

A Daily Program for the Believer

Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Kāẓemī

Translated by

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١. Starting your morning with performing the supererogatory (*nāfilah*^١) prayer prior to the (*wājib*) canonical prayer will spiritually uplift you and drive away laziness, especially when you're overcome with sleepiness. Moreover, numerous narrations indicate that the deficiencies in the obligatory prayers are compensated for by the supererogatory prayers.
٢. Commit yourself to performing the Rosary of Fatimah^٢ immediately after every obligatory prayer. Furthermore, it's best to count the *dhikr* with a rosary made from the soil of Karbala. Shaykh Muhammad b. Ḥasan al-Ṭūsī (d. ١٠٦٧) narrates – in *tahzīb al-aḥkām* – that Imam al-Mahdi (upon whom be peace) said, “the soil of Karbala is the best thing to count your *dhikr* with. If the reciter of the *dhikr* is to forget the invocation, it will still be recorded for him.” You should then recite the specific post-prayer supplications found in *Mafātīḥ al-Jinān* following the invocation.
٣. Seek refuge in God at the beginning of the day to repel the evils of both human and jinn Satans which you might encounter throughout it. This can be done by uttering the following:

أَعِيذُ نَفْسِي وَدِينِي وَأَهْلِي وَمَالِي وَوَالِدِي وَإِخْوَانِي فِي دِينِي وَمَا رَزَقَنِي رَبِّي وَخَوَاتِيمَ عَمَلِي وَمَنْ يَعْزِينِي أَمْرُهُ بِاللَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْأَحَدِ الصَّمَدِ الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ وَيَرْبُّ الْفَلَقَ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ وَيَرْبُّ النَّاسِ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ.

^١ In Islam, canonical prayers (الصلاة) are divided into two categories:

- ١) Obligatory (*wājib*) canonical prayers.
- ٢) Supererogatory (*nāfilah*, sing.) prayers. *Nāfilah* is defined as, “to do more than is required by duty or obligation.” (trans.)

^٢ The Rosary of Fatimah (or, *tasbīḥat al-Zahrā*^٣) is a holy invocation taught by the Prophet (pbuh) to his daughter Fatimah (upon whom be peace). Imam al-Ṣādiq (upon whom be peace) had said, “Performing the Rosary of Fatimah on a daily basis following every prayer is more beloved to me than praying a thousand units of *ṣalāt* every day.” The invocation is as follows:

- i. ʾ Allahu ʾ akbar ٣٤ times.
- ii. ʾ Alḥamdulillah ٣٣ times.
- iii. Subḥanallah ٣٣ times. (trans.)

“I seek refuge for myself, my religion, family, wealth, children, brethren in religion, and that which God has granted me, and for those who concern me and for the outcomes of all my actions in God, the One, the All-embracing, He whom neither begat, nor was begotten, nor has He any equal. And in the Lord of the daybreak, from the evil of what He has created, and from the evil of the dark night when it settles, and from the evil of the witches who blow on knots, And from the evil of the envious when he envies. And in the Lord of mankind, Sovereign of humans, God of humans, from the evil of the sneaky tempter who puts temptations into the breasts of humans, from among the jinn and humans.”

Then recite the following:

a. The Chapter of The Opening (*Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*) [١:١-٧]

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (١) الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٢) الرَّحْمَنَ الرَّحِيمَ (٣) مَالِكِ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ (٤) إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ (٥) اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (٦) صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ (٧)

b. The verse of The Throne (*āyat al-Kursī*) until *fihā khālidūn* [٢:٢٥٥-٢٥٧]

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 (٢٥٥) لَا إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ ۗ قَدْ تَبَيَّنَ الرُّشْدُ مِنَ الْغَيِّ ۗ فَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالطَّاغُوتِ وَيُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ لَا انْفِصَامَ لَهَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ (٢٥٦) اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أُولِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُم مِّنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ ۗ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ (٢٥٧)

c. The verse of *shahidallah*... [٣:١٨-١٩]

شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ (١٨) إِنَّ الدِّينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْإِسْلَامُ ۗ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُولُوا الْكُتُبَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَعَثًا لِّبَنِيهِمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ (١٩)

d. The verse of *al-Mulk* [٣:٢٦-٢٧]

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكِ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّن تَشَاءُ وَتُعْزِزُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُنزِلُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ ۗ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (٢٦) تُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَتُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ ۗ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ ۗ وَتَرْزُقُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ (٢٧)

e. The verse of *al-Sakharah* [٧:٥٤-٥٦]

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَبِيبًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسَخَّرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ ۗ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٥٤) ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ (٥٥) وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا ۗ إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ (٥٦)

- Al-Kulaynī reports that Imam al-Şādiq (upon whom be peace) said, “When God ordered these verses to descend unto earth, they clung onto the Throne and uttered, “O Lord, upon whom are you sending us? Upon those who sin and err?” Once more, God ordered them to descend and replied, ‘By My Majesty and Glory! There is not a single person of Muhammad’s progeny or their followers who recites you after a prayer which I have deemed incumbent upon him but that I look upon him with My Concealed Eye seventy times a day, granting him seventy of his wishes/needs at every gaze and I will accept him though he be in a sinful state. The verses are: *Umm al-Kitāb*^ʔ, the verse of *shahidallah*..., the verse of *al-Kursī*, and the verse of *al-Mulk*.”

- ξ. Make a pledge not to commit a single sin throughout the whole day when you head out to work or school. This is referred to as *mushāraṭah* in the science of ethics. Then, during the day, be in a state of self-supervision (*murāqabah*). Finally, and before sleeping, evaluate how true you kept to your original pledge. This final step is referred to as self-accounting (*muḥāsabah*).
 - The Prophet (peace be upon him and his progeny) had said, “A person of intellect must, if he truly possesses intellect, divide his day into four periods: (١) a period in which he prays to his Lord, (٢) a period of self-accounting, (٣) a period in which he visits the people of knowledge who assist and advise him in his religious affairs, and finally (٤) a period in which he secludes his self with its worldly desires/pleasures which God has lawfully permitted and legislated.
 - Imam al-Kāẓim (upon whom be peace) had said, “He who does not account his self every day is not one of us. If he had committed good, he asks God for an increase and persistence in good and thanks Him for it. And if he had committed evil, he seeks the forgiveness of God and repents to Him.”

- ο. When you head out to work, your intention should be to seek proximity to God and be needless of others. He who has no [means] of sustenance has no afterlife. It’s better for a woman to try avoiding [constant] contact and interaction with men while she’s at work since the barriers between the two genders are lifted due to the level of comfort they reach whilst working with one another on a daily basis. Additionally, there are those men who try to catch

^ʔ This is another name for the first chapter of the Qur’an, the Chapter of the Opening. (*trans.*)

their prey at work whereat employees are [constantly] engaged with one another.

- Imam al-Şādiq (upon whom be peace) said, “The intention is greater than the act. Moreover, the intention is the act [itself].”
- Whenever the Messenger of God (pbuh) would see a person who impresses him he would inquire whether he has an occupation or not. If he replies that he doesn't, the Prophet would say, “He has lost my respect.” The people, upon hearing this from the Prophet, asked him, “Why is that so, O Messenger of God?” To which he replied, “Because if a believer lacks an occupation/profession, he will live off of his religion/faith.”

٦. Always try to be in the state of *wuḍū'* at the beginning of the day, for external purity will, inevitably, lead to internal purity. You should also renew your *wuḍū'* whenever it becomes void. This has become easily feasible nowadays. Moreover, try to recite the invocations assigned to every act of *wuḍū'*^٤. The invocations are as follows:

Upon seeing water

“I begin my ablution in the Name of God. All praise is due to He, Who made water purifying, and not impure.”

Upon washing the hands prior to performing *wuḍū'*

“O Lord! Make me of those who repent and purify themselves.”

While rinsing the mouth

“O Lord! Do not deprive me of the fragrance of Paradise, and make me of those who smell its fragrance and perfume.”

While washing the face

“O Lord! Make my face bright on the Day when the faces will turn dark. Do not darken my face on the Day when the faces are bright.”

While pouring water over the right elbow

“O Lord! Give me my book of deeds in my right hand, and grant me a permanent abode in Paradise in my left, and make my reckoning an easy one.”

While pouring water over the left elbow

^٤ *Wuḍū'* is divided into two acts: (١) **Washing**: whereby you wash your face and hands, and (٢) **Wiping**: whereby you wipe your head and feet. (*trans.*)

“O Lord! Do not give me my book of deeds in my left hand or from behind my back, nor chain it to my neck. I seek refuge in You from Hell-fire.”

While wiping the head

“O Lord! Bestow Your Mercy, Blessings and Forgiveness upon me.”

While wiping the feet

“O Lord! Keep me firm on the Bridge (to Paradise) on the Day when the feet will slip, and help me in my efforts to do things which will please You, O' Glorious and Mighty.”^o

- The Prophet (pbuh) said, “God says, ‘He who loses his ritual [state of] purity¹ and does not perform *wuḍū*’ has shunned me; and he who performs *wuḍū*’ but does not perform two units of prayer [after it] has shunned me; and he who performs two units of prayer, asks me for his need and I do grant him what he requests – be it of his religious or worldly affairs,- then I have shunned him, and I am not a shunning Lord.”

∨. Put a daily charity aside, even it was of little value, with the intention of protecting the Imam of your time (upon whom be peace) as well as his assisters and supporters. It would also be ideal to request from a poor individual to appoint you as his representative[∨] so that the charity is collected as soon as you place it aside, and thus be considered to have [actually] given it.

- The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Attract sustenance by giving charity.”
- The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Charity increases one’s sustenance, so give charity – may God have Mercy on you. Similarly, humility increases the status of a man, thus be humble so that God may raise your status. Furthermore, forgiveness increases the dignity and nobility of a man, thus forgive so that God may dignify you.”
- Imam al-Ṣādiq (upon whom be peace) said, “Death is repelled[^] only by three things: (1) giving charity, (∨) treating your parents well, and (∩) maintaining ties with your family.”

^o This translation is taken from <<http://www.duas.org/wadhu.htm>> with minor amendments. (trans.)

¹ One loses his ritual state of purity through urinal or seminal discharge, excretion or expelling gas. (trans.)

[∨] In Islamic Law, a poor person can appoint another individual to be his representative in collecting charity on his behalf. Thus, the collection of the charity on behalf of the poor individual would constitute an immediate receiving of the charity. (trans.)

[^] Muslim theologians believe that a person’s life is composed of both a fixed and variable duration. The fixed duration marks the definite termination of one’s life whereas the variable entails an early termination of it. Thus, an individual may not live up to his definite age due to various physical or spiritual factors. Some examples of

- The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Charity repels illnesses, thus cure your sick ones through giving it.”
- ^ Upon leaving your house ask those who you left behind, especially your parents, to pray for your success. You should also seek forgiveness from your relatives, - especially your wife –for any wrongdoing which you may have committed towards them, even if it was a mistake of the past. For if a believer prays for another person, his prayer is [truly] accepted. Moreover, advise your family to pray at the beginning of the [appointed] times as an act of fulfilling God’s command: “And bid your family to prayer and be steadfast in its maintenance.” [٢٠:١٣٢]
- ٩. Don’t waste your time on your way to work. Listen to something beneficial in the car either via a cassette or any other means (i.e. your phone, mp3 player, etc.). These will best benefit you at times of “forgetfulness” and “boredom” when you’re mood is more inclined towards listening than reading. Finally, whoever experiences ecstasy with the Qur’an will choose it above and beyond listening to anything else that is permissible [to listen to], let alone that which is forbidden.
- ١٠. Commit yourself to reciting a specific *dhikr* in order to utilize your time most wisely. Examples are:
 - (١) Surat al-Tawhīd.^١
 - (٢) *Lā ʾilāha ʾillallāh*, which is the master of all *ʾadhkār*, ١٠٠ times.
 - (٣) *Ṣalawāt*,^١ for it is the weightiest thing on your scale of deeds.

Moreover, a person who becomes occupied with reciting a *dhikr* will begin to despise uttering anything that doesn’t benefit him in this world or the hereafter.

physical factors include one’s diet, exercise, etc. Spiritual factors include those mentioned in the quoted narration. (trans.)

^١ The Chapter of Unity (*Sūrat al-Tawhīd*), also known as The Chapter of Sincerity (*Sūrat al-ʾikhlāṣ*), is the ١١٢th chapter of the Qur’an. The following is the Arabic text of the chapter followed by the English translation:

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
 قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ﴿١﴾ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ﴿٢﴾ لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ﴿٣﴾ وَمَنْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ﴿٤﴾

In the name of God, the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful

[١] Say, ‘He is Allah, the One. [٢] Allah is the All-embracing. [٣] He neither begat, nor was begotten, [٤] nor has He any equal.’ (Translation by Ali Quli Qara’i). (trans.)

^١ *Ṣalawāt* literally means “prayers” and when associated with Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) it refers to asking God and His angels to send blessings upon Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his progeny. A common formula of the

ṣalawāt is: اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ, transliterated as: “ʾAllahumma Ṣalli ʾalā Muḥammad wa ʾāli

Muḥammad.” (trans.)

- The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Whoever says ‘*lā ʾilāhah ʾillallah*’ ١٠٠ times will be regarded as the man of greatest action on that day, save he who recites it more.”
 - Imam Ali (upon whom be peace) said, “Reciting *sūrat al-Tawhīd* [once] is equal to reading a third of the Qur’an; twice is equal to two thirds of it; and thrice is equal to the entire Qur’an.”
 - The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Recite *ṣalawāt* upon me abundantly for it is an illumination in the graves, on the *ṣirāṭ* and in heaven.”
 - Imam al-Ṣādiq (upon whom be peace) said, “If the Prophet (pbuh)’s name is mentioned then recite *ṣalawāt* upon him in abundance, for God will reciprocate whomsoever recites one *ṣalawāt* upon him with one thousand *ṣalawāt*’s in a thousand lines of angels, and there remains no being which God has created but that sends *ṣalawāt* upon this servant – as a result of God and His angels’ *ṣalawāt* upon him. Thus, he who wishes not to conduct this act is a foolish person whom God, His messenger and the Ahlul-Bayt are disassociated from.”
١١. Instead of wasting your free time on mundane matters, make a small library in your office or workplace which you can read and benefit from during this time. Generally, a believer should always have a beneficial library in his house so that he is encouraged to become a reader. The library collection should be diverse and include a selection of books for women and children.
١٢. Try not to become habituated to neglectful people or, especially, the opposite gender. When you become too comfortable with the way you speak with the opposite gender and start joking around with them, you will eventually fall into other problems. It only requires one slip to fall into a labyrinth of wrongdoings. You should also think about what you’re going to talk about prior to starting a conversation; consider whether what you’re going to say will please God or displease Him.
- Imam Ali (upon whom be peace) said, “So long as a Muslim is silent, the [angel] inscribers record his actions as good. When he begins to speak, however, they would record them as either good or bad.”
١٣. Always carry a prayer-time schedule with you or try becoming acquainted with the timings of prayer so that you can prepare yourself for the noon prayer. The noon prayer, specifically, has a distinct flavor amidst the commotion of daily

life. It is a station whereat the individual stands before God during the busiest hours of the day.

You should also try your best to pray on time no matter how occupied and busy you may be. If you're at work or school, try asking your manager or teacher for permission to pray on time so that your duties and prayers don't conflict with one other. Your main concern should be regarding the quality of your prayer and not its wearing lengthiness.

- Imam al-Riḍā (upon whom be peace) said, “If prayer time approaches while you're at work then let not your trade occupy you from it, for God has described a people and praised them by saying, ‘men whom neither trading nor bargaining distracts from the remembrance of Allah, and the maintenance of prayer and the giving of zakat. They are fearful of a day wherein the heart and the sight will be transformed,’ [٢٤:٣٧]. These individuals were tradesmen who would abandon their trade and pray as soon as prayer time sets. Their reward was greater than those who would pray whilst not being occupied with trade.”
- Imam al-Ṣādiq (upon whom be peace) said, “The ‘middle prayer’^{١١} refers to the noon prayer and ‘stand in devotion to Allah’ [refers] to a person being attentive in prayer and praying on time without allowing anything to distract him nor occupy him from performing it.”
- The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Whenever the time of any prayer sets an angel calls upon the people, ‘O People! Get up to the fires which you have ignited upon yourselves and extinguish them with your prayers.’”

١٤. Commit yourself to seeking forgiveness of your sins (*istighfār*) seventy times after *al-ʿaṣr* prayer, for it has been narrated that God will forgive seven hundred sins of he who does so. Furthermore, he who recites *Sūrat al-Qadr* ١٠ times (after *al-ʿaṣr* prayer) will be granted the reward of every good deed a person earned on that day. Overall, *istighfār* should be a believer's constant utterance (*dhikr*), especially after sinning. He who commits himself to performing *istighfār* after *al-ʿaṣr* and night prayers (*ṣalāt al-layl*) will enjoy a station of forgiveness every twelve hours and thus will encounter His Lord in a state of complete purity and will indeed have a tranquil heart.

- Imam al-Ṣādiq (upon whom be peace) said, “God will forgive seven hundred sins of He who performs *istighfār* after *al-ʿaṣr* prayer.”

^{١١} This is an interpretation of the ٢٣th verse of the second chapter of the Qur'an: “Be watchful of your prayers, and [especially] the middle prayer, and stand in devotion to Allah.” [٢:٢٣] (*trans.*)

- Imam al-Jawād (upon whom be peace) said, “All the good deeds of every creature during the day will also be allocated to he who recites *Sūrat ʿal-Qadr* ten times after *ʿal-ʿaṣr* prayer.”
- Imam al- Ṣādiq (upon whom be peace) said, “He who says the following four hundred times for two consecutive months will either be granted an abundance of knowledge or an abundance of wealth:

“I seek forgiveness from God whom there is no Lord but He; the Live and Eternal; the All-Compassionate and All-Merciful; the Creator of the Heavens and earth, from all my wrongdoings, transgressions, and being prodigal to the detriment of my own soul! And I repent to Thee.”

"أستغفر الله الذي لا إله إلا هو الحي القيوم، الرحمن الرحيم، بديع السموات والأرض، من جميع ظلمي وجرمي وإسرافي على نفسي، وأتوب إليه."

١٥. Try checking up on a few of your believing brethren during your free time. This shouldn't be for the sake of entertainment but rather to maintain some form of communication with the believers. One phone call could relieve your friend from a lot of stress and, in turn, result in the opening of a heavenly gate [of grace] to yourself.
 - It has been related that if the Messenger of God (pbuh) doesn't hear from a brother of his for three days, he would ask about him; if he was away, he would pray for him; if he was present, he would visit him; and if he was sick he would check up on him.
١٦. Spending time and mixing with neglectful people usually makes you fall into the problem of backbiting and demeaning others. This is why you generally should abstain from talking about others since what you utter is, at least, under your own control. The real problem here, however, lies in listening to someone else backbiting others as you can't always abhor them from doing so. Additionally, the Qur'anic comparison of backbiting to eating a dead corpse should act as a sufficient strong deterrent from backbiting. This metaphysical exposition of backbiting is indeed a dreadful and repulsive one. Moreover, it is counted amongst the greater sins.
 - It had been widely reported that the Prophet (s) said, “Do you what backbiting is?” They replied, “God and His Messenger know best.” He then said, “Your mentioning something about your fellow brother that he would not like.’ To which they replied, ‘O Prophet of God, and what if the thing mentioned about him was actually true about him?’ so he replied,

‘Know that if you say something about him that is true then you have indeed backbit about him, and if you what you have said is not true, then you have indeed slandered him.’

- The Prophet (pbuh) said, “The inscribers (angels) ascend with the [good] deed of a God’s servant - that illuminates similar to the rays of the sun- until it reaches the temporal heaven. Upon reaching it, the inscribers praise his deed and grant it approval. However, when it reaches the gate, the guardian angel of the gate will say, “Strike this act in the face of its committer, for I have been endowed with the responsibility of overseeing backbiting and my Lord had ordered me to prevent the deeds of a backbiter from surpassing me.”

١٧. Always try entering your house with a smile, since the fatigue of work could reflect negatively on others upon your first encounter with them. This is something your spouse wouldn’t be expecting, especially after she had been eagerly awaiting your arrival since your departure and had also prepared a meal for you to enjoy together.

- The Prophet (pbuh) said, “God dislikes the person who [constantly] frowns at the face of his brethren.”
- The Prophet (pbuh) said, “The creatures are the children of God. The most beloved of creatures to God is he who most benefits His children and brings joy and happiness to his household.”
- The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Each one of you should greet others upon entering his house for blessings will be attracted to it and angels will enter it.”

١٨. Treat your meals as a Divine feast and consider yourself a guest on its table. Sitting at the table of a host places many restrictions on your behavior and involves a number of etiquettes which you must observe. Of these etiquettes are:

- i. Eating in moderation.
- ii. Performing ablution prior to eating.
- iii. Eating from that which has been purchased from a lawful source [i.e. lawful income].
- iv. Starting with the name of God and ending with praising and thanking Him.
- v. In addition other etiquettes and rituals.

- Imam al-Şādiq (upon whom be peace) said, “Performing *wuḍū’* prior to and after eating repels poverty.”
 - The Prophet (pbuh) said, “He who lessens his food intake will have less accountability [on the day of judgment].”
 - The Prophet (pbuh) said, “He who fills his stomach will not be permitted to enter the dominion of the heavens and the earth.”
 - Imam al- Şādiq (upon whom be peace) said, “There is nothing more harmful to the heart of a believer than eating excessively. It has two consequences: the hardening of the heart and the arousal of desire.”
 - Imam al- Şādiq (upon whom be peace) said, “Eating is a necessity for mankind, so when you eat allocate a third of your stomach for food, a third for liquids, and a third for air.”
 - The Prophet (pbuh) said, “The previous sins of he who says the following when eating will be forgiven: ‘All praise is due to God whom fed me this and granted me it with neither might nor power of my own’.”
١٩. Try to watch beneficial programs, such as the news, during your times of rest (e.g. the hour after lunch). It’s also necessary for a believer to concern himself with the [general] affairs of the Muslims. He who sleeps at night while being indifferent to the affairs and state of the Muslims is not a Muslim. Moreover, *Du ā’ al-Faraj*^{١١} is, undoubtedly, one means of helping in relieving this nation from its troubles.
٢٠. Taking a nap after lunch is necessary for relaxing the stomach and improving digestion. Let your thoughts be occupied with either the remembrance of God or the tasks which you have to do after you waking up. Controlling ones thoughts and imagination will open up a great door towards success.
٢١. Try running your errands at times of least congestion and interaction between the two genders, such as the afternoon. At the same time, you should try avoiding markets and shopping centers known for being heavily crowded and mixed, especially if what you’re going for isn’t necessary. After all, these locations are the most detested by God.
- The Prophet (pbuh) said, “God will record a thousand good deeds for a person who sincerely remembers God in the marketplace where others are forgetful and occupied. He will also forgive him on the day of Resurrection in an unfathomable manner.”

١١ اللَّهُمَّ كُنْ لَوْلِيَّكَ الْحُجَّةَ بْنِ الْحَسَنِ صَلَواتِكَ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آبائِهِ فِي هَذِهِ السَّاعَةِ وَفِي كُلِّ سَاعَةٍ وَلِيًّا وَحَافِظًا وَقَائِدًا وَنَاصِرًا وَدَلِيلًا وَعَيْنًا ۝ حَتَّى تُسَكِّنَهُ أَرْضَكَ طَوْعًا وَتُمَتِّعَهُ فِيهَا طَوِيلًا.

- The Prophet (pbuh) asked Gabriel, “What is the most detested place by God?” Gabriel answered, “The marketplaces. And the people that are in it are the most disliked by Him; they are the first to enter Hell and the last to exit it.”

٢٢. Make a schedule for the times of prayer. Don't go out to a place that will most likely make you miss praying the obligatory *ṣalāt* on time, for doing so is a loss which cannot be compensated for by anything you profit or gain from in this world.

٢٣. The hour preceding sunset is a sacred hour. Try taking advantage of the last fifteen minutes by reciting the known *ṣalawāt* upon the Prophet and his progeny:

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ فِي الْأَوَّلِينَ

O God, send blessings to Muhammad and his Household among the foremost generations,

وَصَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ فِي الْآخِرِينَ

send blessings to Muhammad and his Household among the last generations,

وَصَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ فِي الْمَلَأِ الْأَعْلَى

send blessings to Muhammad and his Household among the Highest Chiefs,

وَصَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ فِي الْمُرْسَلِينَ

and send blessings to Muhammad and his Household among the Messengers.

اللَّهُمَّ أَعْظِ مُحَمَّدًا الْوَسِيلَةَ وَالْفَضِيلَةَ وَالشَّرَفَ وَالرَّفْعَةَ وَالذَّرَجَةَ الْكَبِيرَةَ

O God, (please) grant Muhammad and his Household the right of mediation, preference, honor, loftiness, and the grand rank.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي آمَنْتُ بِمُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَلَمْ أَرَهُ

O God, I believed in Muhammad, may God's blessings be upon him and his Household, while I have not seen him;

فَلَا تَحْرِمْنِي فِي الْقِيَامَةِ رُؤْيَيْتَهُ

so, do not deprive me of seeing him on the Resurrection Day,

وَارْزُقْنِي صُحْبَتَهُ

confer upon me with the favor of accompanying him,

وَتَوَفَّنِي عَلَى مِلَّتِهِ

cause me to die while I follow his creed,

وَأَسْقِنِي مِنْ حَوْضِهِ

and allow me to drink from his Pool

مَشْرَبًا رَوِيًّا سَائِعًا هَنِيبًا لَا أَظْمَأُ بَعْدَهُ أَبَدًا

a drink that is quenching, palatable, and pleasant, after which I will never be thirsty.

إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Verily, You have power over all things.

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي آمَنْتُ بِمُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَلَمْ أَرَهُ

O God, I believe in Muhammad, may God's blessings be upon him and his Household, while I have not seen him;

فَعَرَّفْنِي فِي الْجَنَانِ وَجْهَهُ

so, (please) show me his face in the gardens of Paradise.

اللَّهُمَّ بَلِّغْ مُحَمَّدًا صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ مِنِّي تَحِيَّةً كَثِيرَةً وَسَلَامًا

O God, convey to Muhammad, may God's blessings be upon him and his Household, many greetings and compliments from me.^{١٣}

٢٤. If you're not able to perform the thirty four units of daily *nāfilah* prayers then you should at least perform *Ṣalāt al-Ghufaylah* between the *maghrib* and *ishā'* prayers. It has been narrated that he who prays *Ṣalāt al-Ghufaylah* will be granted entry to heaven. Furthermore, try praying *al-Watīrah* after the *ishā'* prayer.

^{١٣} This translation is taken from < <http://www.duas.org/zilhajj/arafa.htm> > with minor amendments.

Be diligent in praying in congregation at the mosque especially if there's one nearby, for the prayer at home of he who neighbors a masjid is rendered an incomplete one.

٢٥. If you experience a spiritual state in your heart after performing the obligatory prayer then try to maintain the experience for the longest possible duration, - whether this experience occurs at home or at the mosque. These spiritual tidings may never reoccur and are regarded as one of the most precious endowments one can receive in this temporal realm. It's also known that he who continuously experiences such a state will enjoy a splendorous form of [otherworldly] tourism that is far greater than the worldly and temporal tourism of the worldly people.
٢٦. Your dinner should be light. A heavy dinner could make you end up missing the [opportunity to perform the] night vigils and thus lose out on some of its blessings.
٢٧. You should create a reading list for yourself and organize it into a reading schedule. The list should be composed of beneficial and purposeful books such as: a commentary on the Qur'an, a book on hadith, history or theology, in addition to your academic and work-related readings. Random and purposeless readings won't add much value to your general knowledge.
 - The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Either be a scholar, a student, a listener, or a lover but do not be the fifth^{١٤} otherwise you will perish."
٢٨. Devote some time to your wife and children. This time should be utilized in guiding them with them or tackling important issues such as: the negative effects of the internet or television, the harmful relationships which they could fall prey to, and other related topics which one will be asked about on the Day of Judgment. You can also, for example, form a regular family-reading session in which you teach them a complete course on Islamic laws taken from the legal books of a *marji*^٤. This latter task is considered to be one of the greatest priorities.
 - Imam al-Rida (upon whom be peace) said, "May God's Mercy be upon a person who upholds our remembrance." I [the narrator] thus asked, "And how could this be achieved?" Whereby he replied, "by acquainting himself with our teachings and passing them unto others, for if others become acquainted with the beauty of our words they would [surely] follow us."

^{١٤} The fifth category refers to anything other than the first four.

٢٩. Set aside a day or more every week for taking out your family to a park or somewhere similar in order for them to relax and alleviate their stress. You should keep a smile on your face and speak kindly and gently to them while you're out. You should also refrain from any negativity during this time. Furthermore, refrain from going to locations which would make you susceptible to forbidden sights. You should also avoid going to mixed gatherings which will make them fall into sin and drag them into something that will lead to undesirable consequences.
- Beware of going to "suspicious" restaurants that exist nowadays. They promote their forbidden products in the name of being "*ḥalāl*." In many cases, it is nothing but a type of advertising used to promote their products. A [true] believer isn't subdued by the desires of his stomach and private parts.
٣٠. A great portion of our lives is wasted in front of the television watching worthless shows. A believer should watch over what he sees just as he watches over what he eats. Every individual will be taken accountable for indulging in baseless things, let alone if they were in vain. A self-observant individual should make sure that what he's doing will yield him worldly or after-worldly provisions, otherwise he should avoid it. He should also make sure that the device cannot be turned into a tool by which indecency is broadcasted and spread during his absence. This can be done by setting a parental lock on the device.
- Moreover, don't resort to using the internet when you're trying to escape from something forbidden, - especially at night when you're in an enclosed room and your desires are stirred up.
٣١. Try to ensure that your visitations [to others] be beneficial. You shouldn't go to mixed gatherings or houses of those who are neglectful of God's remembrance. If going to such places is necessary -due to social obligations related to visiting your relatives-, then make it quick so that you don't fall into wrongdoings while trying to earn yourself a good deed. It is also necessary to segregate the men and women in following the practice of Ahlulbayt (p) even if it required an outright request from the host.
- Nevertheless, it must be known that many romantic relationships, even with conservative women, initiate in mixed gatherings of this sort which involve joking, laughing and staying up for late hours.
٣٢. Try going to sleep early unless you're not very tired. Otherwise, you will become restless and, in turn, be dragged into the world of illusory and

forbidden thoughts. Certain thoughts can lead you into committing forbidden acts while you're in bed or after waking up.

۳۳. There are a number of recommended acts which are necessary to be performed prior to falling asleep. These include, but aren't limited to, the following:

- ۱) The invocation of the Rosary of Fāṭimah^{۱۰}.
- ۲) Reciting the Chapter of Unity (*Sūrat al-Tawḥīd*) thrice.
- ۳) Performing *wuḍū'* in order to sleep in a state of ritual purity.
- ۴) Asking God to forgive the sins you committed throughout the day.
- ۵) Sleeping on your right side facing the *qiblah*.
- ۶) Reciting the following last verse of the Chapter of the Cave (*Sūrat al-Kahf*) in order to wake up for the night vigils. You should also set up your alarm as a precaution.

"قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُمُ إِلَهٌ وَاحِدٌ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا"

“Say, ‘I am only a human being like you. It is revealed unto me that your God is one God. So whosoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him perform righteous deeds and make no one a partner unto his Lord in worship.’” [۱۸:۱۱۰]

- The Prophet (pbuh) said, “He who recites the Chapter of Vying for Increase (*Sūrat al-Takāthur*) at the time of sleep will be safeguarded from the trials of the grave.”
- Imam al-Ṣādiq (upon whom be peace) said, “The bed of he who performs ablution prior to sleeping will be his masjid. If he remembers that he hadn't performed it then let him perform *tayammum* using any dust he finds, for if he does, he will remain in the state of prayer and remembrance of God [during his sleep].”
- Lady Fāṭimah (upon whom be peace) said that, “the Prophet (pbuh) once entered my home while I was preparing my mattress for sleep. He said, ‘O Fāṭimah, do not sleep without performing four things: (۱) recite the entire Qur'an, (۲) make the prophets your interceders [on the day of judgment], (۳) make the believers pleased of you and (۴) perform Hajj and 'Umrah.’ He Prophet (pbuh) then entered *ṣalāt* so I waited until he completed it and then said, “O Messenger of God, you ordered me to perform four things which I cannot fulfill in this state.” He then smiled at me and said, ‘If you recite the chapter of Unity three times it will be as if you recited the entire Qur'an; and if

^{۱۰} Refer to footnote ۲ for the method of invocation.

you ask God to send His blessings upon me and the prophets who preceded me, we will be your intercessors on the day of judgment; and if you ask forgiveness for all the believers, they will all be pleased with you; and if you say, “*subḥanallah, walḥamdulillah, wa lā ʾilāha ʾillallah, wallahu akbar*” then you have performed Hajj and ‘Umrah.”

- Imam al-Ṣādiq (upon whom be peace) said, “When you lay on your mattress [to sleep], examine and contemplate what you had earned throughout the day and how you earned it. Remember that [one day] you will die and have an afterlife.”

٣٤. You should control the amount of hours you sleep as most people usually sleep for more than what’s considered necessary. This is especially true on holidays and days off.

The Prophet (pbuh) said, “Beware of sleeping excessively, for it yields poverty on the day of judgment.”

Imam al-Ṣādiq (upon whom be peace) said, “God dislikes sleeping excessively and idleness in life.”

Imam al-Ṣādiq (upon whom be peace) said, “Excessive sleeping leads to ones loss of both his religion and world.”

٣٥. The night station of conversing and praying to God is of the most important stations in one’s life. This is especially true if they are to be performed with an attentive heart, and in a dark and secluded area. There hadn’t been a sage of God who wasn’t persistent in performing the night vigils (*Ṣalāt al-Layl*).

If performing the complete set of prayers^{١٣} is difficult to accomplish, then at least perform the two units of *al-Shaf‘* followed by *al-Witr*. These can be prayed immediately before the *adhan* of *al-Fajr*. The “praiseworthy station”^{١٤} is an opportunity that a believer shouldn’t miss. You can redo the prayers during the day if you weren’t able to at night. This will demonstrate your insistence before God on seeking proximity to Him through performing supererogatory acts of devotion.

- The Prophet (pbuh) said, “The best time to pray to your Lord is before dawn.” He then recited the following verse in which Jacob (upon whom be peace) says, “I shall indeed seek forgiveness for you from my Lord.” [١٢:٩٨] The Prophet (pbuh) then said, “he delayed his prayer for forgiveness to dawn.”

^{١٣} *Ṣalāt al-layl* is composed of a total of eleven units of prayer. Eight are to be performed in sets of two. Next are *al-Shaf‘* (composed of a single binary set of units) and *al-Witr* (composed of a single unit). After reciting the Chapter of the Opening in the first unit of *al-shaf‘*, one must recite *Sūrat al-Falaq* (chapter 113). In the second unit, one must recite *Sūrat al-Nās* (chapter 114) following the Chapter of the Opening. As for *al-Witr*, upon the completion of the Chapter of the Opening one must recite *Sūrat al-Ikhlās* thrice followed by *Sūrat al-Falaq* and *Sūrat al-Nās* once consecutively.

^{١٤} The author is referring to the following verse, “And Keep vigil in prayer for part of the night, as a supererogatory act for thee. It may be that thy Lord will resurrect thee in a praiseworthy station.” [١٧:٧٩]

- Imam Ḥasan al-‘Askarī (upon whom be peace) said, “Reaching God Almighty is a journey that cannot be reached save through mounting the night.”

٣٦. Staying in contact with your family members and relatives doesn’t always have to be done through visitations, especially if visiting them might carry some negativity with it. Calling them up and checking on them would be more ideal in certain situations.

٣٧. Taking care of and maintaining your physical health and well-being is one of the recommendations and admonitions which religion has strongly emphasized on. Therefore, you should make an exercise schedule for yourself. At the same time, you should be wary not to join or participate in gyms which could place you in an undesirable position/situation. Thus, it would be more appropriate to exercise at home while listening to something that reminds you of God Almighty.

٣٨. Thursday nights and Fridays should have an exclusive program peculiarly set for them as a believer requires a special program with his Lord on these nights and days. The program should include the following:

- Reciting *ṣalawāt*.^{١٨}
- Reading supplications (*munājāt*).
- Paying a visit to your sick and ill brethren.
- Visiting the graves of the deceased, etc.

The supplication of Kumayl is one of the main highlights of Thursday night.

The main highlights for Friday are *Du‘ā’ al-Nudbah* and *ghuṣl al-jum‘ah*.

٣٩. It’s necessary to prepare oneself for the seasons of devotion, such as the [three] blessed months^{١٩}, prior to their advent. This can be done by referring to books which have been written on these matters.

It’s also important to emphasize on performing “the Prayer of the Beginning of the Month” so that one may acquire well-being and welfare throughout the month. The prayer is performed as follows:

- (١) Reciting *Sūrat al-Ḥamd*^{٢٠} (Chapter of the Opening) once and *Sūrat al-Tawḥīd*^{٢١} (the Chapter of Unity) ٣٠ times in the first *rak‘a*.

^{١٨} Refer to the ١١th footnote for the formula of *ṣalawāt*. (trans.)

^{١٩} These are the following lunar Islamic months: Rajab, Sha‘ bān and Ramazān. (trans.)

^{٢٠} This is the first chapter of the Qur’an, also known as *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*. (trans.)

^{٢١} This is the ١١th chapter of the Qur’an, also known as *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* (the Chapter of Sincerity). (trans.)

(٢) Reciting *Sūrat al-Ḥamd* once and *Sūrat al-Qadr*^{٢٢} (the Chapter of Power) ٢٠ times in the second.

(٣) Reciting a *du ā*’.

(٤) Paying a charity for the month.

٤٠. It is very important for a believer to remember the tragedies of the Prophet’s household, especially that which befell Imam Ḥusayn and his family, even if it was once a week. If you’re unable to attend public gatherings, then utilize the available recordings. This could possibly fulfill the notion of reviving their remembrance and listening to their tragedies. One should also not forgo the recitation of Imam Ḥusayn (upon whom be peace)’s *ziyarah* on Thursday nights. Visiting Imam Ḥusayn, even from a distance, is a great Divine blessing. Enchanted hearts know no physical distances as spiritual interactions are above and beyond these superficial barriers.

- Ḥannan b. Sudayr relates from his father that he said, “al-Ṣādiq (upon whom be peace) told me, ‘O Sudayr, do you visit the grave of al-Husayn (upon whom be peace) once a day?’ I replied, “May my life be your ransom! No I do not.” To which he said, ‘How negligent you are! Do you visit once every week then?’ I replied, “No.” He then said, ‘Do you visit him once a month?’ I replied, “No.” He then said, ‘Do you visit him once a year?’ I said, “Yes possibly,” to which he said, ‘O Sudayr, Do you know that God has two thousand angels that remain by the grave of al-Ḥusayn, disheveled and covered with dust, crying and visiting him? O Sudayr, what stops you from visiting the grave of al-Ḥusayn five times a week or once a day?’ I replied, “May my life by your ransom, there is a great distance between us and his grave.” So he said, “Go to the roof of your house then look to the right and left; then look towards the sky and face the direction of the grave of al-Husayn and say, “Peace be upon you O Aba Abdillah. May the Peace, Mercy and Blessings of God be upon you.” If you say this, you will be recorded as a visitor of his, and his visitation equals the performance of Haj and ‘Umrah.”

^{٢٢} This is the ٩٧th chapter of the Qur’an. (trans.)