72591 - Which Verses to Recite before Sleeping?

the question

I heard a hadith from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), the meaning of which is, Whoever recites ten verses of Quran at night before going to sleep, will not be recorded as one of the heedless.

Is this hadeeth saheeh? If it is saheeh, then is it correct to recite Ayat Al-Kursiy and Surat Al-Ikhlas and Al-Mi'wadhatayn by heart? Thus I will have recited my wird, and I will have recited more than ten verses. Or must it be ten verses read from the Mus-haf?

Summary of answer

It is recommended to recite certain verses when he goes to bed such as: 1- Ayat Al-Kursiy, 2- the last two verses of Surat Al-Baqarah, 3- Surat Al-Isra', 4- Surat Az-Zumar, 5- Surat Al-Kafirun, 6- the last three Surahs of the Quran.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Understanding the Hadith on reciting ten verses at night

The text of the Hadith referred to by the questioner is:

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever recites ten verses at night will not be recorded as one of the heedless." (Narrated by Al-Hakim in Al-Mustadrak, 1/742, and he said: This Hadith is authentic according to the conditions of Muslim although they (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) did not narrate it. It was also narrated by Al-Albani in Sahih At-Targhib, 2/81)

It was also narrated that this was the view of a number of the Companions (may Allah be pleased with them):

It was narrated that Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Whoever recites ten verses at night will not be recorded as one of the heedless. A similar report was narrated from Tamim Al-Dari (may Allah be pleased with him). Both were narrated by Ad-Darimi in his Musnad, 2/554-555.

Reciting 10 verses during Qiyam Al-Layl or otherwise: Interpretations

Is what is meant in the Hadith reciting these verses in one's prayer at night, or can this virtue be attained simply by reciting these verses at night, whether during prayer or otherwise?

Both are possible. The former is supported by the report narrated by Abu Dawud (1398) from `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn Al-`As (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever prays Qiyam reciting ten verses will not be recorded as one of the heedless. Whoever prays Qiyam reciting one hundred verses will be recorded as one of the devout. Whoever prays Qiyam reciting one thousand verses will be recorded as one of those who collected a great deal of reward." (Classed as authentic by Al-Albani in Sahih Abu Dawud, 1264)

It says in `Awn Al-Ma`bud: What is meant here is Qiyam Al-Layl. Hence Ibn Hibban narrated this Hadith in the chapters on Qiyam Al-Layl in his Sahih (4/120), and gave it the title: "Statement that the one who prays qiyam reciting ten verses is not heedless."

This is also supported by the Hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) which says: "Whoever prays at night reciting one hundred verses will not be recorded as one of the heedless, and whoever prays at night with two hundred verses will be recorded as one of the sincere and devout." (Narrated by Al-Hakim, 1/452, and classed as authentic according to the conditions of Muslim. But Al-Albani was of the view that it is inauthentic, as stated in As-Sahihah, 2/243, and Da`if At-Targhib, 1/190).

In the report narrated by Ibn Khuzaymah (2/180) it says: "The one who offers these prescribed

prayers regularly will not be recorded as one of the heedless, and whoever recites one hundred verses at night will not be recorded as one of the heedless." (Al-Albani said in As-Sahihah (643): Its chain of narration is authentic according to the conditions of the two Shaykhs (Al-Bukhari and Muslim))

The fact that recitation is mentioned alongside the prescribed prayer suggests that the command is to recite it during the prayer, i.e., the night prayer.

Hence Ibn Khuzaymah narrated that Hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) in a chapter called "The virtue of reciting one hundred verses in the night prayer, because the one who recites one hundred verses in the night prayer will not be recorded as being among the heedless." It was also narrated by Muhammad ibn Nasr Al-Marwazi in his book Qiyam Al-Layl (164) in the chapters that speak of reciting in the night prayer.

And this virtue may also be attained by the one who recites this number of verses at night in general, whether that is during prayer or otherwise, before going to sleep or after waking up, if he wakes during the night. This general meaning was understood by many of the scholars when they narrated the Hadith in their collections of Hadith. Ad-Darimi (may Allah have mercy on him) included it in a chapter called "The virtue of one who recites ten verses" (2/554).

Al-Hakim included it in his Mustadrak (1/738) in a chapter called "Reports concerning the virtue of the Quran in general."

Al-Mundhiri included it in At-Targhib wat-Tarhib (2/76) in a chapter called "Encouragement to recite Quran in prayer and at other times, and the virtue of learning it and teaching it."

He mentioned it a second time in a chapter entitled "Encouragement to recite Adhkar to be said by night and by day, not just in the morning and in the evening" (2/116).

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Al-Adhkar (1/255):

Reciting the Quran is the most important of Adhkar, which should be done regularly. No day or night should be without it and it may be attained by reciting a few verses.

Then he mentioned a number of Hadiths including the Hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that we have quoted above. (End quote)

It is hoped that the one who recites ten verses at night will not be recorded among the heedless, whether he recites them during his night prayer or otherwise, for the bounty of Allah is great indeed.

Muslim (789) narrated from Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “If the companion of the Quran persists in reciting it by night and by day, he will remember it, but if he does not do that he will forget it.”

The apparent meaning of the Hadith is that what is meant by Qiyam here (idha qama = if [he] persists) is broader in meaning than the idea of praying Qiyam. Al-Munawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: i.e., if he commits himself to reading the Quran at night and during the day, and does not neglect that… This is a recommendation to read the Quran constantly, without singling out a specific time or place. End quote.

Verses Recommended to Recite before Sleeping

In the Sunnah, it is recommended for the Muslim to recite certain verses when he goes to bed.

Among the Surahs and verses which we are recommended to recite are the following:

- Ayat Al-Kursi (Al-Baqarah 2:255)

It says in a mu’allaq report narrated in Al-Bukhari (2311) that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) appointed me to guard the Zakah of Ramadan, then someone came and started rummaging in the foodstuff … and at the end of the Hadith he said: “When you go to your bed, recite Ayat Al-Kursi, for there will remain with you a guardian from Allah, and no devil will approach you, until morning comes.” The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “He told you the truth although he is a liar. That was a devil.”

- The last two verses of Surat Al-Baqarah

It was narrated from Abu Mas`ud Al-Ansari (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever recites the last two verses of Surat Al-Baqarah at night, they will suffice him.” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 5009 and Muslim 2714). Ibn Al-Qayyim said in Al-Wabil As-Sayyib (132): They will suffice him against any evil that may harm him.

It was narrated that `Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) said:

“I did not think that any sane person could sleep without reciting the last three verses of Surat Al-Baqarah.”

In Al-Adhkar (220), An-Nawawi attributed it to the report of Abu Bakr ibn Abi Dawud, then he said: It is authentic according to the conditions of Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

- Surat Al-Isra’ and Surat Az-Zumar

It was narrated that `A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would not go to sleep until he had recited Bani Isra’il (Surat Al-Isra’) and Az-Zumar. (Narrated by At-Tirmidhi, 3402, who said: it is a sound Hadith. It was also classed as sound by Al-Hafidh Ibn Hajar in Nata’ij Al-Afkar (3/65), and it was classed as authentic by Al-Albani in Sahih At-Tirmidhi)

- Surat Al-Kafirun

It was narrated that Nawfal Al-Ashja`i (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said to me: “Recite Qul ya ayyuhal-kafirun then go to sleep at the end of it, for it is a disavowal of shirk.” (Narrated by Abu Dawud, 5055 and At-Tirmidhi, 3400; classed as sound by Ibn Hajar in Nata’ij Al-Afkar, 3/6; classed as authentic by Al-Albani in Sahih Abu Dawud)

- Al-Ikhlas and Al-Mi`wadhatayn [i.e., the last three Surahs of the Quran]

It was narrated from `A’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that when the Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him) went to bed every night, he would hold his hands together and blow into them, and recite into them Qul Huwa Allahu Ahad, Qul a`udhu bi rabb il-falaq and Qul a`udhu bi rabb in-nas. Then he would wipe them over whatever he could of his body, starting with his head and face and the front of his body, and he would do that three times. (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 5017)

It was narrated that Ibrahim An-Nakh`i (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

They regarded it as recommended to recite these Surahs every night three times: Qul Huwa Allahu Ahad and Al-Mi`wadhatayn. An-Nawawi said in Al-Adhkar (221): its chain of narration is authentic according to the conditions of Muslim.

Striving for Consistency in Quranic Recitation

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Al-Adhkar (221):

It is better for a person to do all that has been narrated about this matter, but if he cannot do that he should do whatever he is able to do. (End quote)

It is not essential to read from the Mus-haf. It is sufficient for the Muslim to recite whatever he can from memory of the passages mentioned above, and Allah will decree for him what He has promised.

And Allah knows best.