

The MESSAGE Magazine

Spreading The Light of Knowledge



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Hajj: The Ultimate Sacrifice

In the name of Allah, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful.

"And proclaim to mankind the Hajj. They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, they will come from every deep and distant (wide) mountain highway (to perform Hajj)." (Qur'an 22:27)

The pilgrimage to the sacred house represents one of the greatest acts of worship in Islam. All of the rituals that we perform in the Hajj have been introduced to us by the family of our noble prophet, the father of all the prophets, Ibraheem (peace be upon him).

As a child whenever I thought of Hajj, and Eid-UI Adha, I always thought of the sacrifice of an animal, which we know is one of the rites of Hajj. As I am older now this has greater meaning to me. Anyone who has performed the Hajj will tell you that it is a wonderful journey of blessings and goodness but also that from day one it is all about sacrifice. First of all we sacrifice some money and time to undertake the journey and throughout the days we deprive ourselves of worldly comfort, sleep, seeing our loved ones and so on. And this is indeed a great lesson as we know from the story of Ibraheem (peace be upon him), who was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice, his one and only son at that time.

"And remember when the Lord of Ibraheem tried him with commands, which he fulfilled. He (Allah) said to him: "Verily I am going to make you an Imam (leader) of mankind." (Qur'an 2:124)

The prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and his companions understood the sacrifice needed to be on the path of Allah. They gave up their tribes, families, wealth, status and comforts of this world so that you and I can call ourselves Muslim.

Whilst the fortunate amongst us have been called to be the guests of Allah, what are we, the non-pilgrims doing? Yes we know that we should fast on the nine days of Hajj especially the ninth which is the day of Arafah in which Allah descends to answer the prayers of the pilgrims. And we've sent the money for our own sacrifice, but have we really thought what these blessed 10 days mean? What sacrifices can we make in our lives for the sake of Allah?

Let's try and bring back the spirit of sacrifice, from giving up our sleep and warm beds to rise and pray the dawn prayer, to spending some of our time in doing a good deed like visiting a family member or helping someone in need, to perhaps giving some money to charity or simply putting the needs of another before ourselves. When we see someone in need, how far are we willing to go and how much are we ready to put ourselves out in order to help?

And in doing such deeds, perhaps, and we can only hope, we may be given some of the blessings of those hajjis as they set off on their great journey.

May Allah accept our prayers our sacrifices and all our good deeds and bless the Muslims this month and throughout the year. May He guide us to the best of Islam, instil in us the ardent desire for the hereafter and give us homes close to Him in Jannah. Ameen

"Say: 'verily my prayers, my sacrifice, my living and my dying are for Allah, The Lord of the Worlds.'" (Qur'an 6:162)

All good that comes from this magazine is from Allah and any mistakes are ours so please forgive us for any shortcomings. - The Message Team.



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The Message

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May Allah reward all of the above. Ameen.

Disbelief

Besides gossiping, backbiting and lying, there are other things the tongue can do to get us into trouble, but the worst thing it can do is utter disbelief. This can be done directly by denying Allah and His Messengers or indirectly by disobeying His commands. There are people who curse Allah and our Deen, and these are disgraceful acts with severe punishments.

Using it to oppress people

Our tongue can also oppress people. Whether we are rulers of mass populations or just the head of a household, many of us may misuse our authority. Anyone who consciously oppresses another, whether it is a husband who oppresses his wife, parents who oppress their children, or an employer who oppresses his employees should all beware because the punishment for the oppressor is severe. The Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, was heard saying, "Allah gives respite to the oppressor, but when He takes him over, He never releases him." Then, he recited the verse from the Qur'an, "(Though a messenger, saying) 'Do not worship except Allah. Indeed, I am to you from Him a warner and a bringer of glad tidings.'" [11:02] (Bukhari).

If we feel that we might be an oppressor then we should immediately repent to Allah, stop what we are doing and then ask the person we have oppressed for forgiveness. Our Prophet, sallallahu alayhe wa sallam, once said, "Beware of the supplication of the oppressed for there is no barrier between him and Allah." (Muslim). Do not forget that we also oppress ourselves when we disobey Allah's commands and lead our destiny towards Hellfire.

Giving false haram or halal judgements

Another thing we may do with our tongue is use it to give our opinion for what is halal and haram. Let us take the on-going zabiha meat debate, for example. Some people insist that the animal must be slaughtered islamically while others argue that the meat available in the market could be considered permissible. If you follow one, you should not say that the other is haram.

Both of these opinions come from respectable schools of thought and we should respect them, while following the better opinion in our view. Sometimes people lie about what is haram or halal just to justify their own actions, such as in the case of smoking. This is very dangerous and undoubtedly haram. The Qur'an states, "And do not say about what your tongues assert of untruth, this is lawful, and this is unlawful; to invent falsehood about Allah. Indeed, those who invent falsehood about Allah will not succeed." [16:116].

Showing Off

Many of us use our tongues to show-off. We boast of the size of our house, the amount in our bank accounts or how wonderful our kids are into almost every conversation. Not mentioning that Allah has blessed us with whatever we have whether we earned it or not. It can make the person you are speaking to feel bad if Allah has not given them all that you are blessed with. Some of us even show-off in our Deen. We brag about how we fast every Monday and Thursday, or that we perform Fajr salah in the masjid every

morning. When we have guests over, we recite a long "to be continued in the next rak'ah" surah, yet when we are alone we recite the shortest surah we know. When we do all this, it is questionable whether we actually do these actions for the sake of Allah or we do them to look good in front of Allah's servants. Of course, only we know and Allah knows even better what is in our hearts and intentions.

Not using it for good

We have mentioned some obvious atrocious deeds that our tongues commit, but a sad offence that is not so apparent is when we fail to use our tongue for good and beneficial means. We should use our tongues to make dawah, especially the sisters who wear hijab and are often approached. We are a walking and talking representation of Islam. Our response is what will either attract them to Islam or repel them from it. There were times when people were admittedly afraid to ask about the hijab from previous experiences with other sisters. The way you deal with people on a daily basis not only reflects your character as a person, but also reflects Islam as a whole. Unfortunately, we cannot deny that people will judge an entire race based on the actions of one person. If you are pleasant, people will see all Muslims as pleasant people. If you are rude and unapproachable, people will think that all Muslims are like that. We should try to incorporate teachings from our Deen in our everyday discussions. If you are complimented for your work, you could reply, "Thank you, Islam teaches that when we do something, we should perfect it." These comments should be subtle and random. It would be overwhelming to those new to Islam, if every time we replied with, "Good morning" then recited a verse from the Qur'an or a hadeeth.

It would be wonderful for us to use our tongues to teach. We can teach a child to say "Alhamdulillah" when he sneezes or we can teach a new Muslim how to perform the salah. When you teach someone to do good you will both reap the reward each time the good deed is performed. We can also teach science, reading, and maths in schools and even as a tutor. The point is to pass on the knowledge that you possess to someone who needs it.

Last but not least, we will benefit from our tongues if we use them for what they were made for: thikr, or the remembrance of Allah. Make it a habit to always remember Allah in everything that you do each day. Declare the Shahadah and praise His Oneness. When we are in admiration of something, we should say, "subhanallah" (Glory to Allah). When we are thankful of something, we should say, "Alhamdulillah" (All praises to Allah). And, when we are remorseful, we should say, "AstaghfarAllah" (O Allah, forgive me). Making Tasbeeh and reciting Qur'an will also earn us good deeds and occupy our tongues from doing things that are harmful to us and to others. We need to learn how to

Control our tongues so that our tongues do not control us. If we clear our minds of all negative thoughts and know that Allah knows what we think and what we do at all times; we would be more mindful of the things we utter. May Allah help us to help ourselves become better Muslims.

By Bushra Zaibak

Article reproduced courtesy of Al-Jumua magazine - Volume 15, Issue 3.

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Dhul-Hijja:

A Month of Blessing

So once again another Ramadhan has passed by and along with it the special blessings of that month. But another great month is almost upon us and that is the month of Dhul-Hijjah - the month during which the Hajj or pilgrimage is performed. Of course for those fortunate enough to be going on Hajj there is a lot of good to be gained for these individuals including having all their sins forgiven on the day of Arafah. But what about those of us left behind and not going on Hajj. Is there any benefit for us in this blessed month? Of course there is.

Just like Ramadhan the month of Dhul-Hijjah is a month of worship, and a month like this brings along blessings, benefits and opportunities to correct one's faith and make up for shortcomings.

The first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah are blessed for both the pilgrims and non-pilgrims. The reward for good deeds carried out during these days are multiplied many times. As the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said:

“No deeds are more virtuous than deeds on these days.”

The companions asked: 'Not even Jihad (fighting in Allah's Cause)? The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) replied:

“Not even Jihad for the sake of Allah, unless a man goes out risking himself and his wealth for the sake of Allah, and does not come back with anything.” [Sahih al-Bukhari]

It goes without saying then we should try to do as many good deeds as possible in these first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah.

It is recommended (in fact it is a Sunnah) for us to fast on the day of Arafah the reward for which is the forgiveness of the sins of the previous year and the following year. Who could turn down such an offer? When the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked about fasting on the day of Arafah, he replied: “It expiates the sins of the previous year and that of the following year.” [Sahih Muslim]

It is also recommended to increase in making more Takbir (Allâhu Akbar), Tahlil (La ilaha illa Allâh) and Tamhid (al-Hamdu lillah) during these days. In addition we should try to make Takbir after every obligatory prayer starting on the day of Arafat (after the Fajr prayer) until the Asr prayer of the 13th day of Dhul-Hijjah. The recommended form of this Takbir is, “ Allâhu Akbar, Allâhu Akbar, La ilaha illa Allâh, Allâhu Akbar, Allâhu Akbar wa lillahil-Hamd” This is also the one which most of us will be most familiar with.

Some of us may not have made the best of Ramadhan but let us not waste the benefits of the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah. Considering you can get lots of reward for all good deeds done during these ten days and have last years and next years sins forgiven for fasting on the day of Arafah, it really is a big loss for an individual to not try and do these good deeds.

Virtues of various Ayahs of the Qur'an

Abu Umaamah (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever recites Aayatul Kursi (Surah 2, Verse 255) following every obligatory prayer, nothing prevents him from entering Paradise except dying.”

Ibn Mas'ood (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever recites the last two verses of Surah Baqarah (Surah 2, Verses 285 & 286) in a night, they will suffice him.”

Anas (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever recited: (Qul Yaa ayyuhal-Kaaafiroon -[Surah 109]) it will be equal to a quarter of the Qur'an for him, and whoever recites (Qul huwallaahu Ahad [Surah 112]) it will be equal to a third of the Qur'an for him.”

Ibn Imraan (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever recites the Qur'an then let him ask from Allah by it, for there will come a people who recite the Qur'an and will the ask from people by it.”

Tameem ad-Daaree (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever recites (in prayer) with a hundred verses in a night, it will be written for him as devout obedience to Allah for the night.”

Abdullaah bin Mas'ood (ra) reported that the Messenger (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever recites one letter from the Book of Allah then he will receive a good reward, and every good deed is rewarded with ten times its like. I do not say that Alif Laam Meem is one word but Alif is one word, Laam is one word and Meem is one word.”

Abu Sa'eed (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever recites Sooratul-Kahf (Surah 18) on the Day of Jumu'ah, light will be made to shine for him between the two Jumu'ahs (that Jumu'ah and the one following it).”

Mu'aadh bin Anas (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever recites (Qul huwallaahu Ahad [Surah 112]) ten times, Allah will build for him a house in Paradise.”

Ubayy (ra) reported that the Messenger of Allah (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever recites (Qul huwallaahu Ahad [Surah 112]), it is as if he has recited one third of the Qur'an.”

From islaam.com

Editors Note: One fact not mentioned in the above article that is also worth mentioning is the reward for reciting Surah Mulk (Surah 67) every night as illustrated in the following ahadith.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “A surah from the Qur'aan containing thirty verses will intercede for a man so that he will be forgiven. It is the soorah Tabaarak allaadhi bi yadihi'l-mulk [i.e., Soorat al-Mulk].”

It was narrated that 'Abd-Allaah ibn Mas'ood said: Whoever reads Tabaarak allaahi bi yadihi'l-mulk [i.e., Soorat al-Mulk] every night, Allah will protect him from the torment of the grave. At the time of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) we used to call it al-maani'ah (that which protects). In the Book of Allah it is a surah which, whoever recites it every night has done very well.

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Why I Chose Islam

Brother Michael Yip

“ I have been told that many people who revert to Islam find they fit right in with the religion. Indeed this was the case with me.”

June 23, 1996 I was introduced to Islam in 1995 by an Egyptian classmate who arrived in New Zealand the previous year, and who was placed into my Chemistry class. I had no religion before this, though I guess I was a non practicing Christian, since I attended Sunday school when I was young, (but mainly to learn Chinese, my native tongue, rather than religion). In fact I was uninterested in much that was taught to me, however I never at any stage discounted the notion of a higher being (ie. Allah, or God).

Because of my background in religion, I did not know much about religions other than Christianity and Buddhism. My parents are Buddhists, but my knowledge of it was so weak that I did not even know the proper name for their religion until a few years ago. So I was naive when I met my classmate, Muhammed.

During the first few weeks, another classmate of mine kept teasing Muhammed about his religion, asking leading questions and the like. I thus became interested in some of the things that this other classmate, James, was suggesting. So I got talking with Muhammed about this religion called Islam, and we became acquainted quickly.

I requested to see a Quran but did not find the time to read it, during a busy school year. So when the workload became a bit lighter, I went to see my friend's father, who is our local imam. He spoke to me at length about Islam, and planted a seed which in a few months time, with the blessing of Allah, blossomed into strong muslim, alhumdulillah. I took shahada in November 1995.

I am often asked why I came to Islam. The question seems logical, and simple, but in fact, I still find it the most difficult question to answer, even though I have been asked it so many times. You see, I saw many things in

Islam that I liked. Included in this were the strong brotherhood and sisterhood in Islam, the way fellow muslims looked after each other, and the logic in Islam. The logic in women wearing hijab to deter from that which is haram, the logic in the forbidding of alcohol, which harms more than it ever will heal, and the logic in many other areas of our lives. I have been told that many people who revert to Islam find they fit right in with the religion. Indeed this was the case with me. Coming from a kafir country such as New Zealand (I have lived here most of my life), it is rare for a person to be good religiously like myself, alhumdulillah, masha Allah. You see, alhumdulillah, I made intentions in my heart never to drink in my life, and never have; I made intentions not to fornicate, even though everyone around me in school was either fornicating or planning to. So you see, alhumdulillah, Allah blessed me from the beginning, and I felt Islam was the next obvious step for me to take in my life.

I decided in November of 1995, with the encouragement with some brothers and sisters on the Internet, to take shahada as a first step in Islam, and then take further steps to learn more about Islam, after all we are all in a constant state of learning about Islam. Alhumdulillah since then I have progressed slowly but surely, learning some surats from Quran during a very busy school year. Allah blessed me with some amazing results last year, alhumdulillah, and now I want to thank my Allah by increasing the time I spend learning Quran and about Islam this year, insha Allah, while I pursue entry into a Medical degree. May Allah give me the strength insha Allah to enter Medical school next year. May Allah help us all to learn more about Islam, and let us all undertake to live our lives in the correct way, and follow the one true and surely straight path, that of Islam. Ameen.

END



Does

Hajj

Atone For All

Sins?



The Hajj is the journey of a lifetime for any Muslim. Before going on Hajj most Muslims will have the intention of coming back from the Hajj purified of all their sins and will think about repenting for a lot of past sins during their Hajj. But is this enough or do we need to repent for some sins before we embark on Hajj? The article below explains why we need to seek forgiveness from Allah and others even before embarking on Hajj.

Someone raised this question to me after a Friday salah (prayer), he said that during the performance of his Hajj that year, after the first stage of going out of ritual consecration, having already cast the stones at the Aqaba stoning pillar he went into a store to buy something. However, he did not intend to pay the storekeeper for it, and he left without paying.

Later, he regretted what he had done, because he heard a person quoting the hadeeth of Allah's Messenger (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him), in which he said, "A person who performs Hajj and neither acts immorally nor commits any obscenity will be restored to the same condition as when his mother gave birth to him." He felt guilty and was afraid to lose the reward for his Hajj, so he went back to pay the storekeeper, but he could not find the store he had stolen the item from. The man asked me, "What am I to do now?"

The question was saddening and painful to me. I realized that there are four major issues of which many Muslims seem to be unaware, and I decided to write this essay to point them out.

In general, these issues are that a Hajj does not atone for sins of which the sinner has not repented, that committing an offense while performing an act of piety cancels the credit for that act, that sins motivated by mean-spiritedness are among the worst cardinal sins, and that punishment for an offense committed in the Sacred House is multiplied in the same way that the reward of a good deed is multiplied many times.

Sins of Which the Sinner Has Not Repented:

It should be realised that pilgrimage does not atone for sins of which the sinner has not repented. A person who persists in committing a frequent sin and fails to repent will not have that sin atoned through the performance of a Hajj. The Hajj results in atonement and reward only for a person who repents to Allah, turns to Him, and hopes for His mercy and forgiveness, having ceased, once and for all, to commit any cardinal sins he habitually used to commit.

The evidence for this is a hadeeth cited by Muslim quoting Abdullah Ibn Masoud who says: Some people addressed Allah's Messenger (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) saying, "O Messenger of Allah, are we going to be blamed for what we have done before Islam?" He (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Anyone of you who does well in Islam will not be blamed for it, and anyone who does wrong will be blamed for his deeds before Islam and after it."

It should be pointed out here that the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) states clearly that embracing Islam cancels what happened before it.



Although Islam cancels what has gone before it, a person who does wrong in Islam will be punished for his wrongdoing both in Islam and before it. A person, being a non-Muslim, who drinks alcoholic beverages and commits adultery before he embraces Islam, will have his earlier sins erased and pardoned by Allah when he becomes a Muslim. If, however, he goes back to his habit of committing adultery and drinking, he will be punished for both his early and his late actions.

Sins, moreover, are divided into cardinal and minor. We are told that minor sins are forgiven by Allah as long as cardinal ones are avoided; this is because Allah says, "If you avoid the cardinal things forbidden to you, We will forgive your sins and allow you a noble entrance" (Qur'an 3:31).

Atonement for minor sins can be had by merely avoiding cardinal sins out of fear of, and obedience to Allah. Allah also forgives offenses and minor sins when a Muslim is constant in his compliance and obedience, as evidenced by a verified hadeeth which says, "The five prayers, two consecutive Fridays (jumuah prayers), and two consecutive Ramadhans - all atone for what takes place between them, as long as cardinal sins are avoided." (Muslim).

This is proof that Allah pardons all minor sins that are committed in the interval between two acts of piety, as long as the person concerned stays away from cardinal sins.

Undoubtedly, on the surface, the hadeeth which says that "a blessed Hajj has no reward other than Paradise," and the one in which the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) said "a person who performs a Hajj and neither acts immorally nor commits any obscenity will be restored to the same condition as when his mother gave birth to him," indicate that a Hajj atones for all sins, cardinal and minor. But other verses and ahadeeth show that that is case only when a pilgrim repents and quits all cardinal sins, determined not to commit them again.

A person who believes that Hajj atones for cardinal sins, which the sinner persists in committing, makes a very grave mistake and he misunderstands the meaning of the above quoted hadeeth.

An evidence for that is in words of Allah at the conclusion of the Hajj verses in the surah of Al-Baqarah, where He says, "Invoke Allah's name on numbered, appointed days. A person who hastens and finishes in two days incurs no sins, and a person who delays incurs no sin. That is for a person who fears Allah. Fear Allah and knows that you will be gathered unto Him,"

In sayings "for a person who fears Allah," Allah indicates that a person who is pious and fear Allah that will have his

sins forgiven once a Hajj is completed, whether he hastens to depart within two days or delays till the third. The words "for a person who fears Allah" apply to both cases. It is clear, on the other hand, that a person who persists in sinning is not one who fears Allah.

As to whether a Hajj cancels unrepeated sins, even if the sinner has not stopped committing them, the correct answer is, hopefully, that if this is a case that involves the right of other people, they will not be forgiven, as suggested by the hadeeth which says, "Martyrdom for Allah's cause atones for all sins other than debt. This is because a debt involves the rights of others. The same rule applies here; Hajj does not atone for what is due to other people.

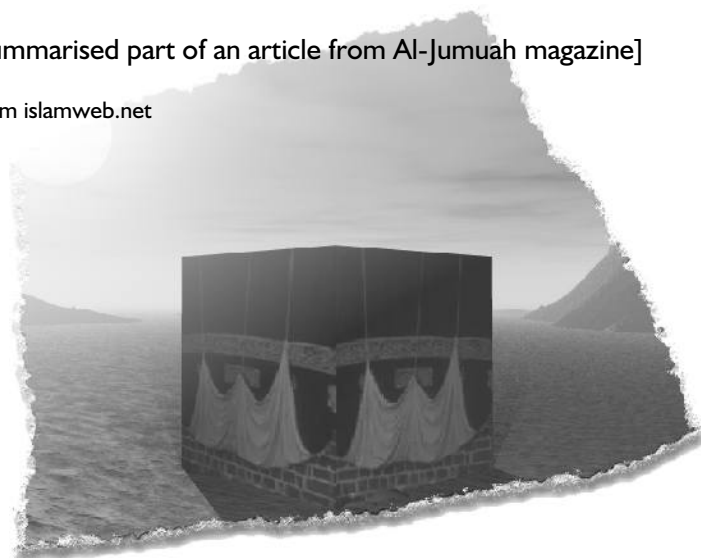
A person who has an unpaid debt, or is entrusted with something or some money to keep for someone else, should know that a Hajj, like all other acts of compliance and good deeds which atone for misdeeds, does not atone for any wrongdoing involving the rights of someone else. Unless the rights of human beings are restored, these rights relinquish them either in this life on earth or in the hereafter, or the owners of these rights will have to be arbitrated on the Day of Resurrection.

The Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) says: O people, any person who has a complaint against him by a brother of his, whether a matter of honor or money, let him relieve himself of it now, before the time when there is no cash or currency. It is a matter of good points and bad points.

When a person has enough good points, an amount of them will be deducted that equals the grievance against him. Otherwise, some of the bad points of the aggrieved party will be removed and added to the wrongdoer's account. Then he will be cast in Hellfire." It is wrong, therefore, to believe that a Hajj cancels the right of other people.

[Summarised part of an article from Al-Jumuah magazine]

From islamweb.net



Easy Good Deeds

Abdullah bin Amr, (may Allah be pleased with him), related of the Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) that he said:

"Two qualities or characteristics that whosoever maintains them as a believing Muslim slave servant of Allah, the Almighty will definitely enter Jannah. They are very simple and easy to maintain. Yet, only few are those who abide and fulfill (these two supplications).

First: one should say after every obligatory prayer: "Subhan- Allah," ten times, "Alhamdu-lil-lah," ten times and "Allah-u-Akbar," ten times. This will make 150 phrases to be uttered, however on the scale of Allah, the Almighty, they are equivalent to 1500 times. Second: Say , when going to sleep for the night: "Allah-u-Akbar," 34 times, "Alhamdu-lil-lah," 33 times and "Subhan-Allah," 33 times. This will make 100 phrases to be uttered, but will be considered 1000 times on the scale of Allah, the Almighty."

The Prophet (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) counted these supplications on the knuckles of his fingers. When he was asked: "O Prophet of Allah! You say that these items are simple to do, but only few people who maintain them how could that be?" He, (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him) replied: "Satan comes to a person before he sleeps and makes him so drowsy that he cannot say these few words of supplication. Moreover, Satan comes to man, while still in prayers and reminds him of other things that he must do after prayer, not allowing him to maintain these words of supplication right after one finishes his prayer."

(This Hadith is reported by Abu Dawoud, Tirmidhi, Nasaiee and Ibu Hibhan in the book entitled "Sahih-ul-Fargheeb," #603.

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