

Daily Routine of the Holy Prophet (SAW)

Syed Abdul Ghaffar Bukhari*

Abida Iqbal**

Introduction:

The life of Holy Prophet (SAW) is full of virtuous deeds. If any Muslim contemplates, he would find guidance in every aspect of Holy Prophet's (SAW) life and this is the reason that starting from Hazrat Adam (A.S.) till date, no one's life has been penned down like that of Holy Prophet (SAW). Therefore, we can say that his pious life acts as a best guide from every aspect for humanity e.g. as a great worshipper, a leader and an honest businessman. In addition to this, there are numerous aspects of the holy Prophet's (SAW) life which can be adopted and practiced. But this is possible only when we thoroughly study His life.

As a human being, the holy Prophet (SAW) accomplished various tasks and demonstrated the complete code of life with such a perfection which is not possible by any other person. The immaculate completion of the divine mission by him within limited time period is not less than a miracle, whose precedent does not exist in this world. All this became possible because the holy Prophet (SAW) led the affairs of his life based on discipline, sound planning and adoption of a balanced approach.

In the Holy Quran, Muslims are urged to adopt two types of role models in his life. First one is the life of father of the messengers, Hazrat Ibrahim (A.S.) The Quran states it as follows:

(قَدْ كَانَتْ لَكُمْ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ) (1)

Second is the pure life of Holy prophet (P.B.U.H.), which the Quran has explained with special emphasis as:

(قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ) (2)

Undoubtedly, Holy Prophet (SAW) is a source of blessings. His pure and pious life provides us complete guidance in every aspect of life e.g. ethics and moral values:

(وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ) (3)

The Holy Prophet (SAW) Himself demonstrated the Commands of the Holy Quran by His actions. Allah Almighty said:

(وَأَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الذِّكْرَ لِتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ) (4)

*Head department of Islamic Studies, NUML, Islamabad, Pakistan.

**Research scholar, department of Islamic Studies, NUML, Islamabad, Pakistan.

Likewise, life of Holy Prophet (SAW) is a guidance also in a respect that His conduct and behavior with believers was very sympathetic and generous. Beside this, He had deep affection and sensible approach towards Ummah. Allah Almighty said:

(فِيمَا رَحْمَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ لَئِن لَّيْتَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ)⁽⁵⁾

However, it merits attention that as a human being how Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) managed His time and our discussion would revolve around following aspects:

- How Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to manage his daytime?
- What were the rules & regulations, Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) applied to manage time?
- What were the practices of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) during day / night?

Principles adapted from Sunnah (regarding Practices):

The Life of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was based on divine laws and principles, which serves as a beacon of light not only for a Muslim but also for whole man-kind. His practices guide us how to arrange our daily practices for having an effective and balanced life. Following practices are mentioned from the life of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.):

- **Day Practices:**

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) performed various practices at different timings in a day. The philosophy behind this was firstly to execute the practices at correct timings and in a righteous manner. Secondly, if all practices were performed in a single spell, this would have set a difficult example for believers to follow. This also could result in monotonous feeling and poor performance. This is why Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had distributed His routine practices at different timings. Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) told Hanzalah:

(يَا حَنْظَلَةَ سَاعَةٌ سَاعَةٌ)⁽⁶⁾

At another place, one of His companion narrated

(إِنَّ لِيْلِكَ وَنَهَارَكَ لَا يَسْتَوْعَبَانِ بِجَمِيعِ حَاجَتِكَ فَاقْسِمَهَا بَيْنَ عَمَلِكَ وَرَاحَتِكَ)⁽⁷⁾

To adopt eternity in practices:

Imam Tahawi (R.A.) has collected a Hadith

(لكل عمل شرة) (8)

One of the Hadith quoted by Hadhrat Abdullah bin Umar (R.A.) that Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said:

"إن لكل عمل شرة ، ولكل شرة فترة ، فمن كانت فترته إلى سنتي فقد اهتدى ، ومن كانت إلى غير ذلك فقد هلك."⁽⁹⁾

Imam Mawardi (R.A.) describes the meanings of “Sharrah” as fast and dynamic; to perform any work or task with large quantity whereas “Fatrah” means laziness after hard work (10). On the other hand Khadmi has explained the word “Sharrah” as inclination and joy, which means to execute any work with devotion and continuity without any gap. Then he describes the meaning of “Fatrah” as performing any work with optimal pace and followed by discontinuity (11)

We can infer from stated Hadith that the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) has forbidden the excessiveness which may cause discontinuation or laziness in practices. Therefore we must observe principle of perpetual in our daily practices.

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was asked “which act is dearest to Allah”? Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said:

(أَحَبَّ الْعَمَلِ إِلَى اللَّهِ أَدْوَمُهُ وَإِنْ قَلَّ)⁽¹²⁾

Alqa asked Harzrat Aisha (R.A.):

“Did Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) dedicate days for special practices”?

Hadhrat Aysha replied:

(كَانَ كُلُّ عَمَلِهِ دِيمَةً وَأَيُّكُمْ يَسْتَطِيعُ مَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ -صلى الله عليه وسلم- يَسْتَطِيعُ)⁽¹³⁾

Wisdom prevails in eternity:

A practice which entails eternity possesses inherent advantage that it always nourishes faith which never diminishes. Such faith continues to rise towards perfection. On the contrary, practices which are performed with zeal and zest but not consistent are devoid of wisdom. It is because that the soul becomes weaker and weaker after sheer hard work which ceases the growth of faith and finally results in discontinuation of the practice.

Theologians have deduced rule of uluyaat from eternity which says that regular practice is more profitable than random practice (14). It is so because lesser but regular practice has far more benefits.

In this regard, Imam Ghazali (R.T) has presented a very beautiful example. He says: A short practice is just like water drops which continuously fall on the ground and create a hole in it. Whereas, a big but inconsistent practice is like water which falls on the ground in single spell or with gapes and does not create any effect on it (15).

It can be easily observed from Holy Prophet’s daily practices that how much the element of steadfastness is found in his life. Same code must be implemented while undertaking both short and long term practices.

Management / Planning:

Many Ahadith are narrated in regard to management and planning (Tasdeed and Muqarbat) of routine practices. “Tasdeed” means to do

something in a righteous & skillful manner but neither lesser nor excessive. “Muqarbat” means to get closer to God. Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said:

"سَدُّدُوا وَقَارِبُوا ، وَاعْدُوا وَرُوحُوا ، وَشَيْءٌ مِنَ الدُّلْجَةِ" (16)

Imam Sanai states the meaning of word “Qarbu” is that do not attempt to achieve the peak of practices at once rather get it slowly, in case there is some interruption, it may not cause boarsome.(17)

Western philosophers also believe and follow the above stated principle and due to this they have progressed a lot in many fields. On the other hand, Muslims have ignored this golden principle in their daily life.

Utilization of free time:

Allah ordered Prophet:

(فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ) (18)

Mufasareen has deduced following four points from above verse.

- 1: Once you are free from your duties, involve yourself in practices which Allah has ordered.
- 2: Once you are free from Jihad, worship Allah Almighty.
- 3: when you are free from prayer, get yourself busy in dua.
- 4: when you are free from worldly affairs then worship almighty Allah.

Imam Jassas states that all above stated explanations can be inferred from the given holy verse. Although Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) has been addressed in this verse but it is meant for all believers (19).

The verse clearly explains the importance of time management and planning. As followers of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.), the various practices must be changed at regular intervals to avoid any stress and monotonous.

Maintaining Balance approach between rights:

It can be easily concluded from the life of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) that He used to pay off rights to deservers. His holy life was balanced and without any discrepancy. This is why balanced approach towards human rights was at the top of the agenda of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.).

The hadith quoted by Hadhrat Salman Farsi (R.A.) truly speaks of daily routines through renowned companion Hadhrat Dardaa (R.A.). At the end of this narration:

"إِنَّ لِرَبِّكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا ، وَإِنَّ لِنَفْسِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا ، وَلِأَهْلِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا ، فَأَعْطِ كُلَّ ذِي حَقٍّ حَقَّهُ" (20)

This hadith is applicable equally to both men and women to balance out rights between Allah and human beings.

Hadhrat Hussain (R.A.) stated: I inquired from my father regarding Holy Prophet’s (P.B.U.H.) activities at home. He replied: whenever Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) stayed at any place, He divided His timings into three parts: first one for Allah, second for His family and third for Himself.

Furthermore, He divided His personal time between Himself and common masses. He used to allocate time to various people according to their religious status (21).

Timely execution of practices:

Hadhrat Abdullah bin Masood (R.A.) asked from the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) that which act is dearest to Allah. Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) replied:

(22) (الصَّلَاةُ عَلَى وَفُيْهَا)

Hence offering prayer late or early than prescribed timings will lose its importance, rather it may not be accepted by Allah. This punctuality does not hold good only for offering prayer but is valid for other social activities as well. Hadhrat Abu Bakar (R.A.) stated:

" أن الله حقا في الليل لا يقبله بالنهار وحقا بالنهار لا يقبله بالليل " (23)

Allah has ordered many duties / practices at defined and fixed timings. It is not appropriate to perform these duties at any other time. The best example of this is offering prayers at respective defined timings.

Alternate practices:

Almighty Allah says:

(24) (وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ خِلْفَةً)

This verse has been derived from the Holy Quran. Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) has explained the meaning of stated verse by referring this example: A person who always offers prayer (tahajud), but on some occasion he could not offer the prayer due to deep sleep, illness or any other reason: must offer 12 rakaat during day time.

A person came to Hadhrat Umar (R.A.) and questioned: O caliph, I missed to offer prayer. He (R.A.) replied: the prayer you missed at night is to be offered at day time. No doubt, Almighty Allah has authorized both day and night alternate to each other (25).

Imam Bukhari (R.A.) has quoted an explanation given by Hadhrat Ibn e Abbas regarding above stated holy verse as: any person who missed any act at night may perform it during day and vice versa (26).

This concession is granted by Allah in special circumstances only to afford a Muslim with a chance to complete his missed out practices. However, it may not be carried out as a regular practice because it is only a special waiver from Allah and best practice is one which is done at its right time.

Defining objectives:

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) always performed tasks with clear and defined objectives. He never under took a task without perceived objectives.

That is why He (P.B.U.H.) accomplished his mission in a very limited time period.

After discussing various principles related to practices performed by the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.), now it is easier to cover His daily routines. In this regard, we will divide our discussion in three parts:

PHASE ONE (Fajar to Zohar):

All religions of the world agree that a day time starts from Fajar (dawn). During this time, the Quran orders to spread out at the earth of Allah and explore the means of earning. The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) stated:

(اللَّهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَأُمَّتِي فِي بُكُورِهَا) (27)

This Hadith holds a central theme in regard to start of any practice which may be related to leadership, Jihaad, intellectual and other aspects of life.

Hadhrat Abu Zar (R.A.) explains the importance of day with a good example that:

(يومك جملك إذا أخذت برأسه أتاك ذنبه) (28)

In this regard, early going to bed would facilitate to get up early in the morning. As night sleep makes body more relaxed, hence more energy is available for day activities. Following practices are proved from the life of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.):

Offering sunnah of Fajar prayer at home:

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) always offered sunnah of Fajar prayer at home. Hadhrat Hafsa (R.A.) stated:

كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يصلي ركعتي الفجر قبل الصبح في بيتي يخففهما جدا. (29)

after call of prayer, He (P.B.U.H.) used to offer two rakaat at home.

This time was purely dedicated for Allah and no one was allowed to pay any visit to Holy prophet (P.B.U.H.) during this time.

Offering prayer at mosque:

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) always offered prayer (Farz) at mosque. At Fajar prayer, apostles (angles) of both day and night are gathered (30). Due to this reason, ladies also used to offer Fajar prayer at mosque.

Hadhrat Ayesha (R.A.) stated that Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to conduct the Fajar prayer and ladies covered with sheets also came to mosque for prayer and returned to their homes in the same manner so that no one could recognize them (31).

Zikar and chasht prayer:

Allah's Zikar can be carried out during whole day however few Azkaar were performed at specified times by Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.). He (P.B.U.H.) stated:

"مَنْ صَلَّى الْعِدَاةَ فِي جَمَاعَةٍ ثُمَّ قَعَدَ يَذْكُرُ اللَّهَ حَتَّى تَطْلُعَ الشَّمْسُ ، ثُمَّ صَلَّى رُكْعَتَيْنِ ، كَانَتْ لَهُ كَأَجْرِ حَبَّةٍ ، وَعُمْرَةٍ ، تَامَّةٍ ، تَامَّةٍ ، تَامَّةٍ" (32)

Often, Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) offered Chasht prayer but never permanently (33).

Mostly, Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) offered four rakaat for Chasht prayer but at times more than four as well (34).

Breakfast:

It is learned from Hadith that there was any neither fixed time for breakfast nor always used to take it. Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to eat dates in the morning. He (P.B.U.H.) stated: he who takes seven Ajwa dates in the morning, then both poison and Black magic (Seher) would not hurt him on that day (35).

Educational conferences:

Morning time is considered best for practices that is why Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) educated and groomed His (P.B.U.H.) companions at morning hours.

Welfare activities:

Imam Ghazali has counted various activities of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) such as: paying visits to patients, attending funeral prayer, organizing educational seminars and other welfare activities (36).

Jihad planning:

During life in Makkah, Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) made plans for migration at morning time and waited for permission by Allah. Hadhrat Abu Bakar's (R.A.) house was most suitable for such type of planning and decisions. In Madinah, He (P.B.U.H.) used to dispatch military troops in first part of the day.

Imam Ibn e Hajar Asqalani states: At war front, Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to postpone the fight till mid day (zawal) if not already started at the initial part of the day. After the zawal, He used to start the execution and ceased the fight at Asr prayer. After offering prayer, restarted the fight (37).

Lunch:

Holy prophet (PBU) stated to Abu Umayya:

((انْتَظِرِ الْعِدَاءَ يَا أَبَا أُمَيَّةَ)) (38)

This indicates that Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to have lunch before mid day.

Phase two: (from Zohar to Asr):

Call for Zohar prayer signifies that morning practices are ceased and time of afternoon practices has commenced. The Holy Quran says:

(فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ) (39)

Offering of Zohar prayer:

Hadhrat Ayesha (A.R) narrates:

(كَانَ النَّبِيُّ - صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ - يُصَلِّي فِي بَيْتِي قَبْلَ الظُّهْرِ أَرْبَعًا ، ثُمَّ يَخْرُجُ ، فَيُصَلِّي بِالنَّاسِ ،) (40)

This phase starts from a prayer and also ends at prayer, which means that most of Holy Prophet's (P.B.U.H.) practices were close to prayers timings.

Nawafil after Zohar:

Hadhrat Ibn e Umar (R.A.) quotes:

(حَفِظْتُ عَنْ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَشْرَ رَكَعَاتٍ رَكَعَتَيْنِ قَبْلَ الظُّهْرِ وَرَكَعَتَيْنِ بَعْدَهَا) (41)

Sleep after lunch:

It was habit of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) that He (P.B.U.H.) regularly used to take sleep after lunch. During this time, He never went out from home. The Holy Quran has included afternoon in three prohibited timings in which entrance in room without permission is prohibited. Allah says:

(وَحِينَ تَضَعُونَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِنَ الظَّهِيرَةِ) (42)

Importance of mid day sleep is also proved from the fact that Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) never missed it even during war .

Phase three: Asr to Maghrib:

The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) never offered Nawafil after Asr prayer. He further stated:

(وَلَا صَلَاةَ بَعْدَ العَصْرِ حَتَّى تَغِيبَ الشَّمْسُ) (43)

- 1: Meetings with people to solve their problems.
- 2: Conduct of educational seminars.
- 3: Preaching, advising on various issues and fatawa.
- 4: Solving disputes among Muslims.
- 5: Resumption of fighting during war.
- 6: Dinner at night.

Practices of Asr timings are similar to that of previous phases of the day. However, as per Allah's instructions that practices must be changed one after the other. At the end of this phase, day time ends and new period commences with Maghrib.

Phase four: Maghrib to Esha prayer:

- 1: Offering of Nawafil after Maghrib prayer.
- 2: After offering Maghrib prayer staying at mosque till Esha.
- 3: Offering of Azkaar.
- 4: Preaching to gatherings.
- 5: Arranging food for people and discussing affairs of Ummah.
- 6: Dinner.

Imam shatbi (R.A.) has explained the meaning of Ibadat concisely and in an effective manner. He stated: "every act which is performed to worship Allah and brings a believer closer to Allah is included in Ibadat. Besides pillars of Islam (prayer, fasting, pilgrimage of Haj and zakat), other social activities which are performed to please Allah are also included in Ibadat" (44).

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) has expressed his annoyance over sleep between Maghrib and Esha

(وكان يكره النوم قبلها والحديث بعدها) (45)

Phase five: Esha to Fajar:

This is the longest period at night. Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) has divided this time into three parts: one each for Allah, family and other activities. Salient practices are as follow:

- 1: Offering of Esha prayer.
- 2: Offering Nawafil at night.

Allah stated in Surah Muzammil while authorizing Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.):

(فَمِ اللَّيْلِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا نِصْفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا) (46) .

Hadhrat Ayesha (R.A.) said: the prayer Tahajjud was very dear to Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.)

(كَانَ إِذَا غَلَبَهُ نَوْمٌ أَوْ وَجِعٌ عَنِ قِيَامِ اللَّيْلِ، صَلَّى مِنَ النَّهَارِ ثِنْتَيْ عَشْرَةَ رَكْعَةً). (47)

whenever He could not offer due to illness or sleep; then He offered 12 rakaat during the day.

3: Interaction with family members:

Conversation after Esha is undesirable however family members are exempted from this restriction because it entails their basic rights. Hadhrat Ibn e Abbas narrates: once I stayed a night at residence of my aunt Hadhrat Maimoona (R.A.) I witnessed that Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) talked to their family members and then slept. He again woke up after two by third part of night passed and recited the verse of the Quran:

(إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ) (48)

Educational gatherings:

Imam Bukhari quotes a narration given by Hadhrat Ans (R.A.) said:

"انْتَظَرْنَا النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَاتَ لَيْلَةٍ حَتَّى كَانَ شَطْرُ اللَّيْلِ يَبْلُغُهُ فَجَاءَ فَصَلَّى لَنَا ثُمَّ خَطَبَنَا". (49)

one night we were waiting for Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.), after half night passed He (SAW) came and delivered a speech after offering prayer.

Prohibition to visit after Esha:

If Almighty Allah would not have imposed this restriction, the continuous flow of visitors may have caused severe disturbance to Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.). Though Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) himself have not forbidden the visitors but Allah orders:

(إِنَّ ذَلِكُمْ كَانَ يُؤْذِي النَّبِيَّ فَيَسْتَحْيِي مِنْكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَسْتَحْيِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ) (50)

This Verse was revealed in favour of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and His family members which testify that time based activities are not disturbed and may not cause misbalance in His routines.

Forbidden activities at night:

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) has ordered and also forbade many activities at night. Both these activities must be a compulsory part of a Muslim's daily life. Imam Muslim quotes a Hadith:

"إِذَا كَانَ جُنْحُ اللَّيْلِ أَوْ أَمْسَيْتُمْ فَكُفُّوا صِيَّانَكُمْ ، فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ يَنْتَشِرُ حِينَئِذٍ ، فَإِذَا ذَهَبَ سَاعَةٌ مِنْ اللَّيْلِ فَخَلُّوهُمْ ، وَأَغْلِقُوا الْأَبْوَابَ وَادْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَا يَفْتَحُ بَابًا مُغْلَقًا ، وَأَوْكُوا قَرَبَكُمْ وَادْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ ، وَخَمَرُوا آيَاتِكُمْ وَادْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ وَلَوْ أَنْ تَعْرُضُوا عَلَيْهَا شَيْئًا ، وَأَطْفِنُوا مَصَابِيحَكُمْ" (51)

The life of Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) is a source of divine guidance for every Muslim. It is a best thing that every Muslim organizes his life and activities according to Sunnah.

References

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2. Surah al Ahzab 33:21.
3. Surah al Qalam 68:4.
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