion which has been narrated in Surah al Anbiya' verse 87, we see that the path to salvation for a true believer is to show remorse and grief, and also to suffer difficulties such as what Yunus ('a) traversed in his life, and it is the confession of one's incorrect actions before the All-Truth, the glorification, sanctification, repentance and turning back towards Him that will save an individual.
3. This event shows how a sinful community which was deserving of a Divine punishment is able to – even at the last moment – alter their own history and save themselves; and fall into the lap of mercy and compassion from the Divine – on the condition that they realize their situation before it is too late and choose a wise scholar to lead them to the correct path.
4. True faith in Allah and sincere repentance from one's sins, in addition to the spiritual benefits and blessings which it brings, also carries with it material worldly blessings for the human being as well. It brings about material growth and the further ability to live on the Earth and also results in a lengthened life span and an opportunity to benefit from the gift of life. This outcome is also something which can be seen in the story of Prophet Nuh ('a) which is covered in the commentary of Surah Nuh. [13](#)

The power of Allah (SwT) is so encompassing and expansive that nothing is difficult for Him to the extent that He is able to safeguard a human being in the mouth and belly of a massive frightful creature and bring that same person out unharmed. This clearly shows that all of the means of this world are according to His Will and everything submits to His will.

[Reply To One Question](#)

At this point a question comes up which is: In the recounting of other previous nations in the verses of the Qur'an, it has been mentioned that when the punishment came down upon them (that form of punishment which is sent to completely eradicate transgressive communities), repentance and remorse were of no use then how was it possible that the nation of Prophet Yunus ('a) were an exception to this

rule?

In reply to this question, there are two answers which can be given:

1. The punishment had not yet started to be meted out to those people – all that was seen was the brief, introductory signs to an impending punishment which included various types of warnings, such that they may be able to see these and make amends and so that before the actual punishment descends upon them, they would turn in repentance and bring about true faith.
2. The second response is that this punishment was not going to be a punishment to completely eradicate them – rather, it was more of a wake-up call sort of introductory punishment which was to come before the actual final retribution which had been given to previous nations as well, such that before they lose the opportunity, they awaken from their spiritual slumber and choose the path of piety. These sorts of punishments had been seen in previous generations as well – such as what happened to the people of Pharaoh before he and his army were drowned.

Drawing Lots And Its Permissibility In Islam

There are some traditions in regards to drawing lots as to whether or not they are permissible in Islam. Imam As-Sadiq (‘a) has stated:

أَيُّ قَضِيَّةٍ أُعْدِلَ مِنْ الْقُرْعَةِ إِذَا فَوَّضَ الْأَمْرَ إِلَى اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَقُولُ فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِينَ

Which manner of coming to a solution [on a matter of confusion] is more just than drawing lots? When one places their complete reliance upon Allah, the noble and grand, just as Allah has said: **“So he shared (with them), but was among those who are cast off” (37: 141).** [14](#)

This points to the fact that when an issue comes up which is difficult to determine what one should do and for which there is no other way to come to a conclusion, drawing lots [to decide on something] can be done, but one must first place all of their trust on Allah (SwT). He is truly the road to resolution, just as has been seen in the story of Prophet Yunus (‘a).

This is also yet another hadith which is much clearer in where the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) has been quoted as saying:

لَيْسَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ تَنَازَعُوا (تقارعوا) ثُمَّ فَوَّضُوا أَمْرَهُمْ إِلَى اللَّهِ إِلَّا خَرَجَ سَهُمُ الْمُحِقِّ

Not a single community has employed the act of drawing lots [when they are in a dead-end situation], by [first off] placing all of their reliance upon Allah except that the drawing of lots lands on what is the real truth and manifests the reality [for them]. [15](#)

Further details in relation to this issue [of drawing lots] has been mentioned in the book, *Al-Qawa'id Al-Fiqhiyyah*.

[1.](#) Tafsir al-Burhan, vol. 4, page 35.

[2.](#) Tafsir al-Kabir, vol. 26, page 165. A similar understanding – with a slight variation – can be gleaned from Tafsir al-Burhan, vol. 4, page 37.

[3.](#) It is worthy to note that the late great commentator of the Qur'an, at-Tabarsi, who normally quotes varying opinions under his commentary of verses has only referred to one opinion in this regard and he says, "The stomach of the fish would have been his grave until the Day of Resurrection."

[4.](#) Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 7, page 489.

[5.](#) Tafsir Nur ath-Thaqalayn, vol. 4, page 436, trad. 116.

[6.](#) This hadith has been narrated in Tafsir al-Burhan, vol. 4, page 35 as coming from Imam as-Sadiq ('a).

[7.](#) According to this opinion, the "أَو" (aw) mentioned in this phrase is in the meaning of "بَل" (bal) or 'rather'.

[8.](#) Naynawa is the name shared by many geographic regions. First off, it is a city near Mosul (or what is known as Qasbah Mosul); it is also an area in the vicinity of Kufa towards the direction of Karbala'; and it is also a city in Asia Minor in the country of Assyria near to the Tigris river – according to the Dahkhuda Encyclopaedia. Other scholars have written that Naynawa is the largest among the cities of Assyria which was built on the Eastern side of the Tigris facing opposite to the city of Mosul according to the Culture of the Qur'an Encyclopaedia.

[9.](#) The entire passage from the Old Testament is presented in Appendix I of this book.

[10.](#) Old Testament, Book of Jonah, Section one, two, three and four.

[11.](#) Tafsir 'Ali Ibn Ibrahim, according to the narration in Tafsir Nur al-Thaqalayn, vol. 4, page 436.

[12.](#) Tafsir al-Qurtubi, vol. 8, page 5567.

[13.](#) This has been translated as Exegesis of the Qur'an: Surah al-Mulk to Surah al Mursalat (A Translation of Tafseer Namuna – 29th Section of the Noble Qur'an) – published by the Islamic Humanitarian Service (www.al-haqq.com [11]) and copublished by the Islamic Publishing House (www.iph.ca [12]).

[14.](#) Tafsir al-Burhan, vol. 4, page 37, trad. 6.

[15.](#) Wasa'il ash-Shi'a, Book on Passing Judgement, vol. 18, Section on the ruling on casting lots in determining a difficult affair, part 13, trad. 5.

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Appendix 2: Did Imam As-Sajjad ('A) Teach Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah The 'Secret' For The Latter To Be Forgiven?

Did Imam as-Sajjad Teach Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah the 'Secret' for the Latter to be Forgiven?[12](#)

There is a popular saying which states that, 'history is written by the victors and this holds true for Islamic history as well. In this regard, the following discussion seeks to clarify a misconception which is prevalent in the Muslim community about the spiritual power contained within *Salat Al-Ghufaylah*.

As we have seen, there is no doubt that short of moving mountains, this prayer can completely transform an individual and move one from a life of sin to the path of righteousness. However, one needs to ensure that one does not get carried away in extolling the benefits of this or any other act of worship by misquoting narrations which have no historical or religious basis to them.

With regard to *Salat Al-Ghufaylah*, some have mentioned that the fourth Imam, 'Ali Ibn Al-Husayn 'Zayn Al-'Abidin' ('a) also known as Imam asSajjad taught the method of forgiveness to Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah after his heinous and atrocious crimes in Karbala' through this *salat*.

In order to clarify if this actually transpired or not, let us reflect on this supposed event and the response given by the scholars of Islam.

Question: In relation to the spiritual virtues and values of *Salat al Ghufaylah*, we have heard something to the effect that apparently Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah said to Imam 'Ali Ibn Al-Husayn as-Sajjad ('a): "I have killed the son of the Messenger of Allah ... is it possible for me to still attain salvation?!" To this, Imam as-Sajjad has been reported to have replied, "Yes, if you perform *Salat Al-Ghufaylah*, then you will be redeemed."

After this conversation transpired, Sayyida Zaynab Bint 'Ali said to her nephew, Imam Al-Sajjad. "You are showing the means of salvation to the person who was directly responsible for the killing of your father?" To this question from his aunt, the Imam replied, "All I have taught him is *Salat Al-Ghufaylah*, However, [I know that] Yazid [due to him being hardhearted] will never have the Divine succour (*tawfiq*) to perform this prayer."

Is this historical event true and if so, where is this event narrated (in which book)?[3](#)

Answer: In researching those things that are frequently related and believed (to be true) by the masses, sometimes we come across issues which have been erroneously attributed to the infallible Imams and

are definitely not found within their traditions and sayings.

Undoubtedly, *Salat Al-Ghufaylah* is one of the highly recommended prayers for which there are numerous traditions⁴ from the Imams of the Ahl Al-Bayt ('a), and it is based on such reports that all jurists (*maraji' taqlid*) have offered their verdicts (*fatawa*) that this is a prayer which should be performed.⁵

However, with regards to what has been mentioned in the above question relating to the level of merit earned from performing of this prayer it is certainly incorrect. And it must be noted that the details which formed the question do not appear in any of the reliable books of traditions, and the reality is that there is nothing even remotely close to this contained in any of our books!

At this point, regardless of whether the details which are mentioned in the question are present or not in the books of traditions, if we were to merely study the contents of the question posed, we will see that from many points of view, they contradict with the realities of the religion for the following reasons:

1. There is definitely an inconsistency between the crime and the process of asking for forgiveness for it: One of the things which is agreed upon amongst the learned of the Islamic faith and is also an acknowledged fact among the principles of religion is that there must be relationship between the crime and its punishment, or in this case, between the offense and the method of penitence.

For example, if a person steals some money from someone, then as the religion of Islam has legislated within its teachings, the way that a thief will seek forgiveness is that one must return the wealth (or whatever was taken) back to its owner. If this is not possible, then some other way must be agreed upon which will satisfy the one who had his goods misappropriated.

If a person had engaged in backbiting, then the method of seeking forgiveness entails one to either directly inform the person whom one spoke ill about and ask to be forgiven for the ill words spoken; but if this is not possible, then the person who engaged in the backbiting would have to pray to Allah to forgive that person's bad deeds and to grant that person His goodness.

Finally, if someone's reputation was ruined in the society, then the form of asking forgiveness for this major sin is that one must seek to reinstate the individual's position among those people. These are just some of the ways in which sins need to be compensated for, However, obviously there is much more which could be said in these regards [but we will not cover other instances here].

Of course, in many instances, Allah – the Grand – forgives the major sins through the performance of even minor acts of goodness. However, in regards to the issue at hand as was posed in the question, we see a huge lack of congruency between the crime and the way of making amends for it, and thus there is no way that we can bring forth a logical justification [for this event ever transpiring].

How is it possible that a person goes forth and sullies his hands in killing the Imam of the Muslims and

that too the (grand) son of the Messenger of Allah and is then told that the way for his sin to be removed is merely to perform *Salat Al-Ghufaylah* and that his asking of forgiveness (in this method) will be accepted!?

How is it conceivable that a person like Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah who ordered the destruction of the city of the Prophet (Medina), and allowed his soldiers to attack and rape the women of that city or that such a person could make his way to Mecca and destroy the House of Allah and then turn around and perform the *Salat Al-Ghufaylah* and have all of his sins washed away!?

2. There are some people who claim that traditions exist which state that on numerous occasions in his life, Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah intended to perform *Salat Al-Ghufaylah* as a means of asking for forgiveness from his despicable crimes, However, because he had intense stomach pains, he was never actually able to perform this prayer.

We know that there is a credible and accepted tradition in which it is stated that the intention of an individual who simply intends to perform a good deed is even better than the good action intended.⁶ This shows us that even if a person does not have the ability to perform a good deed, However, if one had the intention to perform that action, then such an intention will actually be even greater and spiritually admirable than the performance of that good deed! Therefore, based on this tradition, if a person has the intention of repenting for one's sins, However, does not get the opportunity to perform that specific act of asking for forgiveness (in this case *Salat Al-Ghufaylah*), then does this mean that his inner intention will not be accepted and that he will not be granted salvation from the acts of transgression which one had performed? Of course not! It is highly possible that there are some sins which a person performs by which one falls into the pit of spiritual darkness and through this, one loses the ability to even try and repent for one's sins.

In various traditions – which if we were to go into their details would require an entirely separate discussion – some specific sins have been mentioned whereby we are told that the performance of those evil deeds will actually prevent an individual from ever having the ability to ask for forgiveness. Some of these sins include the performance of actions which are considered as innovations (*bid'ah*) in the religion⁷ – innovations that are performed not only by an individual, but also by a large number of people, after which multitudes end up being deflected from the path of truth – throwing them into the valley of spiritual darkness and religious obscurity.

At this juncture, another question can also be posed: Principally, is it correct to say that such an individual (Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah and those like him) who suffered such an illness (that he apparently could not perform *Salat Al-Ghufaylah* due to intense stomach pains) should be reprimanded due to his illness? How is it possible that for other jurisprudential rulings such as fasting, *Hajj* and other such acts – for which a person needs to have the physical means to perform to be considered obligatory – when one is ill and is not able to carry out fasting (for example because it is dangerous to one's health) then not only is it not obligatory to fast, but rather, it will actually be considered forbidden for one to fast. How is it

that in regards to performing this recommended act (*Salat Al-Ghufaylah*), if a person is not well and has a pain in a specific place in one's body (and this is something which is out of one's control), that person should be blamed and not be forgiven (for one's past transgressions)? Isn't that due to something he does not have the ability to perform?

3. In this discussion, a statement has been attributed to Lady Zaynab Bint 'Ali which definitely does not befit her status. In the "narration," we are told that after Imam 'Ali Ibn Al-Husayn Al-Sajjad ('a) encouraged Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah to perform *Salat Al-Ghufaylah* – so that his repentance for the killing of Imam Al-Husayn will be accepted – Lady Zaynab apparently objected to Imam Al-Sajjad for giving this advice and said to him, “What, do you really intend to forgive the killer of your father!”

How is it possible for one to conceive that Lady Zaynab, whose spiritual roots are planted in the family of revelation and is a woman who clearly knows and respects the station of divinely appointed leadership (*Imamah*), would raise such an objection to her Imam – something which we may not even expect from a common person to do – let alone a woman of her status!

Yes, indeed, it is possible that sometimes an infallible Imam or one of the saints of Allah may perform an act which may, at face value, look like they are going against the religious code (*shari'ah*), and if this were to occur then not only is it not a problem for a person to question or object to what they are doing and the reality of their actions, rather this is something which is acknowledged as being something which should be done. This has been seen in the event of the objections raised by Prophet Musa ('a) to alKhidr ('a) in the story in which Prophet Musa ('a) accompanied Al-Khidr ('a) in his journey.

In his travels, a point came when Al-Khidr killed a young boy to which Prophet Musa ('a) protested that he had no right to kill an innocent child [and he was justified in raising this objection].

However, in regards to the opposition by Lady Zaynab levied against the Imam of her time, she is shown to have protested against one of the actions of Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) in a manner that is not appropriate on many fronts. First, it was an action which was not expected of her as she apparently believed that an infallible Imam would never show the worst human being the ways to felicity and the means to having his forgiveness accepted. Second, that Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) who in his position as the Imam and then one who is the defender of the blood of Imam Al-Husayn ('a) has the right to forgive his murderer.

4. Another dilemma which this question poses is the reply which we are told was given by Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) to his aunt, Lady Zaynab. We are told that he said, "I said that Yazid could be granted salvation through *Salat Al-Ghufaylah*, However, do not worry as he will never have the Divinely-granted ability to perform this prayer!"

In reality this is a form of enticement which the Imam used as he had been requested to show an act through which an individual may be forgiven for his sins, and the infallible Imam, despite knowing that Yazid will not have the ability to perform it, still went ahead and encouraged him to perform this specific religious act of worship. In reality it is entirely possible that if Yazid actually felt true remorse for his

actions, then Imam as-Sajjad ('a) would have guided him to perform some religious acts which he actually had the ability to perform so that he would have been absolved of his sins.

In addition to all of this, we know that throughout the life of Yazid [after the events of Karbala¹], he never once lamented for his actions in killing Imam Al-Husayn ('a) and his noble family and friends. Rather, his atrocities continued in the years after the tragic events of Karbala¹ in the disastrous event of *Harrah*⁸, and therefore, there is no proof that Imam as-Sajjad ('a) ever showed such an individual – whose crimes continued to persist even after the tragic event of Karbala¹ – the ways to seek forgiveness, or at least to a partial extent, exonerate him in the public sphere.

This brings an end to the discussion on whether Imam 'Ali Ibn Al-Husayn as-Sajjad ('a) taught Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah how to perform *Salat Al-Ghufaylah* or not – such that his repentance for the killing of Imam Husayn Ibn 'Ali ('a) would be accepted.

From this we conclude that despite the fact that *Salat Al-Ghufaylah* is as significant and effective as it is, and despite the fact that it holds such a prominent place in the teachings of Islam, this 'historical' event has absolutely no basis to it and must be categorically rejected.

The readers are highly encouraged to follow the video link provided to glean further knowledge on this important issue.

1. Researched by www.IslamQuest.net [15], the original question and answer can be found in Farsi at: <http://islamquest.net/fa/archive/question/fa14099> [16]. We have translated it into English for the purpose of this book. (Tr.)

2. Hujjatul Islam Sayyid Muhammad Rizvi of the Jaffari Community Centre (www.jaffari.org [17]) spoke about this alleged incident in detail on January 29, 2014. This lecture can be found at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GfEmYODEo4 [18] from the 19:47 to 24:10 mark of the lecture. We have also included the excerpt of his talk in our video on *Salat al-Ghufaylah* found on our YouTube channel which can be found at <https://youtu.be/tQZjIWk1ywl> [19]

3. This event, as you will see, is a fabricated narration. The 'Arabic text of this can be found on numerous websites and has been recorded as below:

وكان مما روى في فضلها: أن يزيد من معاوية لعنه الله عليه، سأل الامام زين العابدين سلام الله عليه، هل لي من توبة وقد قتلت أباك أبا عبد الله (عليه السلام)؟ فقال له الامام السجاد عليه السلام: نعم لك من توبة؛ وهي ان تصلي صلاة الغفيلة أربعين ليلة أو قال أربعين جمعة! فغضبت العقيلة زينب سلام الله عليها، وعاتبته الامام السجاد سلام الله عليه؛ كيف يدل الطريد بن الطريد على طريق التوبة! فقال لها سلام الله عليه: لا عليك يا عمة، إنه لا يوفق لها. In regards to its worth (*Salat al-Ghufaylah*), it has been narrated that Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah, may Allah remove His mercy from him, asked Imam Zayn al-'Abidin ('a) "Is there any room for repentance (tawbah) for me, given that I killed your father, Aba 'Abdillah?" Imam as-Sajjad replied: "Yes, there is a way for you to make repentance (tawbah) and it is to perform *Salat al-Ghufaylah* for forty nights [and in some traditions, it is stated that the Imam said forty Fridays]!" (Upon finding out about what her nephew, Imam al-Sajjad ('a) had said, al-'Aqilah Zaynab [bint 'Ali] became upset (at Imam Zayn al-'Abidin) and rebuked Imam as-Sajjad ('a) by saying, "How can you possibly guide this fugitive and the son of a fugitive [Yazid the son of Mu'awiyah] towards the course of repentance (tawbah)?" To this, he (Imam as-Sajjad) replied, "Do not worry my dear aunt! He will not have the [Divine] assistance needed to perform this [act of worship]."

4. The late Sayyid Ibn Tawus in his book, *Falah as-Sa'il* has mentioned numerous traditions in regards to this recommended prayer. Please refer to page 244 of his monumental work.

5. Lankarani, Muhammad Fadhil, *Book of Salat*, page 54.

6. Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: "نِيَّةُ الْمُؤْمِنِ خَيْرٌ مِنْ عَمَلِهِ" – "The intention of a believer is even better than his

action." – see al-Kulayni, Muḥamad Ibn Ya'qub, al-Kafi, vol. 2, page 84.

[7.](#) Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 69, page 216.

[8.](#) One of the acts of sheer barbarity and inhumanity Yazid brought upon the Muslims was the event of Harrah. This incident resulted in the brutal killing of thousands of Muslims of Madina and was a massacre for which the order was issued by Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah himself. The deplorable atrocity of Harrah, which blackened the pages of history, took place in the 63rd year of the Islamic calendar during the reign of Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah between the powerful armies of the Levant (Sham) and the people of Madina. Yazid gave the following order to Muslim Ibn 'Aqabah, "Invite the people of Madina to pay allegiance to me – and do this three times. If they respond positively and pay allegiance, then let them go free. However, if they do not respond positively and refuse to pay allegiance, then fight them. If you triumph over them, then continue the massacre for three days. Anything that belongs to the city will be permissible for your army to loot. Do not stop the Levant army from doing whatever it wishes with its enemy. After three days, stop the killing and pillaging. Then again ask for allegiance from the people. They should promise to be Yazid's slaves and servants. When you leave Madina, move towards Mecca for another attack and confrontation."

Ibn Qutaybah recounts that, "The Sham army entered Madina on the twenty-seventh day of Dhul Hijjah in the year 63 AH. For three days Madina was plundered by the Levant army up to the appearance of the new moon of the month of Muharram".

Following Yazid Ibn Mu'awiyah's orders, and after the seizure of Madina, Muslim Ibn 'Aqabah told his soldiers, "Your hands are open and you are free to do whatever you want. You must plunder and loot Madina for three days." Thus, the city of Madina was subjected to wholesale murder and plunder by the Sham army. Everything was permissible for the Sham soldiers and no man or woman remained safe from their harm. The civilians of Madina were killed and their property was looted. In this invasion of the Prophet's city, thousands of women were raped from which, thousands of children were born whose fathers were not known and these children later became known as 'the Children of Harrah [Awlad al-Harrah]. The streets of Madina were filled with dead bodies; blood flowed on the ground up to the Prophet's masjid; children were mercilessly killed in their mothers' arms; and elderly companions of the Prophet were exposed to torture and dishonour. The scale of the killings was so great that because of his excessiveness in killing the people, Muslim Ibn 'Aqabah was from then onwards nicknamed "Musrif Ibn 'Aqabah, which in the Arabic language means "the one who is excessive". After this horrendous event, the people of Madina wore black mourning clothes and the sounds of their weeping could be heard from their homes for up to one year.

Ibn Qutaybah narrates, "On the day of Harrah, eighty companions of the Prophet were killed and after that day there was no Badri (person that took part in the Battle of Badr) left. Seven hundred members of the Quraysh and Ansar [the early Muslims who were local inhabitants in the city of Madina where Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions migrated to] were put to death and ten thousand innocent people of the community were killed from among the Arabs, the tabi'in (the generation of people who came after the companions of Prophet Muhammad (S), and other virtuous people of Madina".

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Appendix 3: The Story Of Prophet Yunus (Jonah) In The Bible

Jonah Flees From The Lord

1. The word of the **Lord** came to Jonah son of Amittai:
2. "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."
3. But Jonah ran away from the **Lord** and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the **Lord**.
4. Then the **Lord** sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up.
5. All the sailors were afraid, and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep.
6. The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish."
7. Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.
8. So they asked him, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?"
9. He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the **Lord**, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."

10. This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the **Lord**, because he had already told them so.)
11. The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?"
12. "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."
13. Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before.
14. Then they cried out to the **Lord**, "Please, **Lord**, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, **Lord**, have done as you pleased."
15. Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm.
16. At this the men greatly feared the **Lord**, and they offered a sacrifice to the **Lord** and made vows to him.

Jonah's Prayer

17. Now the **Lord** provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah 2

1. From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the **Lord** his God.

2. He said: "In my distress I called to the **Lord**, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry.
3. You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.
4. I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again, toward your holy temple.'
5. The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head.
6. To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, **Lord** my God, brought my life up from the pit.
7. "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, **Lord**, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.
8. "Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them.
9. But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the **Lord**.'"
10. And the **Lord** commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Jonah Goes To Nineveh

1. Then the word of the **Lord** came to Jonah a second time:

2. "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."
3. Jonah obeyed the word of the **Lord** and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it.
4. Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown."
5. The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.
6. When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust.
7. This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: "Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink." "
8. But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence.
9. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."
10. When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

Jonah's Anger At The Lord's Compassion

1. But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry.

2. He prayed to the **Lord**, "Isn't this what I said, **Lord**, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.
3. Now, **Lord**, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."
4. But the **Lord** replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"
5. Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city.
6. Then the **Lord** God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant.
7. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered.
8. When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."
9. But God said to Jonah "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" "It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."
10. But the **Lord** said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight.
11. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left hand

also many animals?"

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Glossary Of Prophets And Saints

Throughout the book, to maintain continuity, we have employed the 'Arabic names of the prophets and saints of Allah – just as they have been used in the Qur'an and *ahadith*. We mention their English equivalents here:

'Arabic Name	English Equivalent
Ādam	Adam
Ayyūb	Job
Dāwūd	David
Hārūn	Aaron
Ibrāhīm	Abraham
Ilyās	Elias or Elijah
'Isā	Jesus
Ishāq	Issac
Ismā'il	Ishmael
Khidr	Apparently, there is no equivalent in English for this saintly individual
Lūṭ	Lot
Muḥammad	Muḥammad
Mūsā	Moses
Nūḥ	Noah
Sulaymān	Soloman
Yaḥyā	John
Ya'qūb	Jacob
Yasa'a	Elisha
Yūnus	Jonah
Yūsuf	Joseph
Zakariyyah	Zechariah

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