

CHAPTER TWELVE

SUNNAH OF SLEEPING

O Allah (The Exalted) bless our master Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) his family, his Companions, his children, his wives, his descendants, the People of his House his relations by marriage, his Helpers. His adherents, his lovers, his nation and all of us along with them, O Most Merciful of the Merciful.

Sleeping is similar to death. That is why sleeping has been linked to death and waking with life. When preparing to sleep we should fear that may be our eyes close and do not open again. This has happened many times¹; hence we should ask Allah (The Exalted) for forgiveness of our sins as it is not good to do so without.

The pious would sleep little as the time spent in sleep is of no use. Only if we are successful and able to understand to reality of our life. For instance, if someone has a life of 60 years and sleeps for 8 hours a day then we would have spent 20 years in sleep, that's 1/3 of the life spent in sleeping. In these 20 years we did not achieve anything, however, if we spend our sleeping in the way of the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) then *Inshallah* we will gain some benefit as this will become worship.

Imam Ghazali (may Allah have mercy upon him) states that those who can not stay awake and worship and are engaged in sin. When completed the necessities such as *Salaah* etc. it is superior for them to go to sleep. At least one will abstain from sin. In a hadith it states to the nearest meaning that until a person is asleep the pen of deeds is lifted, meaning one is not bound by the *Shariah*.ⁱ

After Isha

After the *Isha* congregational prayer, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would see the companions off before returning home himself. At his bed side, he would keep the following items; a Surma² bottle (eye colouring), a comb, some oil, a pair of scissors, a *Miswak*, a mat or a folded cloth to lie on, a mirror and a wooden stick.ⁱⁱ

Safety Check

Abu Musa (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that a house in *Madinah* with the inhabitants inside set on fire. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was informed about this and he said, "*The fire is your enemy, this is why when you prepare for sleeping put it out.*"ⁱⁱⁱ

We should make sure that any appliances are not left on. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) is teaching us how to live, those who follow him will succeed.

Recite Bismillah

According to the hadith narrated by Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) who said that, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, 'Recite *Bismillah* whilst closing the doors and cover any utensils i.e. water, food, etc. and switch off the light i.e. not leave it burning or the utensils open^{iv} so the Shaytan can not come in or use the utensils.'^v The reason is that something may fall inside the foodstuff & if candles are left lit it may catch fire.

Wudhu Before Sleeping

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, "When a person sleeps with *wudhu*, Allah (The Exalted) gives permission to his soul to circumambulate the 'Arsh³ and bow to Allah (The Exalted).^{vi} Whilst sleeping in the state of *wudhu*, the reward of worship is being written for you in your book of deeds all night. *Subhanallah!*

¹ It was *Ramadhan* and a brother in a nearby town who was approx. 19 years old came home and sat with his mother one night. He went to sleep and when his brother went to wake him up the next morning for *Suhoor/Sehri* to keep a fast, his body was cold. He had died in his sleep, *Inna Lil-Lahi Wa Inna Ilay hi Raji'o'on*.

² See Chapter Twenty-Three for this Sunnah.

³ The Throne of Allah (The Exalted).

Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, *“When one of you goes to bed then with the edge of your lower garment (or the edge of the duvet) clean to bed, what were you to know what is in the bed.”*^{vii}

One may ask the question, why do we need to do this because they lived in a hot country and there is a chance small animal/creatures such as a snake or scorpion etc. may seek refuge, we don't have this problem here neither do we have sand or dust particles getting into our bed? I say that the Sunnah is for all mankind no matter who or where you are. Those who live in these climates and conditions can use this method and those who live in cold climates can use it too as there are other insects like bed mites which the visible eye can not see which can harm. Then to clean the bed is a great Sunnah and no matter where in the world you may be, one can practise it, *Subhanallah!*

Angel & The Devil

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *“When a person enters his bed (to sleep), an angel and a devil surround him. The devil whispers ‘Your awakening will end in evil’ and the angel says ‘ends in good.’ But if one sleeps after engaging in remembrance of Allah (The Exalted) the angels will protect him throughout the night.”*^{viii}

Going on One's Stomach

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) never laid on his stomach and if he saw anyone doing so he would wake them up by his feet and be very upset.

Ya'eesh bin Tighfat Gafari⁴ (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates from his father that he states, *“I was reclining in the mosque on my stomach (due to chest pains), suddenly a person nudged me with his feet and said, ‘To lie down like this is disliked by Allah (The Exalted).’ When I turned to see who it was, I saw the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace).”*^{5 ix}

In another similar hadith narrated by Abu Dhar (may Allah be pleased with him) it states; *“It is the way of the people from Hell.”*^x Meaning either the non-Muslims recline like this or the people of Hell fire will recline like this.

Imam Shafa'i (may Allah have mercy upon him) states that there are four types of sleep;

1. One is to lie on the back this is the sleep of the Prophets,
2. One is to sleep on the right side which is the sleep of the worshippers,
3. One is to sleep on the left which is the sleep of the rulers
4. And one is to sleep on the stomach that is the sleep of the devil.^{xi}

We should sleep according to the Sunnah as there are many benefits including health benefits.

The Prophet's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) Bed

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), states that, *“The Messenger of Allah's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) bed was made of animal skin, which had leaves of date trees.”*^{xii}

Imam Muhammad Al-Baaqir (may Allah be pleased with him) says that, *“Someone asked ‘Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her), ‘How was the bed of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)?’ She replied, ‘It was made of leather, in which was filled the coir of the date palm.’”*^{xiii}

Hafsa (may Allah be pleased with her) was asked how was the bed of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) in your house?^{xiv} she replied: 'It was a canvas folded into two, which was spread for the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) to sleep on. On one night I thought if I folded it into four and spread it, it would become softer. I folded it and spread it that way. In the morning the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) asked: *‘What did you spread for me last night?’* I replied: 'It was the same bed; I only folded it into four so that it may become softer'. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said: *‘Leave it in its original form. Its softness deprived me of my prayers (Tahajjud) at night.’*^{xv}

⁴ Who was one of the As-hab-us-Suffah (may Allah be pleased with them all), who were poor and stayed on a raised platform behind 'Aisha's (may Allah be pleased with her) house.

⁵ Another similar hadith has been related by Abu Hurayrah in Tirmidhi.

'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) states that, "*The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) was sleeping on a mat, the marks of the mat were left on his blessed side. I said, 'O Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) only if you would sleep on something better than this'. The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) replied, 'What have I to gain in this world, this world is like as if a traveller is travelling in the sun and he sits under a tree and gets up and goes.'"*"^{xvi}

Look at the simplicity of the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and we sleep on the best mattress available. There is no problem in sleeping on a good bed; however, you should make sure to wake up for *Fajr Salaah*. Unfortunately people stay in their comfortable beds and miss their *Salaah* but when it comes to waking up for work we will not miss a day. We should try to sleep on the floor at times following the Sunnah, *Inshallah*; you will not have a problem waking up for *Salaah*.

The Pillow

Abu Qataadah (may Allah be pleased with him) relates that, "*If the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) made an early journey-break in the last portion of the night on his travels, he slept on his right side. If he was staying there till before the morning, he lifted his right arm, put his head on it and slept.*"^{xvii}

Meaning that he rested his blessed head on the inner part of his arm and the hand would be near his back.

Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) forbade placing one leg on top of the other when reclining on your back.^{xviii}

This is when you have one leg raised and the other leg over it as there is a chance of the *Satr* being seen. There is no problem if both feet are stretched out and one is on top of the other.^{xix}

Supplication Position

'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) states that, "*When the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would lie down every night on his bed, he would raise his hands in the supplication position and pray. He would recite Surah Ikhlas⁶ (Qulhuwallahu Aḥad) three times, Surah Falaq⁷ (Qul A'oodhubi Rabbil Falaq) once and Surah Naas⁸ (Qul A'oodhubi Rabbinnaas) once and blow on his palms and wiping his hands over his blessed body where they could reach, this was done thrice.*"^{xx}

How The Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) Slept

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would put his blessed right hand under his blessed right cheek.^{xxi} He would lie on his blessed right side facing the *Qibla* and rest on a pillow that was made from leaves of a date tree.^{xxii}

Bara bin 'Azib (may Allah be pleased with him) reports; "*When the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) retired, he put his right hand under his right check*".^{xxiii}

Supplication Before Sleeping

Hudhayfa (may Allah be pleased with him) states that, before the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) went to sleep he would place his right hand under his cheek and pray this supplication:

'Alla-humma Bis-mika Amu-tu Wa-Ahya'

'O Allah (The Exalted) with Your name I die and I live'^{xxiv}

Lesson From Supplication

In the hadith the meaning of living and dying is to awaken and sleep. In Your name do I sleep and in Your name do I awake, meaning I do not stay headless of You at any time, O Allah (The Exalted) give us the ability and this state, Aameen.

6 Surah No: 112

7 Surah No: 113

8 Surah No: 114

The Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) would talk to his wife and whilst praising Allah (The Exalted) he would go to sleep. The Messenger's (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) blessed eyes were closed but his heart was always in the remembrance of his creator. ^{xxv} The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, *"My eyes sleep, but my heart does not sleep."* ^{xxvi}

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) did not sleep until he recited *Surah Sajdah* and *Surah Mulk*. ^{xxvii}

For The Guest

Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *"For a man he has a bed for himself, one for his wife, the third for a guest and the fourth is for Shaytan."* ^{xxviii}

Sleeping After 'Asr

Abu Ya'la narrates from 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, *"Whosoever sleeps after 'Asr Salaah and loses their intellect, has only themselves to blame."* ^{xxix}

To keep a spare bed is permissible for a guest; however, to have more than necessary leads to pride and arrogance due to excess wealth as this is from Shaytan. It is Shaytan who places evil whispers in us, hence we should abstain from having anything in access.

Die as a Muslim

Al-Bara' bin 'Azib (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said that, *"O so-and-so, whenever you go to your bed (for sleeping) say, 'O Allah (The Exalted)! I have surrendered myself over to you and have turned my face towards You, and leave all my affairs to You and depend on You and put my trust in You expecting Your reward and fearing Your punishment. There is neither fleeing from You nor refuge but with You. I believe in the Book (Qur'an) which You have revealed and in Your Prophet (Muhammad, may Allah bless him and grant him peace) whom You have sent.' If you die that night, you will die as a Muslim, and if you wake up in the morning you will receive the reward."* ^{xxx}

Zaid bin Thabit complained to the Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) about his sleepless nights. The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) advised him to read the following supplication:

O Allah (The Exalted) the stars have sunk in and the eyes have become tranquil and quiet and You are alive and everlasting neither does sleep overcome You. O! The live and everlasting one make my night tranquil and give my eyes sleep. ^{xxxi}

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said, *"Whoever at the time of sleeping recites Ayat-ul-Kursi⁹ will themselves be protected and his neighbour, to the extent your neighbour's neighbour, and the houses surrounding will be protected too."* ^{xxxii}

Sleepless Night

Once the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) spent a sleepless night. He would turn from side to side and could not sleep. His wife asked him: *"O Prophet of Allah! (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) Why can you not sleep?"* He responded, *"A date was lying about. I took it up and ate it, lest it should be wasted. Now I am troubled that it may be from Sadaqah¹⁰ (charity)."*

Respected brothers/sisters of Islam! Before going to sleep we should think of the sins we may have done and try our best not to do these again, repent and ask for Allah's guidance. If you want to spend your night in worship then sleep the way our beloved Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) slept

9 Surah Baqarah, Surah No: 2, Verse: 255

10 Abul Muttalib bin Rabi'ah (may Allah be pleased with him) narrates that *"The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) said to us, 'Zakat is the dirt of others, hence, it is not lawful for Muhammad (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) and his family.'" (Muslim, Sharah Sunnah, Fatawa-e-Razwiyya, Vol: 4, p. 391. Jam'i-ul-Hadith, Vol: 2, p. 171.)*

and offer *Fajr Salaah* with congregation. You will surely gain the reward of worshipping all night even though you were sleeping.

Manners of Sleeping

1. One should recite '*Bismillah*' whilst closing the doors and latching the lock. ^{xxxiii}
2. Containers with foodstuff including water should be covered with the recitation of '*Bismillah*'. ^{xxxiv}
3. To put out any burning fire i.e. candles, fireplace etc.. ^{xxxv}
4. To switch off or put out anything that may catch alight if left on. ^{xxxvi}
5. To discuss, with members of the household, matters relating to Islam. For example, by telling stories (of Sahabas, etc.) or simply talking about matters that pleases the family but within the confines of Shariah. ^{xxxvii}
6. To have available *Surma* and apply three times in the right and left eye. ^{11 xxxviii}
7. It is desirable (*Mustahab*) to sleep with *wudhu* the Sunnah way. ^{xxxix}
8. To sleep in the state of purity, ^{xl} (i.e. with *Wudhu* and *Ghusl* if necessary). If one has just made *Wudhu* prior to the sleep then it would not be necessary to repeat the *Wudhu*. If one is not able to make *Wudhu* then *tayammum* (dry ablution) will suffice.
9. To lay or spread the bed yourself. ^{xli}
10. To clean the bed three times with a cloth before sleeping. ^{xlii}
11. When a child reaches the age of ten, he must not sleep in the same room as his sister, mother or another woman except his wife. ^{xliii}
12. For two men to sleep on one bed or in one blanket is not permissible, it has been prohibited in the hadith. ^{xliv}
13. A child of ten must not sleep in the same bed as the husband and wife. ^{xlv}
14. The feet should not be facing towards *Makkah* or *Madinah*. ^{xlvi}
15. Before sleeping recite '*Bismillah*' and the three *Quls*¹², and thereafter to blow on the palms and rub three times on one's entire body – beginning from the head and ending at the toes. ^{xlvii}
16. To use a pillow is Sunnah (to rest one's head on). ^{xlviii}
17. The Messenger (may Allah bless him and grant him peace) disliked lying on the stomach. ^{xlix}
18. Do not have your feet facing the Qur'an or other religious books and if the books are higher than the feet there is no problem. ^l
19. To recite any Surah from the Qur'an one remembers, especially *Surah Mulk*¹³, *Surah Sajdah*¹⁴, *Surah Bani*¹⁵ *Israeel* and *Surah Zumar*¹⁶. ^{li}
20. To recite *Surah Waaqi'ah*¹⁷ before sleeping as this safeguards one from hunger and poverty. ^{lii}

11 See Chapter Twenty-Three for this Sunnah

12 Surah No: 112 three times, Surah 113 once & Surah 114 once.

13 Surah No: 67

14 Surah No: 32

15 Surah No: 17

16 Surah No: 39

17 Surah No: 56

21. To recite *Tasbih-e-Fatima*¹⁸ and *Kalimah Tayyab*¹⁹ once, before sleeping. ⁱⁱⁱ
22. To keep a prayer mat for the *Tahajjud*²⁰ prayer besides the head is a Sunnah. ^{liv}
23. When going to sleep, remember your grave as you will be sleeping on your own with your deeds and no one will be there with you. ^{lv}
24. Remember Allah (The Exalted) because the state a person sleeps in is the state in which one will wake up. ^{lvi}
25. Do not sleep after 'Asr as there is a chance of losing the intellect ^{lvii} and it is disliked (Makrooh) to sleep in the beginning part of the morning and between *Maghrib* and *Isha*. ^{lviii}

i Kimiya-e-Sa-aadat. Faizan-e-Sunnat, Sunnats of sleeping and awaking. p. 848

ii Faizan-e-Sunnat

iii Bukhari

iv ibid

v Muslim & Mishkat

vi Kashaf Mahjoob. Faizan-e-Shariat. p. 1175

vii Muttafak 'Alay. Faizan-e-Sunnat. p. 852

viii Hisnul Hasin

ix Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah. Riyadhus Saliheen and Faizan-e-Sunnat. Manners of Sleeping. p. 852

x Ibn Majah

xi Ihya-ul-uloom by Al-Ghazali

xii Shamail-e-Tirmidhi. Bed of the Prophet. p. 335

xiii ibid p. 336

xiv Imam Ahmad in his Musnad, Ibn Hibban in his Sahih and Bayhaqi.

xv Shamail-e-Tirmidhi. Bed of the Prophet. p. 336

xvi Madarijun Nabuwat

xvii Shamail-e-Tirmidhi. Sleeping of the Prophet. p. 256

xviii Muslim

xix Bahar-e-Shariat and Anwarul Hadith. p. 387

xx Bukhari, Ibn Majah & Shamail-e-Tirmidhi

xxi Bukhari

xxii Abu Dawud & Shamail-e-Tirmidhi

xxiii Shamail-e-Tirmidhi. Sleeping of the Prophet. p. 254

xxiv Bukhari, Mishkat and Shamail-e-Tirmidhi

xxv Ash-Shifa: Chapter two; Section: One.

xxvi Bukhari & Muslim

xxvii Darami, Tirmidhi, Nasa'i, Hakim narrated from Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him).

xxviii Muslim

xxix Bahare Shariat: Volume:17. Akhlaq Aur Aadaab. p. 88

xxx Bukhari. Riyadhus Saliheen. Vol: 1. p. 674

xxxi Ibn Sunni

xxxii Bezawi

xxxiii Bukhari

xxxiv ibid

xxxv ibid

xxxvi ibid

xxxvii Shamail-e-Tirmidhi

xxxviii ibid

xxxix Abu Dawud

xl Attargheeb

xli Muslim

xlii Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah and Mishkat.

xliii Bahare Shariat: Volume:17 with reference to Mishkat, Durre Mukhtar & Radul Mohtar.

xliv Akhlaq Aur Aadaab, p. 89. Bahar-e- Shariat, Vol: 17. Faizan-e-Sunnat. Manners of Sleeping. p. 858

xlv Bahare Shariat: Volume:17 with reference to Durre Mukhtar. Akhlaq Aur Aadaab, p. 90. Anwar-ul-Hadith.

xlvi Faizan-e-Sunnat. Manners of Sleeping. p. 858

xlvii Shamail-e-Tirmidhi, sleeping of the Prophet. p. 256

xlviii Muslim

xlix Tirmidhi & Abu Dawud

I Faizan-e-Sunnat. Manners of Sleeping. p. 858

li Hisnul Haseen. p. 72

lii Attargheeb

liii Bukhari, Muslim, Mishkat Abu Dawud and Tirmidhi.

liv Nisai

lv Bahare Shariat: Volume:17. Akhlaq Aur Aadaab, p. 89

lvi ibid

18 *Subhanallah* thirty-three times, *Alhamdulillah* thirty-three times and *Allahu Akbar* thirty-four times

19 La-ila-ha Illallahu Muhammadur Rasool-Allah (may Allah bless him and grant him peace)

20 See Chapter Seventeen for this Sunnah.

