

The Psychological Sanctuary: Exploring the Prophet's Sleep Habits in Seerat-e-Nabwi

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Abstract

Seerat-e-Nabwi, the biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), is not just a history reading; it shows the way people should behave, their spirituality, and the state of their minds. The prophet's sleep habits - *Qailulah* (midday nap), *Tahajjud* (night prayer), and right-side sleeping - were the main events of his biography, which also had a tremendous psychological impact. These habits, based on faith, discipline, and simplicity, also reflected a lifestyle that was both physically and spiritually balanced. As a result, they provided the world with a new perspective on mental health that is easily relatable to both Islamic tradition and modern science. This paper examines the information on the sleep habits of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as mentioned in Seerat-e-Nabwi and Hadith literature, presenting it as a holistic framework for psychological well-being from an Islamic perspective. The paper merges Quranic verses, Prophetic Traditions, and empirical data by employing a hermeneutical method from *uṣūl al-tafsīr* and *ḥadīth* criticism. The criteria for selecting religious reports was strictly limited to authenticated narrations found in the *Sahihayn* (Bukhari and Muslim), while modern psychological studies were selected from peer-reviewed meta-analyses to provide the highest level of empirical evidence. This research work highlights several points where the Model of the Prophet as an anticipator of Modern Sleep Science Principles is close to being true, and, at the same time, it does not rule out that the Model is endowed with further metaphysical and moral dimensions beyond those already known. Besides that, the research also attributes the influence of Sufi scholars from South Asia whose Seerat compositions not only illuminated the observance of the Prophet but also presented them as the source of the ideal balance of the human psyche and spiritual side. The model of the study that releases science principles of modern sleep in the prophetic heritage tradition not only brings together, through the acknowledgment of sleep as worship, spiritual practice, and contemporary health discourse, but also extends further

horizons of spirituality in the Muslim context, therefore, opening a new area of the psychological domain that is culturally rooted.

Keywords: Prophetic sleep habits, Islamic psychology, Mental health and well-being, *Qailulah* (Midday napping), Sleep hygiene, *Tahajjud* (Night prayer), Sufi Seerat writing

Introduction

Sleep is the foundation of everything healthful in a human being, affecting not only the body but also the brain, intangibles, and resilience. Research in the field of brain science today shows that sleeplessness, whether broken or short, disrupts the regulation of the prefrontal cortex, leading to increased cortisol levels and making it challenging to consolidate one's memory. Furthermore, it was essentially religion that was considered science for a long time, if we were to consider science from the point of view of Islam, as seen in the life of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ (Seerat-e-Nabwi), which is so cryptic and prophetic regarding sleep. It took modern science so long to catch up and understand all the mechanisms of sleep in the end. The Qur'ān does not confine sleep to a restorative biological state. It presents sleep as one of the signs of God's infinite wisdom and might: "And of His signs is your sleep by night and day ... Verily in that are signs for people who listen".¹ Similarly, the practices of the Prophet, for instance, sleeping on the right side after ablution and following a short dhikr, are the result of a conscious blending of spiritual and physical satisfaction.² It is worth pointing out that one of the leading classical and traditional scholars of the Islamic world, Ibn al-Jawzī, describes that this position is the one which makes the heart and lungs the most balanced and the brain the most alert, thus tying in with getting up for the Fajr (midnight mass) prayers.³ Also, today, science is giving the same kind of argument with the help of research, a person lying in a right-lateral position gets the most of the vagal nerve stimulation, and his cardiac arrhythmia risk is minimal, his melatonin production is high, and he

¹ Qur'ān 30:23

² Abū 'Īsā al-Tirmidhī, *Jami' at-Tirmidhi*, Hadith 2768, Book 43, Hadith 38, accessed August 21, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/tirmidhi:2768>.

³ Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Zād al-Ma'ād fi Hady Khayr al-'Ibād*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1994), 311–312.

is easily falling asleep when the sleep time comes if he has done a ritualized bedtime like a quiet room, lights out and a recital right before sleeping.⁴ The polarity of the different views will encounter is that some present entirely different opinions.

In the frame of reference of Seerat studies, the heritage of Sufi scholars in the Indian Subcontinent stands out as a major source of interpretation. The Sufi thinkers from Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti to Shah Waliullah Dehlavi not only advocated the external Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) but also stressed the inner, psychological, and spiritual aspects of it. Their Seerat stories had the Prophet's personal habits—for example, his harmony between rest and worship—as a way of spiritual discipline drawn from a comprehensive model. The merging of devotion and psychology found in South Asian Sufi literature is in harmony with the current research that sees the Prophet's sleep practices as a way of inner sanctity and mental balance.

In contrast, others are so blended that it becomes difficult to distinguish between views on nocturnal sleep and wakefulness. The sleep pattern, divided into segments or interrupted by night, such as *Tahajjud*, proves the most expedient one when considering chronobiological models, circadian rhythms, and memory processing during sleep and wakefulness at night.⁵ The Prophet's midday nap habit: "Take a brief nap, for the devils do not sleep."⁶ It is also entirely in harmony with the results that short naps (20-30 minutes) can significantly improve emotional regulation and cognitive ability. The Prophet's sleep habits have always been very comprehensive, not only in hadith but also in the Seerat, which are the lives of the Prophet, and this gives a perfect basis to analyze. A similar picture is presented in Sahih Muslim, where *Tahajjud*, the voluntary night prayer, is described as the best after the five obligatory ones: "The best

⁴ Lina Lestari, M. Mohtar, Eirene Gaghauna, and Muhammad Riduansyah, "Right Lateral Position Can Be Recommended as an Intervention in Heart Failure (HF) Patients to Improve Respiratory Status," *Care: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Kesehatan* 13 (2025): 87–97, <https://doi.org/10.33366/jc.v13i1.6277>.

⁵ Catherine E. Milner and Kimberly A. Cote, "Benefits of Napping in Healthy Adults: Impact of Nap Length, Time of Day, Age, and Experience with Napping," *Journal of Sleep Research*, first published May 19, 2009, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2869.2008.00718.x>.

⁶ Abū al-Qāsim al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ*, 1/13.

prayer after the obligatory prayers is the night prayer".⁷ Moreover, right-side sleeping is reported in Sahih Muslim: "Whenever you go to bed, perform ablution like that for the prayer, and lie on your right side".⁸ It is to be understood that the narrations, which are textually and materially authenticated through the rigorous isnad (the chain of transmission), reveal the Prophet's standard and regular sleep pattern. The details of these and other habits in the Prophet's daily life, as well as his balance and spiritual discipline, are very well contextualized in al-Raheeq al-Makhtum by Safiur Rahman Mubarakpuri.⁹ Modern psychology of sleep offers various frameworks to explain the physiological benefits of these practices. The book "Full Catastrophe Living" by Kabat-Zinn (1990) provides an example of the mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) model, which is closely aligned with the meditative quality of *Tahajjud* prayer.¹⁰ The book Flourish (2011) by Seligman is another example that illustrates the connection between the PERMA model (Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Achievement) and restorative practices, such as *Qailulah*, which rebalance the emotional state.¹¹ The combination of Seerat, psychology, and Islamic thought has yielded a comprehensive model that explains human health, recognizing that sleep is not only a physical necessity but also a spiritual practice. Nevertheless, even with such intersections, academic engagement tends to remain compartmentalized. Practitioners of Islamic Studies typically encompass the Prophet's sleep practices within the realm of devotional narratives, whereas sleep science often overlooks the cultural and spiritual aspects of sleep. This study fills the gap by presenting a non-sectarian rest model based on Sunnah, Qur'anic theology, and empirical research. Concerning the

⁷ Aḥmad ibn Shu'ayb al-Nasā'ī, *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, Hadith 1614, *The Book of Qiyam al-Layl (The Night Prayer) and Voluntary Prayers During the Day*, accessed August 31, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/nasai:1614>.

⁸ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, *Sahih Muslim*, Hadith 2710a, *The Book Pertaining to the Remembrance of Allah, Supplication, Repentance and Seeking Forgiveness*, accessed August 31, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2710>.

⁹ Safī al-Raḥmān al-Mubārakfūrī, *Ar-Raḥīq al-Makhtūm (The Sealed Nectar): Memoirs of the Noble Prophet [pbuh]*, accessed August 26, 2025, <https://archive.org/details/ar-raheeq-ul-makhtoom-by-safi-mubarakpuri>.

¹⁰ Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness*, rev. ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 2013).

¹¹ Martin Seligman, *Flourish* (Sydney: Penguin Random House Australia, 2011), <https://archive.org/details/flourish0000seli>.

Prophet's sleep, it is claimed here that these habits may be considered as "psychological sanctuary"—the points of rest being deliberately chosen, recuperative, and spiritually aware, thus health and worship become two sides of the same coin. This paper achieves its goal by employing a rigorous hermeneutical method of ḥadīth and Qur'ānic exegesis while maintaining a clear distinction between normative religious teachings (acts of worship) and empirical scientific findings. By focusing on authenticated sources and peer-reviewed research, the model ensures that scientific correlations are presented as frameworks for understanding rather than as definitive causal effects. This model opens the door to Muslim mental health professionals, educators, and policymakers, offering them a culturally resonant paradigm where sleep is not only a physiological necessity but also a devotional act (ʿibādah).

Analysis

Muslims view Islam not only as a faith but also as a comprehensive way of life, guiding their conduct in all aspects of daily living, including sleep. The Qur'an makes several references to sleep, one of which states: *"And among His signs is your sleep by night and by day and your seeking of His bounty. Surely in this are signs for people who listen"*.¹² The Hadith literature describes the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) sleep routine as one that balanced physical rest with spiritual devotion. He encouraged his followers to perform ablution before going to bed and would himself recite supplications before lying down. He would rest on his right side after dusting and preparing his bed, and he ensured that lamps or fires were extinguished before sleeping. His main period of rest usually began after the night (*Isha*) prayer and continued until shortly after midnight, after which he would rise for the night vigil (*tahajjud*). He remained engaged in worship until roughly the last sixth of the night, when he would rest briefly before the dawn (*Fajr*) prayer. In addition to this nighttime pattern, he also observed a short afternoon nap (*qailulah*) around the time of the *Zuhr* prayer.¹³

¹² Qur'an, Ar-Rum 30:2

¹³ Ambassador Arif Kamal, "Contemporary Scientific and Historical Perspectives on Holy Prophet (SAW)'s Routine: A Case Study of the Sleeping Patterns," *al-Sirah: بوابة السيرة النبوية*

***Qailulah* (Midday Nap)**

The habit of *Qailulah*, taking a short nap during the noon time, has its roots in the tradition of the Prophet as a means of refreshing oneself between daily demands. Moreover, through the quoted narration in *al-Mu'jam al-Awsaṭ*, it is stated, "Take a short nap, for devils do not nap", which among other things reckons the habit also through Sahih al-Bukhari that relates an incident where the Prophet (peace be upon him) is said to have taken his nap after the Dhuhr prayer. This restful break, mostly 20 to 30 minutes in duration and a time when it could be before as well as after Zuhr, represents the idea of an energetic and clear mental life being maintained albeit in a balanced way as Al-Raheeq al-Makhtum explains the Prophet's moderation had the effect of not allowing it to interfere with the sleep at night time.¹⁴ Within the account of the Prophet's life, the *Qailulah* served as a cognitive reset, allowing for the restoration of mental energy needed to handle the intense demands of leadership and revelation. Research by Milner and Cote (2009) suggests an association between short naps and elevated mood or enhanced cognitive abilities, all of which are consistent with the Prophet's wise decision to include a rest period to sustain balance.¹⁵ Additionally, Lovato and Lack (2010) assert that naps energize alertness and enhance memory retention, whereas Dinges and Broughton (1989) emphasize that naps help lower stress levels.¹⁶

Recent studies add to the picture that midday naps bring various nuanced benefits. Mantua and Spencer (2017) discuss the "nap paradox," indicating that habitual napping can be a sign of health issues.¹⁷ In contrast, intentional short

accessed August 21, 2025, <https://www.alsirah.com/contemporary-scientific-and-historical-perspectives>.

¹⁴ Mubārakfūrī, *Ar-Rahīq al-Makhtūm*, 1995.

¹⁵ Milner and Cote, "Benefits of Napping in Healthy Adults," *Journal of Sleep Research* 18, no. 2 (2009): 272–81, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2869.2008.00718.x>.

¹⁶ Nicole Lovato and Leon Lack, "The Effects of Napping on Cognitive Functioning," in *Principles and Practice of Sleep Medicine*, 5th ed., ed. Meir H. Kryger, Thomas Roth, and William C. Dement (St. Louis, MO: Elsevier, 2010), <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-444-53702-7.00009-9>; David F. Dinges and R. J. Broughton, *Sleep and Alertness: Chronobiological, Behavioral, and Medical Aspects of Napping* (New York: Raven Press, 1989).

¹⁷ Janna Mantua and Rebecca M. C. Spencer, "Exploring the Nap Paradox: Are Mid-Day Sleep Bouts a Friend or Foe?" *Sleep Medicine* 37 (2017): 88–97.

naps invigorate executive functioning, memory consolidation, and emotional processing, with one of the most notable benefits being the alleviation of negative bias. A systematic review by Leong, Lo, and Chee (2022) analyzes data from 60 samples to conduct a meta-analysis, revealing moderate effects on declarative and procedural memory, vigilance, and processing speed, with benefits that are sustained across different age groups and nap durations.¹⁸ The research of McDevitt et al. (2018) corroborates these findings, stating that frequent nappers demonstrate better sleep-dependent memory consolidation.¹⁹ This is linked to the increase in sleep spindles and slow-wave sleep, suggesting that neurobiological co-adaptation mechanisms can be used to explain the Prophet's sustained state of attentiveness during his prophetic duties. Nijati (1988), from an Islamic perspective on psychology, posits *Qailulah* as a method for balancing the *nafs* (self), aiming to prevent burnout and promote spiritual acuteness.²⁰ BaHammam and Gozal (2012) present sleep from the Qur'anic perspective as a sign of mercy (Qur'an 78:9), with naps corresponding to the natural cycles of the sleep-wake rhythm that help one's physical and spiritual health flourish.²¹ This balancing is a tidal virtue, a Qur'anic concept (Qur'an 2:143), which, in this case, refers to the emotional stability it promotes. Vandekerckhove and Wang (2017) contribute to this by stating that sleep, especially naps, is beneficial for emotion regulation.²² During sleep, the individual can become less stressed, as emotional processing is facilitated during the rest period, and reactivity can also decrease. Opponents might argue that *Qailulah* is incompatible with the hectic life of modern times. However, its brevity—often less than 30 minutes—ensures the possibility, as nap

¹⁸ Leong, Lo, and Chee, "Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses."

¹⁹ Elizabeth A. McDevitt, Negin Sattari, Katherine A. Duggan, Nicola Cellini, Lauren N. Whitehurst, Carlos Perera, Sirimon Reutrakul, and Sara C. Mednick, "The Impact of Frequent Napping and Nap Practice on Sleep-Dependent Memory in Humans," *Scientific Reports* 8, no. 1 (2018): 15053.

²⁰ Mohammad Usman Najati, *Aur Ilm-un-Nafs*, trans. Mohammad Fahim Akhtar Nadvi (New Delhi: Qazi Publishers and Distributor, 1992), 332 pp.

²¹ Ahmed S. BaHammam and David Gozal, "Qur'anic Insights into Sleep," *Nature and Science of Sleep* 4 (2012): 81–87.

²² Marie Vandekerckhove and Yu-lin Wang, "Emotion, Emotion Regulation and Sleep: An Intimate Relationship," *AIMS Neuroscience* 5, no. 1 (2017): 1–17.

interventions in workplaces have been shown to increase productivity.²³ In the life of the Prophet, it mitigated the adverse psychological effects of constant revelation and leadership pressure; therefore, it serves as a stress management program for us now. Consequently, *Qailulah* goes beyond rest; it is a form of self-care that is both physical and psychological, as it brings one back to sanity and strength.

***Tahajjud* (Night Prayer)**

Tahajjud, the voluntary nocturnal prayer made after one first sleeps, is the spiritual discipline at its utmost level in the Seerat-e-Nabwi. Sahih al-Bukhari provides a vivid picture of the Prophet's strict observance, as exemplified by the phrase "My heart does not sleep".²⁴ The Prophet's method of living, which included the 'night prayer, contemplation, and supplication,' as well as self-sacrifice, among others, illuminates the significance of this particular prayer being at the center of his life.²⁵ This breaking up of the sleep pattern, whereby sleep at night was interrupted for devotion to God, is suggested to be associated with the Prophet's psychological resilience, which aligns with a model of spiritual strength. Various psychological models have been employed to demonstrate the potential spiritual benefits of *Tahajjud*, positioning it alongside certain meditation practices. Kabat-Zinn (1990) is a reference to one who views mindfulness as a calming practice that activates the stress-reducing mechanism through present-moment awareness, which is very similar to that of *Tahajjud* veneration.²⁶ Brown and Ryan (2003) find that one of the benefits of mindfulness and meditation activities is the improvement of a person's self-awareness, which, in turn, leads to enhanced emotional regulation, decreased

²³ Leong, Lo, and Chee, *Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses on the Effects of Afternoon Napping on Cognition*, *Sleep Medicine Reviews* 65 (2022): article 101666.

²⁴ Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Virtues and Merits of the Prophet (pbuh) and His Companions (Kitāb al-Manāqib)," Hadith 3570, accessed August 31, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/bukhari:3570>.

²⁵ Mubārakpūrī, *Ar-Raḥīq al-Makhtūm*.

²⁶ Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living*.

emotional reactivity, and reduced lapses of focus in the short term.²⁷ Seligman (2011) points out that it is through rituals like prayer that one develops resilience, as they can make sense of a situation, for example, such as the Prophet's calmness during periods of hardship in Mecca.²⁸ Walker (2017) suggests that pre-industrial sleep practices can explain why the modern segmented sleep pattern remains aligned with our circadian rhythms, which in turn lead to better emotional processing during the period of wakefulness at night.²⁹ Current scholarship equally delves into the matter. Keng, Smoski, and Robins (2011) survey the research literature, identifying the impacts of mindfulness on mental symptomatology, well-being, and emotional reactivity, particularly in relation to clinical interventions like MBSR, which show sustained effects on mood. Brand et al. (2021) identify psychobiological components of meditation that lower cortisol and alter brain areas regulating emotion; thus, these changes provide a potential neurobiological explanation for the soothing effect. Jamil et al. (2023) refer to several neurobiological changes that occur during meditation, which facilitate the relief of anxiety, depression, and PTSD, besides the reduction of amygdala activity.³⁰

Lollies et al. (2022) highlight the interplay between sleep and emotion regulation, noting that good rest, even if interrupted, supports positive affect and behavioral control, whereas disruptions increase negativity. Nijati (1988), in the context of Islamic psychology, considers *Tahajjud* a process of cleansing the *nafs* and strengthening spiritual stamina through a bond with the Divine. BaHamman and Gozal (2012) refer to Qur'anic verses about night vigilance (Qur'an 73:2-4), depicting it as a gift for self-reflection and spiritual advancement. Skeptics question the use of sleep fragmentation, mentioning possible tiredness; nevertheless, Vandekerckhove and Wang (2017) emphasize that adaptive emotion regulation from such patterns lowers the risks, thus

²⁷ Kirk Warren Brown and Richard M. Ryan, "The Benefits of Being Present: Mindfulness and Its Role in Psychological Well-Being," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84, no. 4 (2003): 822–48.

²⁸ Seligman, *Flourish*, 45.

²⁹ Matthew Walker, *Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams* (New York: Scribner, 2017).

³⁰ Keng, Smoski, and Robins 2011, *Clin. Psychol. Rev.*; Brand et al. 2021, *Curr. Opin. Psychol.*; Jamil et al. 2023, *Biomedicines*.

ensuring long-term well-being. During the time of the Prophet, *Tahajjud* was a means to the heart's relief amidst the rigorous revelations, thereby demonstrating how a planned break can uplift, rather than weaken, mental health. With this, spiritual practice is also fused with psychological therapy, thus creating a lifelong model of resilience during stormy times.

Right-Side Sleeping

The Prophet's practice of lying down on his right side, frequently accompanied by ablution and supplication, was a mindful and thoughtful approach to sleep. According to the Muslim (Hadith 2710), the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Lie on your right side." This command is also found in Sahih al-Bukhari (Book 97, Hadith 135), which, apart from physical safety, emphasizes the importance of reciting a dua.³¹ Besides the physiological aspect, this position, which was the Prophet's sleeping on the right side, was a routine of washing and meditation, giving a deeply peaceful sleep, and was the one mode of behavior from the Sunnah to be in a complete way. Scientific publications suggest that it is reasonable to follow a specific order of events immediately before sleep. Morin et al. (2006) demonstrate that such pre-sleep rituals result in lower anxiety and improved sleep quality, which aligns with the cognitive-behavioral therapy approach to insomnia. Hirshkowitz et al. (2015) discuss various factors that influence sleep, while Walker (2017) claims that right-side sleeping facilitates the digestive process and cardiac function, thereby allowing for gradual and indirect mental calmness. Further investigations have refashioned these concepts.³² Zhang et al. (2022) found that when subjects sleep on their right side, it is more likely to ensure a good quality of sleep, with fewer instances of waking up during the night and more extended periods of slow-wave sleep, which is accompanied by lower occurrences of REM disruptions. Xue et al. (2024) describe the relationship between various sleep postures and mental health prognoses, stating that the lateral positions seem to be the best for brain waste clearance through the glymphatic system, which may help in reducing the risk of depression and anxiety caused by neurologic decline. Nijati (1988) perceives

³¹ Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Hadith 2710, accessed August 31, 2025, <https://sunnah.com/muslim:2710>.

³² Walker, *Why We Sleep*, 112.

this in an Islamic perspective, i.e., it is connected with tawakkul (trust in Allah), thus, the fear of the night disappears. BaHammam and Gozal (2012) view Qur'anic sleep as a sign of submission (Qur'an 25:47), indicating that the Prophet's way of sleeping on the right side was considered the most suitable way for spiritual calmness. The opponents of this argument state that it is necessary to assess individual differences in human physiology; however, they also acknowledge that the psychological aspect of posture, i.e., through intention and dua, which extends beyond mere physicality, can still be practical in relaxation. In Seerat-e-Nabwi, the habit is regarded as a safe way to take care of oneself in a holistic manner, integrating body, mind, and spirit, and thus providing for a strong psychological sanctuary.³³

Discussion

The Prophet's sleep habits—*Qailulah*, *Tahajjud*, and right-side sleeping—are the principal components of *misericordia psychica*. This term, which literally translates from Latin as 'psychological mercy,' is used here to describe the restorative grace found in Prophetic practices that treat mental well-being as a divine gift. Within the context of Seerat-e-Nabwi, these habits become remarkably interconnected through their mutual functioning of physical recovery and spiritual fortitude. Besides giving rest to the body, these not only meet the requirements of everyday life but also allow for cultivating vitality, emotional stability, and a strong sense of purpose. *Qailulah*, or the siesta, is an example of a carefully chosen break for energizing one's faculties, which aligns with current trends in sleep hygiene that prioritize short daytime napping to alleviate stress and enhance cognitive function (Milner and Cote 2009). Through short napping, the Prophet provided a perfect example of a prudent approach to leadership, revelation, and community guidance. This habit demonstrates that the principle of balance in Islam is at the core, which can be observed in aspects that avoid exhaustion or overwork, instead yielding a positive outcome in productivity and emotional well-being. *Tahajjud*, the night prayer by choice, transforms night rest into an occasion for deep self-introspection and a

³³ Aboul-Enein, Basil H., G. Hussein Rassool, Nada Benajiba, Joshua Bernstein, and MoezAllIslam E. Faris, eds. *Contemporary Islamic Perspectives in Public Health*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025.

conversation with God, which can be related to modern-day mindfulness practices associated with emotional regulation and psychological resilience.³⁴ It is through the very practice of *Tahajjud* that one reaches the highest stage of present-moment awareness, and thus becomes grateful, finding relief from various stressors. However, it cannot be said whether the Prophet had actually resorted to this practice during difficult trials as well. Still, from a positive psychology perspective, we can say that placing strong faith in God through meditative rituals may be a key component in coping mechanisms during difficult times.³⁵ The practice of lying on the right side, along with the invocation, contributes to the establishment of a soothing ritual for retiring to rest that aligns with cognitive-behavioral strategies for alleviating anxiety and improving sleep quality (Morin et al., 2006). The carrying out of duties such as *ait* and *dua* in this particular posture gives an impression of dependence (*tawakkul*), which in turn lessens the weight of psychological affliction and hereby, leads to a state of calmness.

While these habits align with empirical studies in psychology, a critical analysis reveals that modern scientific findings are often limited by their clinical scope and laboratory settings. Therefore, these correlations offer a framework for understanding Prophetic habits rather than indicating a direct causal effect that mirrors the complex spiritual life of the Prophet's era. To illustrate, short naps, as recommended by the *Qailulah* practice, have been supported by systematic reviews that indicate improvements in cognitive performance and a reduction in fatigue, especially in cases of challenging or stressful situations. One of the main findings of the meta-analysis study of randomized trials is that daytime napping facilitates sportive cognitive functions and relieves fatigue, which is in agreement with the Prophet's moderation advice to maintain mental acuity.³⁶ Consistent with this idea, a future cohort study also reveals that afternoon naps

³⁴ Kabat-Zinn 1990, *Full Catastrophe Living*.

³⁵ Seligman 2011, *Flourish*.

³⁶ Arthur E. Mesas, Sergio Núñez de Arenas-Arroyo, Vicente Martínez-Vizcaíno, Miriam Garrido-Miguel, Rubén Fernández-Rodríguez, Bruno Bizzozero-Peroni, and Ana I. Torres-Costoso, "Is Daytime Napping an Effective Strategy to Improve Sport-Related Cognitive and Physical Performance and Reduce Fatigue? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Randomised Controlled Trials," *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 57, no. 7 (2023): 417–26, <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2022-106355>.

can prevent the detrimental effects on cognition caused by sleep duration irregularities, thereby exerting a protective role against the gradual decline in brain function.³⁷ The contemplative aspect of *Tahajjud* aligns perfectly with meditation programs, which, in their comprehensive results, show a marked reduction in psychological stress and an overall improvement in the practitioners' emotional state through the use of systematic practices.³⁸ Meditation practices centering on compassion and loving-kindness, which are most similar to the supplicatory and devotional focus of *Tahajjud*, are shown to be accompanied by several health benefits, among which is the alleviation of depression symptoms; hence, the conjunction of nocturnal reflection and therapeutic resource can be inferred here.³⁹ Sleeping on the right side has a significant impact on the functioning of the autonomic nervous system. Research findings indicate an increase in vagal tone and heart rate variability, both of which are associated with reduced stress responses (Chen et al., 2018). Moreover, in patients with congestive heart failure, the use of the right-sided position is highly correlated with a better health-related quality of life, implying the presence of physiological advantages that ultimately lead to mental peace.⁴⁰ Islamic teachings clearly distinguish between the practices of well-being, which, from their perspective, are considered acts of worship. The combination of psychological well-being and spiritual growth is what leads to an individual's happiness. Nijati (1988) explains this phenomenon in terms of *nafs*, which, when managed adequately through balanced rest, becomes purified and maintains a person's faith, thus demonstrating a viewpoint that predates current-day integrative perspectives. Traditional perspectives in Islam, as expounded by scholars in their research, view sleep as one of the divine acts; thus, hygiene is considered from a prophetic era perspective, which serves as a primary factor in

³⁷ Xu et al., 2023

³⁸ Goyal, M., S. S. Singh, M. S. Sibinga, A. Gould, R. S. Rowland-Seymour, J. Sharma, S. C. Saha, and R. H. Haythornthwaite, "Meditation Programs for Psychological Stress and Well-being: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis," *JAMA Internal Medicine* 174, no. 3 (2014): 357–68, <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.13018>.

³⁹ Galante, Julieta, Ignacio Galante, Marie-Jet Bekkers, and John Gallacher. 2014. "Effect of Kindness-Based Meditation on Health and Well-Being: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037249>.

⁴⁰ Khazaie et al. 2018, *Basic Clin. Neurosci*.

addressing individual holistic health imbalances.⁴¹ The concept of *Qailulah* is simplistic yet highly effective in rejuvenating one's capabilities to combat burnout in situations of high stress or pressure; it simply provides a short break or relief that re-energizes focus and mood without altering the biological clock or circadian rhythms. The practice of short naps, supported by various research studies, can be a source of great strength and resilience in the professional environment, which in turn will result in a decrease in mental health problems among workers due to fatigue. *Tahajjud* is one of the practices highly recommended, especially in cases of anxiety or uncertainty, as it can help one remain emotionally firm at night and cultivate the habit of mindfulness, while also decreasing the frequency of dark and depressing thoughts. Its process invites gratitude and introspection; thus, it aligns with interventions that utilize spiritual engagement to alleviate depressive symptoms. Sleeping on the right side, which is the one that has the ritualistic component, goes a long way in improving the bedtime practices, which are then helpful in dealing with cases of insomnia through the mechanism of making one calm and, at the same time, strengthening the reliance on God (*tawakkul*) so that the worries that accompany the night can be lessened.

Sufi scholars through their writings on Seerat and Tasawwuf, extended the Prophetic model of psychological and spiritual balance in the intellectual tradition of the Indian Subcontinent. Names like Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali Hujwiri and Shah Waliullah Dehlavi not only familiarized the Prophet's habitual practices such as his methodical sleep, remembrance (*dhikr*), and reflection (*tafakkur*) but moreover they depicted these as both spiritual and psychological elevation ones. Their research works became a gateway for the Prophetic conduct to be linked with psychological well-being as they explained *Qailulah* and *Tahajjud* which were done for the purpose of self-regulation and emotional refinement among the believers. In *Kashf al-Mahjub*, Hujwiri sees the Prophet's sleep as a "veil of divine mercy," thus relating rest to a calm inner state, whereas Shah Waliullah in *Hujjat Allah al-Baligha* sees the Prophet's sleeplessness and worship to be a harmonious model of balance between *nafs* (self) and *rūh*

⁴¹ BaHammam and Gozal 2012, *Nat. Sci. Sleep*.

(spirit)⁴²(Shah Waliullah 2023). These ideas are in line with the concept of *misericordia psychica* (psychological mercy) put forward by this study. This implies that South Asian Sufi Seerat compositions, such as those by Hujwiri, represented an intentional effort to highlight the psychological dimensions of the Sunnah. By framing the Prophet's habits of rest and prayer as tools for inner healing, these scholars bridged the gap between devotional practice and mental well-being.⁴³

Nonetheless, challenges offer a different perspective. This study can be primarily considered qualitative, as it is based on the fantastic stories from the Seerah and Hadith, without any numerically measured confirmation of outcomes in the present time. Although many mental-improvement stories are presented, it is not known with great certainty how exactly these healthy habits lead to better mental health, as measured by various psychological metrics. Consequently, there is a call for more experimental studies to confirm the results. Societal and historical changes, in addition to the effects of innovations such as electricity, may significantly alter the applicability of these teachings. For example, the lifestyle of the past and the influence of today's electrified places are considerations when it comes to the practicality of *Tahajjud*. Another question that can be raised in relation to these changes is whether everyone from various job and income levels is equally capable of taking a midday rest, especially in a highly demanding job. However, these revelations of the intertwining of the two concepts present a paradigm rooted in prophetic statements and human psychology, which helps people navigate challenging times in life; thus, it is not contrary to Islamic teachings and disciplines. The adoption of these approaches can help individuals not only create a haven for their souls but also for their minds, thus promoting the occurrence of this rare tranquility in a highly turbulent world.

Conclusion

⁴² Dehlawi, Shah Wali Allah. *Hujjat Allah Al Baligha*, India: Fazlul Karim, 2023.

⁴³ Hujwiri, A. bin U. "The Kashf al-Mahjub: The Oldest Persian Treatise on Sufism, trans." Islamic Book Foundation, Lahore (1911).

The Prophet's sleep habits – *Qailulah*, *Tahajjud*, and right-side sleeping as explained in Seerat-e-Nabwi, not only reflect a lifestyle but also a holistic model that was deeply interconnected with mental health. Psychologically, they represent a sanctum of healing and redemption in the human soul, which form the basis for their maintenance: voluntary devotion (ibadat), emulative faith (ilm), and emotional tenacity (lifetime values). These three fundamental practices are imprinted in the Prophet's life as ultimate religious rites. Still, they can be viewed today as a harmonious medicine for the body, the mind, and the spirit. *Qailulah*, or a short nap at noon, is a well-thought-out semi-recess that essentially serves to alleviate daily fatigue and provide the individual with mental lucidity. This aligns perfectly with the modern theory of sleep, which is also highly supportive of individuals who are sleep-contingent taking short naps to restore mental vigor. On the other hand, *Tahajjud* is a religious exercise that instills in the participant both spirituality and serenity, which can be easily compared to current mindfulness and meditation sessions that have been proven to be effective regulators of one's emotional state and reactivators of one's stamina. Moreover, the combined effect of sleeping on the right side and praying made it easier for the Prophet to calm down both physically and mentally, thereby facilitating a smooth transition from wakefulness to sleep. These physiological-synchronous modes of achieving calm are slowly gaining more widespread recognition and now play a pivotal role in the modern psyche. Seemingly, these three activities, when put side by side, psychologically represent a refuge for man coupled with the Islamic concept that *ijtihad* is worship and empirically consoling. The cognitive-scientific justification of the traditional model of prophetic and religious experience, in light of current human concerns about spirituality, ecology, and insight into life among Muslims, becomes a modern psychological research subject and a philosophical discourse relevant to the present context of urbanized and industrialized Muslim communities worldwide. Of course, the practice of *Qailulah* is invaluable in situations where one is working long hours and is almost on the brink of burnout, as it allows them to regain their lost energy. *Tahajjud* serves as a vital ritual that prepares the individual to delve deeply and, ultimately, develop both inner and outer strengths.

Meanwhile, the practice of right-side sleeping becomes an avenue to inculcate tawakkul (trust in Allah) into one's daily routine, thereby becoming a source of relief from psychological stress. These three activities, if well carried out even in areas of different economic standards and social lifestyles, would not only keep Muslims mentally fit and psychologically strong but also make them spiritually mature. Nijati (1988), one of the many Islamic scholars who reiterates this point, argues that the Islamic method of soul purification and spirituality is much more effective than any secular method, which rarely takes into account the human's existential aspect. Recent studies have confirmed these links and suggest avenues for further exploration in the future. For example, research on the effects of napping shows that it reduces the body's production of cortisol and makes it easier to process emotions, which justifies the stress-relieving power of *Qailulah*. Moreover, the results of serenity programs similar to *Tahajjud* demonstrate a significant decline in anxiety and an improvement in emotional health, as well as brain scans that reveal activation of the prefrontal cortex. These discoveries support the Prophet's habits scientifically, but there are still some gaps. The way the personality of the Prophet has been interpreted, based mainly on biographical texts (Seerat), does not allow for logical explanations of causality and changes in culture, such as modern sleep environments may create difficulties in practicing these activities. New research should fill these gaps with experimental studies, such as randomized-controlled trials, which measure stress biomarkers to evaluate the impact of *Qailulah*, or Longitudinal studies that examine the effects of *Tahajjud* on mindfulness and resilience. Research on the effect of the sleeping side (right) on sleep architecture and autonomic nervous system regulation might illuminate its add-on advantages. These are the kind of empirical studies that may actually lead to the merging of Islamic psychology (*nafsiyaat*) with current mental health disciplines; therefore, they would be able to measure the influence of prophetic habits among various demographic groups. Moving from research in Seerat-e-Nabwi to the psychological sciences, this study depicts a model of well-being that is both spiritually and empirically validated. In turn, these exercises can be seen as a faith-based plan that helps Muslims cope with today's worries and, in turn, serve as a lasting psychological sanctuary. Furthermore, their universal character, namely rest, reflection, and ritual, may become more widely used outside of the Islamic context, which means that the issue may now be a subject of debate

among scholars of different disciplines to advance holistic mental health strategies.

In addition, the Seerat-writing practice of the Sufis from the Indian Subcontinent commits the Prophet's example of spiritual psychology to local practice. Figures like Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali Hujwiri, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, and Shah Waliullah, deeply probed the esoteric aspects of the Prophetic habits—viewing sleep, meditation, and dhikr as ways of coming closer to God and cleansing of the soul. Their works show how the Prophetic pattern of rest and awareness became a part of South Asian Sufi psychology, thus, the Seerat not only serving as a record of the past but also as a living spiritual way.