



القول الراجح في صلاة التراويح

The Taraweeh Prayer

An analysis of established opinions
pertaining the Taraweeh prayer

شيخ الحديث العلامة محمد حميد الرحمن

Shaykh al-Hadith al-Allamah Muhammad Habibur Rahman R.

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Al Habib Foundation

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قال الإمام الترمذي رحمه الله تعالى -
واكثر اهل العلم على ما روي عن عمر وعلى
وغيرهما من اصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه
وسلم عشرين ركعةً
الجامع الترمذي، الجزء الأول الصفحة ٢٢٣

Imam al-Tirmidhi (*Rahimahullah Ta'ala*)
said: "Majority of the scholars agree the
units of the Taraweeh prayer are reported,
from Umar, Ali and other companions, to
be **Twenty units**."

(*al-Jami' al-Tirmidhi*, Volume 1, Page No. 223)

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Preface

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله الذي قسم نعبه بين عبادة، وهدى من شاء إلى صراطه،
أشهد ألا إله إلا الله وحده لا شريك له وأن محمدا عبده ورسوله
أفضل من صلى وصام وتعبد وقام عليه أفضل الصلاة والسلام، وبعد

From all the great opportunities, given to Humankind, to gain proximity to Allah (*Subhana Wa Ta'ala*), the blessed month of Ramadan is the greatest. Ramadan is a month of great importance and virtue. Allah (*Subhana Wa Ta'ala*) mentions the following, with regards to the virtue of this great month:

شَهْرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ فِيهِ الْقُرْآنُ

Translation: "The month of Ramadhan [is that] in which was revealed the Qur'an..."¹

Rasoolullah (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) would inform his companions about the importance and excellence of this month. For example:

وعن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه قال: كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم
يبشر أصحابه بقدوم رمضان يقول: قد جاءكم شهر رمضان شهر
مبارك، كتب الله عليكم صيامه، فيه تفتح أبواب الجنة وتغلق فيه
أبواب الجحيم، وتغل في الشياطين، فيه ليلة خير من ألف شهر، من
حرم خيرها فقد حرم

Translation: It is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurairah (*Radiyallahu Anhu*), he said: The Messenger of Allah (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) would give glad tidings to his companions regarding the arrival of Ramadan by saying: "The

¹ Quran 2:185 (Translation Source: Abdul Haleem)

month of Ramadan has come to you, a blessed month; Allah has prescribed fasting for you; in this month the doors of Paradise are open and the doors of Hell-fire are closed; the devils are chained; in this month there is a night better than a thousand months. Whoever has been deprived of its goodness has certainly been deprived.”¹

When the month of Ramadan would enter, the Messenger of Allah (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) would increase his performance of supererogatory worship such that on the last ten days he would stay awake in worship and encourage his family to do the same. Among the additional actions performed during the nights of Ramadan, one of the most important is the Taraweeh prayer. The Messenger of Allah (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) offered the Taraweeh prayer, himself, and his companions offered it, giving it great importance. From the caliphate of the second Orthodox Caliph, Umar (*Radiyallahu Anhu*), specifically from 14 AH, the companions and successors began offering twenty units of the Taraweeh prayer in congregation. Since then this tradition has been ongoing.

In the current day, Muslims have suffered a decline in knowledge and religious action. On the one-hand, there are conspiracies in many countries who are working strongly to oppose the tide of Islam. On the other-hand, various Muslim sects have cast doubts over religious rituals that have been performed for thousands of years, causing general Muslims to doubt their conviction in the performance of such actions. This has resulted in a decline in religious worship. Regrettably, this has all

¹ Ahmad, *al-Musnad*, 2:386 (Hadith No. 8979); al-Nasai, *al-Sunan*, 4:129 (Hadith No. 2106); al-Mundhiri, *al-Targhib Wa al-Tarhib*, 1:490

emerged in the name of adhering to sound prophetic traditions (*Sahih Ahadith*).

Among these newly-contested issues is the controversy surrounding the Taraweeh prayer. Some of these sects claim that the Taraweeh prayer is merely eight units, in accordance to the sound prophetic traditions (*Sahih Ahadith*) and performing more than that is a blameworthy innovation (*Bid'ah*). Thus, performing twenty units of the Taraweeh prayer is incorrect as the maximum number of units for the prayer is eight. Recently, almost half of the well-known districts, in my home country of Bangladesh, have established their own mosques so that they can follow this opinion of eight units. Every year, when the month of Ramadan enters, these mosques announce and publicise, through the distribution of leaflets and public events, that everyone should attend the Taraweeh prayer specifically at their mosques so that they can perform the prayer according to the "*Sahih-Sunnah*". Consequently, this misconception is ever spreading and has seeped from district to district and trickled into the villages. This is a huge problem, in and of itself, as what was to remain an academic discussion among the Islamic scholars has become a wide-spread area of conversation and debate among the laymen.

Despite being an inconsequential servant of *Ilm al-Hadith* (The science of prophetic traditions) and having limited means to obtain such knowledge, I have taken it upon myself to enlighten the laymen with what little knowledge I have been able to acquire. In particular, I have intended to simplify this topic for the laymen such that our respected scholars can warn the general Muslim and educate them regarding such modern-day problems.

For several years, I have perceived the need for a piece of writing containing an objective analysis of the number of units of the Taraweeh prayer, providing the correct information and making the general Muslim aware of the issue. However, due to my ill-health and my engagement in other affairs, nothing had been forthcoming on my behalf. Thus, my youngest son, Muhammad Abdul Baqi' Khalid, composed this small book, called "The Taraweeh Prayer", from my verbal discussions and instructions. In an effort to make this book more appealing, my eldest son, Muhammad Abdul Awal Helal, edited and annotated it.

Primarily, this book discusses the number of units of the Taraweeh prayer. However, due to the need, discussions of some simple and relevant issues pertaining the prayer have been included.

I hope that this book will assist in educating people regarding the Taraweeh prayer.

I ask Allah to accept my efforts in trying to preserve his religion.

اللهم ألهمنا رشدنا واحفظنا من اتباع الهوى وجنبنا مضلات الفتن،
وصلى الله على سيدنا ومولانا محمد وعلى آله وأصحابه وبأرك وسلم،
والحمد لله رب العالمين



(Muhammad Habibur Rahman)

15th March 2019

The Taraweeh Prayer (Salat al-Taraweeh)

The Arabic term “Taraweeh” (تراويح) is the plural of the word “Tarweeah” (ترويه). Literally, it means to rest or to take a break. According to *Shari’ah* (Islamic Law), “Taraweeh” is an endorsed optional prayer (consisting of twenty units) performed after the completion of the obligatory *Isha* prayer, during the month of Ramadan.

It is said, the reason of naming the prayer “Taraweeh” is because:

سَمِيَتْ بِذَلِكَ لِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَسْتَرِيحُونَ بَيْنَ كُلِّ تَسْلِيمَتَيْنِ

Translation: “It has been named this because they (i.e. the performers of the prayer) take a break or a rest after every two “*Salaam*” (i.e. after every four units).”¹

Virtues of the Taraweeh Prayer

Ramadan is a month of great importance and virtue for Muslims. Allah (*Subhana Wa Ta’ala*) in his eternal mercy increases the reward of worship during this month. The following is mentioned in a prophetic tradition:

مَنْ تَقَرَّبَ فِيهِ بِخُصْلَةٍ مِنَ الْخَيْرِ كَانَ كَمَنْ أَدَّى فَرِيضَةً فِي سَائِرِ شَوَاهِدِ الشَّهْرِ
أَدَّى فِيهِ فَرِيضَةً كَانَ كَمَنْ أَدَّى سَبْعِينَ فَرِيضَةً فِي سَائِرِ الشَّهْرِ

Translation: “Whoever performs a good (supererogatory) action during this month, it is as though he performed an obligatory action like it. And Whoever performs an obligatory action, it is as

¹ *al-Fath al-Rabbani* 5:2; *Lisan al-Balaghah* pg. 256; *al-Qamus al-Muhit* 1:224; *Lisan al-Arab* 2:462.

though he has performed seventy obligatory actions like it.”¹

The Messenger of Allah (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) would encourage his companions to increase their performance of supererogatory actions, with it the performance of the Taraweeh prayer, with regards to which he gave the following glad-tiding:

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ:
مَنْ قَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

Translation: On the authority of Abu Hurairah (*Radiyallahu Anhu*) who said that the Messenger of Allah (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) said: “Whoever stands during the nights of Ramadan in optional prayer (i.e. the Taraweeh prayer), with faith and hope of forgiveness, will have all his past (minor) sins forgiven.”²

In another tradition, the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) is reported to have said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى فَرَضَ صِيَامَ رَمَضَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَسَدَّنْتُ لَكُمْ قِيَامَهُ
فَمَنْ صَامَهُ وَقَامَهُ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا خَرَجَ مِنْ ذُنُوبِهِ كَيَوْمٍ وَلَدَتْهُ أُمُّهُ

¹ *Ibn al-Khuzaymah, Kitab al-Sawm*, 3:391 (Hadith No. 1887); *Shu'ab al-Iman* 5:223 (Hadith No. 3336); *al-Kamil* 6:512; *al-Ta'ayid* pg. 205; *Mishkat al-Masabih, Kitab al-Sawm*, 2:341 (Hadith No. 1965)

Notes: The mentioned Hadith is narrated on the authority of Salman al-Farsi (*Radiyallahu Anhu*) and is a portion of a longer narration. There is a narrator by the name of Ali ibn Ziyad ibn Jad'an who was known to have some weakness in memory in the chain of transmission. This resulted in some *Hadith* experts saying the Hadith is “weak” (*Da'eef*).

² *al-Bukhari*, 1:374

Translation: "Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, enjoined the fast of Ramadan upon you, and I have made it Sunnah for you to spend its nights in prayer. Whoever fasts it and spends its nights in prayer out of faith and in the hope of reward, he will emerge from his sins as on the day his mother gave birth to him."¹

There remain many sound traditions regarding the virtue and importance of *Qiyam al-Layl* or *Salat al-Taraweeh*. The text and commentary of all these traditions clarifies the great blessings and virtue of the prayer. Thus, in order to attain full benefit, blessings and favour from the month of Ramadan, one must observe the fasts of Ramadan during the day, whilst giving importance to the performance of the Taraweeh prayer during the night, alongside reciting the Holy Qur'an and make an effort to perform excessive supererogatory actions.

Issue (1): Did the Prophet Muhammad (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) offer the Taraweeh Prayer in congregation?

It is well known that the second orthodox caliph, Umar (*Radiyallahu Anhu*) established the performance of the Taraweeh prayer in congregation behind one Imam. Considering this, many people conclude that the Messenger of Allah (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) did not perform the Taraweeh prayer in congregation, rather it was Umar (*Radiyallahu Anhu*) was the one that initiated this. However, this view is factually incorrect as there are traditions narrated via sound chains (of transmission) that mention that Rasoolullah (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) offered the prayer in *Jama'ah*. For Example:

¹ Sunan Ibn Majah, pg. 198; Sunan al-Nasai, 1:361

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَرَجَ لَيْلَةً مِنْ جَوْفِ اللَّيْلِ، فَصَلَّى فِي الْمَسْجِدِ، وَصَلَّى رِجَالٌ بِصَلَاتِهِ، فَأَصْبَحَ النَّاسُ فَتَحَدَّثُوا. فَاجْتَمَعَ أَكْثَرُ مِنْهُمْ، فَصَلُّوا مَعَهُ، فَأَصْبَحَ النَّاسُ فَتَحَدَّثُوا. فَكَثُرَ أَهْلُ الْمَسْجِدِ مِنَ اللَّيْلَةِ الثَّالِثَةِ، فَخَرَجَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَصَلَّى، فَصَلُّوا بِصَلَاتِهِ، فَلَمَّا كَانَتِ اللَّيْلَةُ الرَّابِعَةُ عَجَزَ الْمَسْجِدُ عَنْ أَهْلِهِ، حَتَّى خَرَجَ لِمَصَلَاةِ الصُّبْحِ، فَلَمَّا قَضَى الْفَجْرَ أَقْبَلَ عَلَى النَّاسِ، فَتَشَهَّدَ ثُمَّ قَالَ "أَمَّا بَعْدُ، فَإِنَّهُ لَمْ يَخَفْ عَلَى مَكَانِكُمْ، وَلَكِنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ تُفْتَرَضَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَتَعْجزُوا عَنْهَا

Translation: "Allah's Messenger (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) went out in the middle of the night and prayed in the mosque and some men prayed behind him. In the morning, the people spoke about it and then many of them gathered and prayed behind him (on the second night). In the next morning the people again talked about it and on the third night the mosque was full of many people. Allah's Messenger (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) came out and the people prayed behind him. On the fourth night the Mosque was overwhelmed with people and could not accommodate them, but the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) came out (only) for the morning prayer. When the morning prayer was finished he recited *Tashah-hud* (i.e. he concluded the prayer) and then (addressing the people) said, "*Amma ba'du*, your presence was not hidden from me, but I was afraid lest the night prayer (*Qiyam*) should be enjoined on you and you might not be able to carry it on."¹

¹ *al-Bukhari*, 1:293=

Besides this tradition, there remain other narrations which clarify that the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) performed the Taraweeh prayer at least two or three nights in congregation. From the language of the traditions, one can also deduce the beauty and importance of offering the prayer in congregation. On the fourth night, after the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) began performing the prayer in congregation, the mosque had become full and the companions sat waiting for the prayer with great anticipation and interest. However, on this night the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) did not enter the mosque until the *Fajr* prayer. He (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) said the following after performing the *Fajr* prayer: "Your presence and interest in performing the prayer was not oblivious to me. The only reason I did not enter the mosque to pray, tonight, was because I feared that if Allah (*Subhana Wa Ta'ala*) witnessed this great congregation, he would make performing the Taraweeh prayer as such compulsory (*Fardh*) and performing it would have become difficult upon you." Thus, it is clear to understand that if there was no possibility of the Taraweeh prayer becoming obligatory, the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) would have continued offering Taraweeh in congregation.

Issue (2): What is the Number of Units (Raka'at) For the Taraweeh Prayer?

We have established, in light of sound traditions, that the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*)

=Notes: This tradition is collected by *al-Bukhari* on the authority of Aisha (*Radiyallahu Anha*). It is also mentioned in the collection of Muslim (i.e. his book *sahih Muslim*) along with various narrations in the other four *Sunan* collections (i.e. *Abu Dawud*, *Tirmidhi*, *Nasai* and *Ibn Majah*)

offered the Taraweeh prayer in congregation, with his companions, for two or three nights. However, the number of units of prayer (*Raka'at*) he offered during these two or three nights are not known via sound narrations.¹

Regardless, despite the chains of certain traditions being termed as weak (*Da'eef*), there are still numerous traditions mentioning that the number of units offered for Taraweeh was twenty. For Example:

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يُصَلِّي فِي رَمَضَانَ عِشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً ثُمَّ يُوتِرُ

Translation: It is narrated on the authority of Ibn Abbas (*Radiyallahu Anhuma*), he said: "The Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) used to perform twenty units of prayer (i.e. twenty units of only the Taraweeh prayer) excluding the *Witr* prayer."²

It is narrated in another tradition:

¹ Imam Jalal Uddin al-Suyuti (849 – 911 AH) mentions the following regarding Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*)'s performance of the Taraweeh prayer:

وإنما صلى ليالي صلاة لم يذكر عددها. ثم تأخر في الليلة الرابعة خشية أن تفرض عليهم فيعجزوا عنها. وقد تبسك بعض من أثبت ذلك بحديث ورد فيه لا يصلح الاحتجاج به

Translation: "Indeed he (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) offered it (i.e. the Taraweeh prayer in congregation) for several nights but the number (of units) is not mentioned. Then, on the fourth night, he (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) delayed his entrance to the mosque out of fear that it would become obligatory upon them and this would become difficult for his nation. Some people try to establish the number of the units through the presentation of various traditions. However, not all these traditions are suitable for evidence in this issue.

² Ibn Abi Shaybah, *al-Musannaf*, 2:394; Haythami, *Majma' al-Zawaaid*, 3:172; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, *al-Matalib al-'Aaliyah*, 1:146; Zufar Ahmad al-Uthmani, *I'laa al-Sunan*, 7:82-83; al-Banuri, *Ma'arif al-Sunan*, 5:546=

عَنْ جَابِرٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَرَجَ لَيْلَةً فِي رَمَضَانَ فَصَلَّى بِالنَّاسِ أَرْبَعَةً وَعِشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً وَأَوْتَرَ بِثَلَاثٍ

Translation: "It is narrated on the authority of Jabir (Radiyallahu Anhu) that the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) came out during one night of Ramadan. Then he performed twenty-four units of prayer with the people (i.e. in congregation). Then he performed three units of Witr."¹

=**Notes:** The hadith narrated by Ibn Abbas (Radiyallahu Anhumu) has a narrator in its chain, with the name Ibrahim ibn Uthman Abu Shaybah al-Abasi al-Kufi (the paternal-grandfather of Ibn Abi Shaybah). Imam Zahabi narrates from Imam Shu'bah that this narrator is a known liar. Ibn Ma'een said: He is not trustworthy. Ahmad ibn Hanbal said he is weak (in narration). (*Mizan al-I'tidaal Fi Naqd al-Rijal*, 1:74)

Imam al-Suyuti said the following regarding the mentioned tradition:

هذا الحديث ضعيف جداً لا تقوم به حجة

Translation: "This tradition is very weak, it cannot be used as an evidence."

Sayyid Yusuf al-Banuri (1908 – 1977 CE) said the following with regards to the Hadith:

وإن كان ضعيفاً ولكن يؤيد روايته تعامل الأمة من عهد الفاروق ومن بعده

Translation: "Even though the narrator (Ibrahim ibn Uthman) is weak, however his narration is supported and reinforced by the ongoing action (of twenty units of prayer) from and after the time of Umar (Radiyallahu Anhu). (*Ma'arif al-Sunan*, 5:547)

¹ Abu Tahir al-Silafi, *al-Mashikhat al-Baghdadiyyah*, Volume 9, Manuscript Copy.

Notes: This tradition is mentioned in Abu Tahir Ahmad bin Muhammad al-Silafi's (478 – 576 AH) book entitled "*al-Mashikhat al-Baghdadiyyah*". I am currently in possession of a manuscript copy of the book.

The chain of transmission (*Isnad*) of this tradition is as follows: Abu Tahir al-Silafi (*Thiqah* – Reliable) >>> Abu Muhammad=

The tradition indicates that the night prayer during the month of Ramadan is twenty-four units, meaning that four are the four obligatory units of *Isha*, twenty for the Taraweeh prayer and a further three for *Witr* prayer.

Both mentioned traditions clearly provide us the information that the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) offered twenty units of the Taraweeh

=al-Khallal (*Thiqah* – Reliable) >>> Abul Fadl Ubaidullah Ibn Abdur Rahman (*Thiqah* – Reliable) >>> Muhammad Ibn Harun Ibn Humayd al-Razi (*Thiqah* – Reliable) >>> Ibrahim Ibn Mukhtar al-Tamami (*Maqbul* – Acceptable) >>> Abdur Rahman ibn 'Ataa (*Maqbul* – Acceptable) >>> Abdul Malik Ibn Jabir Ibn 'Atiq al-Ansari (*Thiqah* – Reliable) >>> Jabir (*Radiyallahu Anhu*) – a companion of the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*)

The mentioned chain is judged to be "*Salih al-Ihtijaj*" (compatible as an evidence). However, after analysis of the death dates of these narrators one can conclude that the chain is in fact broken (*Munqati*).

Hafiz al-Hadith, Imam Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani mentions the following tradition (without the chain) in his book, *Talkhis al-Habir*:

أنه صلى الله عليه وسلم صلى بالناس عشرين ركعة ليلتين فلما كان في الليلة الثالثة اجتمع الناس فلم يخرج إليهم . ثم قال من الغد خشيت أن تفرض عليكم فلا تطيقوها

Translation: "Indeed he (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) prayed twenty units with the people for two night. On the third night, the people gathered (again) but he (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) did not come to them. The next morning, he (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) said: I feared that it would become obligatory on you and you would not be able to carry it out." (*Talkhis al-Habir*, Volume 2, pg. 45)

Even though the narrations of Ibn Abbas (*Radiyallahu Anhu*) and Jabir (*Radiyallahu Anhu*) are weak, Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani's narration acts as a support for both, establishing that the Messenger of Allah (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) did indeed perform twenty units of the Taraweeh prayer.

Besides this, the conviction that it has been performed since the time of Umar (*Radiyallahu Anhu*) until now, also acts as a support to the narrations. Thus, in the terminology of *Mustalah al-Hadith*, it becomes known as "*Mutalaqqa Bi al-Qubul*" (i.e. reaches the state of accepting).

prayer. However, due to the weakness in their chains of transmission (*Isnad*) they are not strong evidences for the performance of twenty.

The Number of Units (Raka'at) For the Taraweeh Prayer is Twenty

We have mentioned in the previous chapter, that we know the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) offered the Taraweeh prayer in congregation for two or three nights, during the month of Ramadan. However, the number of units he offered have not reached us with a strong chain of transmission. There are traditions that mention that during the caliphate of Abu Bakr (*Radiyallahu Anhu*), the companions offered the Taraweeh prayer either by themselves in *Masjid al-Nabawi* or in small spontaneous congregations (meaning there was no organised big congregation). However, even these traditions do not explicitly mention the number of units offered. Thereafter, during the second year of Umar bin Khattab (*Radiyallahu Anhu*)'s caliphate (i.e. 14 AH), he organised one big congregation for the performance of the Taraweeh prayer under the Imam-ship of the famously well-versed companion, Ubayy ibn Ka'b (*Radiyallahu Anhu*). Whilst we do not know the number of units offered in the time of the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) or during the caliphate of Abu Bakr (*Radiyallahu Anhu*), we do know how many units were offered under the Imam-ship of Ubayy (*Radiyallahu Anhu*), via a sound chain. For example:

عَنِ السَّائِبِ بْنِ يَزِيدَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ كَانُوا يَقُومُونَ عَلَى عَهْدِ عُمَرَ
بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ بِعِشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً

Translation: On the authority of al-Saa'ib bin Yazid

(*Radiyallahu Anhu*), he said: “We would offer twenty units of the Taraweeh prayer, during the month of Ramadan, in the time of Umar bin Khattab (*Radiyallahu Anhu*).”¹

عَنْ يَزِيدَ بْنِ رُؤْمَانَ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: كَانَ النَّاسُ يَقُومُونَ فِي زَمَانِ عُمَرَ بْنِ
الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فِي رَمَضَانَ بِثَلَاثٍ وَعِشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً

Translation: On the authority of Yazid bin Ruman who said: “We would offer twenty-three units of the night prayer, during the month of Ramadan, in the

¹ al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, 2:699; al-'Ayni, *al-Binayah Sharh al-Hidayah*, 2:550 and *Umdat al-Qari*, 7:259; al-Zaylai', *Nasb al-Rayah Takhrij Ahadith al-Hidayah*, 3:149; al-Suyuti, *al-Masabih Fi Salat al-Tarawee*, pg. 30; Sayyid Amimul Ihsan, *Fiqh al-Sunan Wa al-Athar*, pg. 285; Sayyid Yusuf al-Bannuri, *Ma'arif al-Sunan*, 5:557; Ismail al-Ansari, *Tashih Hadith Salat al-Taraweeh 'Ishrin Rak'ah*, pg. 7; Dr. Ibrahim Ibn Muhammad, *Adad Raka'at al-Tarawee*, pg. 49

Notes: The famous successor (*Tabi-i'*), Yazid bin Abdullah (*Rahimahullah*) narrated from the companion al-Saa'ib (*Radiyallahu Anhu*), that the Muslims offered twenty units of the Taraweeh prayer during the caliphate of Umar (*Radiyallahu Anhu*). This *Mawquf* narration (i.e. a narration that reaches a companion) has a sound chain of transmission. Imam al-Nawawi (in *al-Khulasa al-Majmu'*), Imam al-Zaylai' (in *Nasb al-Rayah*), Imam al-Subuki (in *Sharh al-Minhaj*), Imam al-Ayni (in *Umdat al-Qari*), Imam al-Suyuti (in *al-Masabih Fi Salat al-Tarawee*), Mulla Ali Qari (in *Sharh al-Muwatta*) and Imam al-Naymawi (in *Aathar al-Sunan*) have all said this narration is sound.

Initially this tradition came under scrutiny by being called weak (*Da'eef*) by Ibn al-Arabi al-Ishbili (468 – 543 AH) in the book “*Aaridat al-Ahwadhi*”. Thereafter, a famous *Ahl al-Hadith* scholar (a scholar that does not ascribe to a school of thought) from the Indian sub-continent, Abdur Rahman al-Mubarakpuri (Death: 1353 AH) mentioned it as weak also in “*Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi*”. Imitating the two mentioned scholars, Shaykh Nasir al-Din al-Albani (1914 – 1999 CE) also mentions the tradition as weak in his book “*Salat al-Taraweeh*”. =

time of Umar bin Khattab (*Radiyallahu Anhu*).”¹

عَنْ شُتَيْبِ بْنِ شَكْلٍ وَكَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّهُ كَانَ
يُؤْمَهُمْ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ بَعَشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً وَيُوتَرُ بِثَلَاثٍ

Translation: “On the authority of Shutayr bin Shaki, who was a companion of Ali (*Radiyallahu Anhu*). He would lead them (i.e. the Muslims), during the

=Furthermore, he attempts to prove that performing more than twenty units of the Taraweeh prayer is a heinous innovation. However, al-Albani’s position on this issue is clearly against the *Sunnah*. Various scholars from various countries have written and espoused replies to al-Albani’s misguided claims. A Saudi scholar, Shaykh Professor Dr Ibrahim bin Muhammad al-Sabihi, wrote a short and concise passage in direct opposition to al-Albani’s stance in his book “*Adad Raka’at al-Taraweeh*” (i.e. pages 45 to 55). This book was approved by the publishers *Maktabat al-Malik Fahd al-Wataniyah* and they published a second edition in Riyadh 1436 AH. A famous scholar and researcher for Saudi Arabia’s *Dar al-Ifta*, Shaykh Ismail Ibn Muhammad al-Ansari also wrote a reply to al-Albani’s erroneous claim, in his book “*Tashih Hadith al-Taraweeh ‘Ishreen Rak’ah Wa al-Radd ‘Alaa al-Albani Fi Tad’eefihi*” (page 125). The book was published for a third edition in 1988 CE/1408 AH by *Maktabat al-Imam al-Shafi-i*.

¹ Malik, *al-Muwatta*, 1:115; al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, 2:496; al-Bayhaqi, *Shu’ab al-Iman*, 3:177; al-Farabi, *Kitab al-Siyam*, pg. 132; al-Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari*, 4:253; al-Asqalani, *al-Dirayah Fi Takhrij Ahadith al-Hidayah*, 1:203; Ibn Abd al-Barr, *al-Tamhid*, 8:115; al-Ayni, *Umdat al-Qari*, 7:259; al-Ayni, *al-Binayah Fi Sharh al-Hidayah*, 2:551; al-Zurqani, *Sharh al-Muwatta*, 1:342; al-Shawkani, *Nayl al-Awtaar*, 3:63; al-Zaylai, *Nasb al-Rayah*, 2:154; Ibn Rushd, *Bidayat al-Mujtahid*, 1:152; Ibn Qudamah, *al-Mughni*, 1:456; al-Bahlawi, *Adillat al-Hanafiyyah*, pg. 227; Dr. As’ad al-Saaghirji, *al-Fiqh al-Hanafi Wa Adillatuhu*, 1:244; al-Saabuni, *al-Hady al-Nabawi*, pg. 55; Dr. Tahir al-Qadri, *Minhaj al-Sawi*, pg. 317.

The tradition narrating that twenty units of the Taraweeh prayer were offered during the caliphate of Umar (*Radiyallahu Anhu*) has been narrated by many different=

month of Ramadan, with twenty units of prayer (*Taraweeh*) and three units of *Witr*.¹

عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ السُّلَمِيِّ، عَنْ عَلِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: دَعَا الْقُرَّاءَ فِي رَمَضَانَ فَأَمَرَ مِنْهُمْ رَجُلًا يُصَلِّي بِالنَّاسِ عِشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً، قَالَ وَكَانَ عَلِيٌّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ يُؤْتِرُ بِهِمْ وَرَوَى ذَلِكَ مِنْ وَجْهِ آخَرَ عَنْ عَلِيٍّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ

Translation: “On the authority of Abu Abdur Rahman al-Sulami who said, from Ali (*Radiyallahu Anhu*): He [i.e. Ali (*Radiyallahu Anhu*)] called the reciters (of the Quran) in Ramadan. He ordered one of them to perform twenty units (of the Taraweeh prayer) with the people. Ali (*Radiyallahu Anhu*) would lead the people in *Witr*.” This tradition is also narrated in another chain, by this narrator, via Ali

=scholars via their own personal chains of transmissions. Imam Malik (*Rahimahullah*) [93 – 179 AH] narrates this tradition from his teacher Shaykh Yazid bin Ruman (*Rahimahullah*) [Death: 130 AH]. One only needs a glance at the *Rijal* scriptures to see Imam Malik’s reliability in relating *Ahadith*. As for Yazid bin Ruman, the following was mentioned about him, by Ibn Ma’een, Ibn Hibban, al-Nasai, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani and al-Dhahabi: كَانَ عَالِمًا ثَقَّةً كَثِيرَ الْحَدِيثِ. Translation: “He was a learned reliable scholar who narrated many traditions.”

¹ Ibn Abi Shaybah, *al-Musannaf*, 2:163; al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, 2:496; Ibn Abd al-Barr, *al-Istidhkar*, 5:156; Dr. Tahir al-Qadri, *Minhaj al-Sawi*, pg. 323.

Notes: Both Shutayr and his father Shaki bin Humaid were among the famous *Tabi-i'* (successors) of Kufa. He (i.e. Shutayr) narrated traditions from various companions, for example: Ali (*Radiyallahu Anhu*) and Abdullah bin Mas'ud (*Radiyallahu Anhu*). he is considered reliable in the narrating of *Ahadith*.

His death date is estimated between 68 AH and 73 AH. He is passed away in Kufa.

(Radiyahallahu Anhu).¹

عَنْ أَبِي الْحَسَنِ أَنَّ عَلِيَّ بْنَ أَبِي طَالِبٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَمَرَ رَجُلًا أَنْ
يُصَلِّيَ بِالنَّاسِ خَمْسَ تَرَوِيحَاتٍ عَشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً

Translation: "On the authority of Abul Hasanaa' who said that Ali (Radiyahallahu Anhu) ordered one of them to perform twenty units (of the Taraweeh prayer) with the people with five breaks/rests (i.e. a break every four units)."²

عَنْ أَبِي الْخَصِيبِ قَالَ: كَانَ يُؤْمِنَا سُويْدُ بْنُ غَفَلَةَ فِي رَمَضَانَ فَيُصَلِّي
خَمْسَ تَرَوِيحَاتٍ عَشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً

Translation: "On the authority of Abul Khasib, who said: In Ramadan, Suwayd bin Ghafalah would lead us in prayer. He would perform twenty units (of the

¹ al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, 2:496; Ibn Abd al-Barr, *al-Istidhkar*, 5:556; al-Mubarakpuri, *Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi*, 3:528; Dr. As'ad al-Saaghirji, *al-Fiqh al-Hanafi Wa Adillatuhu*, 1:244; Dr. Tahir al-Qadri, *Minhaj al-Sawi*, pg. 323.

A narrator in this chain, Hammad ibn Shu'aib is considered *Da'eef* (weak/unreliable).

Notes: Abu Abdur Rahman al-Sulami's real name is Abdullah. He was a first generation/senior *Tabi-i'* (meaning he saw many of the senior companions). His father was the companion, Habib ibn Rabi'ah (Radiyahallahu Anhu). He narrated traditions from Umar, Ali, Abu Musa al-Ash'ari, Hudhaifah ibn al-Yaman and Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas (Radiyahallahu Anhum). He was a well-known reliable narrator of *Hadith*. He passed away in the year 74 AH in Kufa.

² Ibn Abi Shaybah, *al-Musannaf*, 2:163; al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, 2:496; Ibn Abd al-Barr, *al-Tamhid*, 8:115; Ibn Qudamah, *al-Mughni*, 1:456; al-Aajuri, *Kitab al-Shari'ah*, 3:1781; al-Mubarakpuri, *Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi*, 3:527; Dr. As'ad al-Saaghirji, *al-Fiqh al-Hanafi Wa Adillatuhu*, 1:244; Dr. Tahir al-Qadri, *Minhaj al-Sawi*, pg. 324.

The chain of transmission (*Isnad*) of this tradition is *Da'eef* (weak).

Taraweeh prayer) with five breaks/rests (i.e. a break every four units).”¹

عَنْ نَافِعِ بْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: كَانَ ابْنُ أَبِي مُلَيْكَةَ يُصَلِّي بِنَا فِي رَمَضَانَ عِشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً

Translation: “On the authority of Nafi’ bin Umar, who said: In Ramadan, Ibn Abu Mulaykah would lead us in twenty units (of the Taraweeh prayer).”²

عَنْ عَطَاءٍ قَالَ: أَدْرَكْتُ النَّاسَ وَهُمْ يُصَلُّونَ ثَلَاثًا وَعِشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً بِالْوُتْرِ

¹ al-Bayhaqi, *al-Sunan al-Kubra*, 2:446; al-Bukhari, *al-Kuna*, 1:28; al-Baghawi, *Sharh al-Sunnah*, 4:122; al-Naymawi, *Aathar al-Sunan*, pg. 322.

Allamah al-Naymawi and Mufti Amimul Ihsan have mentioned this tradition to be *Hasan* (fair).

Notes: Suwayd ibn Ghafalah was a first-generation, senior *Tabi-i’* (successor). He had accepted Islam during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) but he didn’t have the opportunity to see him or meet with him. According to Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, al-Dhahabi and others, he arrived in *Madinah al-Munawwarah* a little while after the burial of Rasoolullah (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*). He narrated *Ahadith* from a great number of companions including the four orthodox Caliphs (*Khulafa al-Rashidun*). It is unanimously agreed that he is reliable in the narration of *Hadith*. He passed away in Kufa in 80 AH. According to some narrations, he passed away at the age of 130.

² Ibn Abi Shaybah, *al-Musannaf*, 2:123; al-Baghawi, *Sharh al-Sunnah*, 4:122; al-Naymawi, *Aathar al-Sunan*, pg. 296; al-Kandehlawi, *Awjaz al-Masalik*, 2:536; Amimul Ihsan, *Fiqh al-Sunan Wa al-Aathar*, pg. 285; Dr. Tahir al-Qadri, *al-Minhaj al-Sawi*, pg. 325.

According to Imam al-Naymawi, Mufti Amimul Ihsan and others, this tradition is *Sahih* (sound).

Notes: (1) Nafi’ – His name and lineage: Nafi’ bin Umar bin Abdullah bin ibn Jamil bin Amir. He was a famous *Tab’ al-Tabi-i’* (successor of the successors) that used to live in *Makkah al-Mukarramah*. Among his *Hadith* teachers were: Ibn Abi Mulaykah, Umayyah bin Safwan al-Jamuhi, Bishr bin=

Translation: “On the authority of ‘Ataa, who said: I saw the people performing twenty-three units (of prayer) including *Witr*.”¹

=Asim al-Saqafi, Amr bin Dinar and many other successors. Among his students were: Abdullah bin Mubarak, Yahya al-Qattan, Waqi’ ibn al-Jarrah, Yazid bin Harun and many other famous *Hadith* narrators.

According to the al-Bukhari, Ibn Ma’een, al-Nasai and other, Nafi’ is a reliable narrator of *Hadith*.

He passed away in *Makkah al-Mukarramah* in 169 AH.

(2) Ibn Abi Mulaykah – This famous successors’ full name is Abdullah bin Ubaidullah al-Tamimi. He was born in *Madinah al-Munawwarah* towards the end of Uthman bin Affan (*Radiyallahu Anhu*)’s caliphate. He had the fortune of seeing thirty companions of the Prophet Muhammad (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*), among them: Mother of the Believers – Ayesha al-Siddiqah (*Radiyallahu Anha*), Asma bint Abi Bakr (*Radiyallahu Anha*), Abdullah bin Abbas (*Radiyallahu Anhum*), Abdullah bin Umar (*Radiyallahu Anhum*), Abdullah bin Zubair (*Radiyallahu Anhum*), Abdullah bin Ja’far (*Radiyallahu Anhu*), Abdur Rahman bin ‘Auf (*Radiyallahu Anhu*) and many others, from which he narrated *Ahadith*.

From among the successors (*Tabi-i*) he narrated *Ahadith* from ‘Ataa bin Abi Rabah and Amr bin Dinar. He also narrated from some *Tab’ al-Tabi-i* (successor of the successors) such as Nafi’ bin Umar and Laith bin Sa’d. He is unanimously agreed as a reliable narrator.

He passed away in 117 AH in *Makkah al-Mukarramah*.

¹ Ibn Abi Shaybah, *al-Musannaf*, 2:163; al-Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari*, 4:298; al-Naymawi, *Aathar al-Sunan*, pg. 291; al-Sahranpuri, *Badhl al-Majhud*, 7:160; Amimul Ihsan, *Fiqh al-Sunan Wa al-Aathar*, pg. 291; al-Kandehlawi, *Awjaz al-Masalik*, 2:532; Dr. Tahir al-Qadri, *al-Minhaj al-Sawi*, pg. 325.

According to Imam al-Naymawi, Mufti Amimul Ihsan and others, this tradition is *Hasan* (fair).

Notes: The famous successor (*Tabi-i*), ‘Ataa bin Abi Rabah Aslam bin Safwan was born in 27 AH in Yemen. During his adolescence he moved to *Makkah al-Mukarramah* with his family. He was the most famous scholar of his time. He once said:

أَدْرَكْتُ مِائَتَيْنِ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Translation: “I met with two hundred companions of the=

Besides the traditions brought forth in this chapter, there remain a variety of traditions, mentioned in many famous books, that prove the units of the Taraweeh prayer to be twenty. Saying that the units of Taraweeh is eight and that anything above eight is against the Sunnah seems like something thought-up and fictional. The traditional scholars did indeed have various opinions regarding the number of units. However, there is no record of anyone claiming that the number is eight and performing above eight is an innovation.

=Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam)." (Siyar 'Alameen Nubala, 5:81)

Among these two hundred, he procured Hadith from sixteen of them directly. Among his students are: Muhammad bin Sirin, Qatadah, Mujahid, Abu Hanifah, Malik, al-Aswad, Laith ibn Sa'd, al-'Amash, Sufyan al-Thawri, Abdullah bin Mubarak and many other famous scholars of *Hadith* and *Fiqh*.

Whenever any people would gather to know any Fiqh rulings from the famous companion Abdullah bin Abbas (*Radiyallahu Anhuma*), he would say to them:

يَا أَهْلَ مَكَّةَ! تَجْمَعُونَ عَلَيَّ وَعِنْدَكُمْ عَطَاءٌ

Translation: "O people of Makkah! Why do you gather to me when you have 'Ataa among you?" (*Tahdhib al-Kamal*, 2:77)

Imam Amr bin Sa'd narrates the following from his father:

قَدِمَ ابْنُ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا مَكَّةَ فَسَأَلُوهُ. فَقَالَ: تَجْمَعُونَ لِي السَّائِلَ وَفِيكُمْ عَطَاءٌ

Translation: "(Once) Ibn Umar (*Radiyallahu Anhuma*) arrived in Makkah. The people began asking him various *Fiqh* rulings. He said: Why do you gather to me when you have 'Ataa among you?" (*Tadhkirat al-Huffaz*, 1:898)

He passed away in 114 AH in *Makkah al-Mukarramah*.

Such a famous, knowledgeable, well-renowned successor scholar, the like of Imam 'Ataa bin Abi Rabah narrates that he saw the people of his time (i.e. the Companions and Successors) performing twenty units of the Taraweeh prayer.

The Actions of the Orthodox Caliphs (Khulafa al-Rashidun) and the Instructions of Rasoolullah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam)

We discussed in the previous chapter, that during the reign of the first Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (*Radiyallahu Anhu*), the companions would offer the Taraweeh prayer alone (i.e. not in congregation) either at home or in the mosque. Even then, they would have small occasional congregations. During the first year of Umar (*Radiyallahu Anhu*)'s caliphate, as before, the small occasional congregations and the offering of the Taraweeh prayer in isolation continued. It is also clear from a tradition in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, that during his caliphate Umar (*Radiyallahu Anhu*) established the performance of the Taraweeh prayer in congregation behind one Imam (i.e. one big congregation rather than small occasional congregations). There are various narrations regarding the number of units of Taraweeh offered during that time.¹ However, there are genuine sound traditions that mention twenty units were offered at the time of Umar (*Radiyallahu Anhu*)'s caliphate. The companions and successors continued to offer the twenty units throughout the caliphates of Uthman (*Radiyallahu Anhu*) and Ali (*Radiyallahu Anhu*).

With regards to this, Imam al-Tirmidhi (209 – 279 AH) said the following:

¹ In his *Muwatta*, Imam Malik (*Rahimahullah*) brought traditions mentioning that the companions and successors offered twenty units of Taraweeh during the caliphate of Umar (*Radiyallahu Anhu*). In addition, he also mentions various traditions mentioning that eight units were offered. Thereafter, many compilations of Hadith brought these narrations and referenced Imam Malik's *Muwatta*. One such example is Mulla Ali Qari in his *Mirqat al-Mafatih*, where in=

وأكثر أهل العلم على ما روي عن عمر وعلي وغيرهما من أصحاب
النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم عشرين ركعة

Translation: "Majority of the scholars agree that the units of the Taraweeh prayer are reported from Umar, Ali and other companions, to be twenty units."¹

Hafiz Ibn Taymiyyah (661–728 AH) said the following:

ثبت أن أبي بن كعب كان يقوم بالناس عشرين ركعة في رمضان ويوتر
بثلاث فرأى كثيرا من العلماء أن ذلك هو السنة لأنه قام بين
المهاجرين والأنصار ولم ينكره منكر

Translation: "It is established that Ubayy bin Ka'b led the people in Taraweeh during Ramadan with twenty units and then he offered three *Witr*. Majority of the scholars opine that this is the

=he disproves the performance of eight units. He starts the discussion by stating:

قال ابن عبد البر: هذه الرواية وهم، والذي صح كانوا يقومون على عهد عمر بعشرين ركعة
(مرقاة المفاتيح، الجزء الثالث، صفحة ٣٤٢)

Translation: "Ibn Abd al-Barr (al-Maliki) [368 – 464 AH] said: These narrations are conjectures. It is soundly narrated that they (i.e. the companions and successors) offered 20 units of Taraweeh during the caliphate of Umar (*Radiyallahu Anhu*)."
(*Mirqat al-Mafatih*, 3: 342)

It is also necessary to clarify such narrations in a different light. It is certainly true that Imam Malik brought narrations mentioning that the units of Taraweeh are eight, but it would be prudent to say that these narrations were not "action-worthy" according to Imam Malik. This is inferred as the Maliki School of Thought has only two opinions regarding the number of units and they are thirty-six or twenty (this will be discussed comprehensively in an upcoming chapter). If the traditions mentioning eight units were credible according to Imam Malik, then surely, he would have acted upon them.

¹ *al-Jami' al-Tirmidhi*, Volume 1, Page No. 223 (Book of Fasting, Chapter pertaining the Night Prayer of Ramadan)

Sunnah as he stood among the *Muhajirun* and the *Ansar* and none of them opposed him.”¹

Imam Mulla Ali Qari (930–1014 AH) said the following:

إنهم كانوا يقيمون على عهد عمر بعشرين ركعة وعلى عهد عثمان وعلي رضي الله عنهم

Translation: “Certainly, they performed twenty units of Taraweeh during the caliphate of Umar, Uthman and Ali (May Allah be pleased with them).”²

Shaykh Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahhab al-Najdi (1115 – 1206 AH) said the following:

ولنا أن عمر لما جمع الناس على أبي بن كعب يصلي بهم عشرين ركعة ... وما كان عليه الصحابة أولى

Translation: “According to us, when Umar gathered the people to perform Taraweeh behind Ubayy bin Ka’b, they performed twenty units ... and what the companions do is the best.”³

Shaykh ‘Atiyyah Muhammad Salim Al-Madani (1346 – 1420 AH) said the following:

ففي زمن علي رضي الله عنه كانت التراويح عشرين ركعة ... كما كانت في عهد عثمان رضي الله عنه وعهد عمر رضي الله عنه

Translation: “During the caliphate of Ali (May Allah be pleased with him) the Taraweeh prayer was twenty units ... as it was during the caliphate of Uthman (May Allah be pleased with him) and Umar (May Allah be pleased with him).”⁴

¹ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmu’ al-Fatawa*, 1:191

² Mulla Ali Qari, *Fath al-Bab Al-Inayah*, 1:342

³ Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, *Mukhtasar al-Insaf Wa al-Sharh al-Kabir*, pg. 157

⁴ ‘Atiyyah Muhammad Salim, *al-Taraweeh Akthar Min Alf ‘Aam Fi Masjid al-Nabi Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*, 1:342

Allamah al-Sayyid Sabiq (1315–1420 AH) said the following:

وصح أن الناس يصلون على عهد عمر وعثمان وعلي عشرين ركعة

Translation: “It is sound (*Sahih*) that the people performed twenty units of Taraweeh during the times of Umar, Uthman and Ali.”¹

Shaykh Muhammad Ali al-Sabuni (1930– 2015 AH) said the following:

وهي عشرين ركعة من غير صلاة الوتر، ومع الوتر تصبح ثلاثاً وعشرين ركعة. على ذلك مضت السنة واتفقت الأمة سلفاً وخلفاً من عهد الخليفة الراشد عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه وأرضاه إلى زماننا هذا

Translation: “It (i.e. the Taraweeh prayer) is twenty units excluding the *Witr* prayer. Including the *Witr* prayer, it is (a total of) twenty-three units. The sunnah has been established as such. The past and present Ummah, from the time of the orthodox Caliph, Umar bin al-Khattab (May Allah be pleased with him), until our times, are agreed upon this point.”²

It is as clear as daylight, from the above discussion and evidences that the Taraweeh prayer was twenty units throughout the caliphate of Umar, Uthman and Ali (*Radiyallahu Anhum*). The companions and the successor all performed twenty throughout that time. One should note that those among the *Salafi*-movement and the *Ahl al-Hadith* of the Indian sub-continent, who claim that performing more than eight units of Taraweeh is an innovation (*Bid'ah*), take Ibn Taymiyyah and

¹ al-Sayyid Sabiq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, 1:142

² Muhammad Ali al-Sabuni, *al-Hady al-Nabawi al-Sahih Fi Salat al-Taraweeh*, pg. 52

Ibn Abdul Wahhab al-Najdi as two of their most decorated scholars (referring to the former as *Shaykh al-Islam* and the latter as a *Mujaddid* of his time). These two scholars have opined that twenty was performed during the time of the Sahabah and *Tabi'un*. Among the other scholars cited is Shaykh Atiyaah Muhammad Salim al-Madani a former judge of the Illuminated city, a famous Egyptian scholar of the Muslim Brotherhood, a long-term Hadith researcher and also a famous exegete of Umm al-Qura University in Makkah, a receiver of the King Faisal award (al-Sayyid Sabiq whose book *Fiqh al-Sunnah* is available in various languages) and the famous Syrian scholar, Muhammad Ali al-Sabuni. Many other scholars have shared this view, but we could not bring everyone's quotations. Thus, we can conclude that performing twenty units of Taraweeh was both the action and instruction of the Orthodox Caliphs.

Now one may question, what is the need to follow the instruction of the Orthodox Caliphs? We will present some evidence for this:

The Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) clearly instructed his Ummah the following:

مَنْ يَعِشْ مِنْكُمْ فَسَيَرَى اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا، فَعَلَيْكُمْ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمُهْدِيِّينَ، عَضُّوا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِدِ... الحديث

Translation: "Whoever among you lives long, he will see great controversy. So, you must keep to my *Sunnah* and to the *Sunnah* of the *Khulafa al-Rashideen* (The Orthodox Caliphs), those who guide to the right way. Bite hard on it with your molar teeth (i.e. cling to it stubbornly)."

The tradition clearly states that if you witness any controversy or huge differences then you hold

stubbornly to the Sunnah of the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) and the “Sunnah” (actions, sayings and practices) of the *Khulafa al-Rashideen* (The Orthodox Caliphs). Thus, the huge controversy surrounding the units of Taraweeh is clear for all to see. Consequently, even if we say that twenty units is not established from the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*), it is established through the actions of the *Khulafa al-Rashideen* (The Orthodox Caliphs).²

Thus, following the Orthodox Caliphs and the other companions, is in fact the *Sunnah*, if there remains no clear-cut command from the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) himself.

¹ al-Tirmidhi, *al-Jami'*, 2:81; Ibn Majah, *al-Sunan*, pg. 8; al-Hakim, *al-Mustadrak*, 1:174; al-Albani, *Silsilat al-Ahadith al-Sahihah*, 2:290

Notes: The above tradition is a portion of a longer Hadith, narrated on the authority of Irbad bin Sariyyah (*Radiyallahu Anhu*). al-Tirmidhi concludes this tradition is *Hasan-Sahih*. al-Albani mentions that this tradition is *Sahih* (sound) [*Silsilat al-Ahadith al-Sahihah*, 2:210].

² As mentioned on various occasions we have presented evidences proving that between 13 AH and 40 AH (i.e. from the beginning of Umar [*Radiyallahu Anhu*]'s caliphate until the end Ali [*Radiyallahu Anhu*]'s caliphate) the companions and successors offered twenty units of Taraweeh. This is an opinion taken by Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Abdul Wahhab al-Najdi. However, Nasir al-Din al-Albani (1914 – 1999 AH) says the following:

لم يثبت أن أحدا من الصحابة صلاها عشرين

Translation: “It is not established that any of the companions offered twenty units of it (i.e. Taraweeh).” (*Salat al-Taraweeh*, pg. 96)

Thus, if anyone solely accepts al-Albani’s research and his opinion in this regard, he has surely done the sound traditions an injustice.

The Opinion of the Four Schools of Thought (*Madhaahib*) Pertaining the Units of the Taraweeh Prayer

In the modern-day, it is well known that majority of the world's Muslims adhere to one of the four remaining schools of thought (*Madhaahib*): Hanafi, Maliki, Shaf'ee and Hanbali. The objective of the founding *Mujtahid*¹ Imams of the respective schools, was to facilitate a Muslims adherence to the *Shari'ah* (i.e. adherence to the Quran and *Sunnah*). In the last few decades, there has been a rise in Muslims who profess to follow *Sahih Ahadith* (sound traditions) only and do not adhere to any school of thought. While we make no comment regarding Muslims who follow this new "school", anyone who opposes the adherence to one of the four schools of thought has surely opposed an action of Islam (i.e. surely making Islam easier for the people to follow cannot be an act of evil?). Regardless of what name such groups crop under, the act of creating doubt, uncertainty and confusion regarding millennia-old traditions and previously unopposed actions of worship is surely not in the interest of the Ummah as a whole. Despite established traditions from the companions themselves and clear opinions from the *Mujtahid* Imams of the *Madhaahib*, the issue of the units of Taraweeh has been raised, seemingly just to cause confusion and corruption.

Looking through the books of the schools of thought, one will find detailed discussions and

¹ *Mujtahid* refers to a scholar who has his own principles of deriving *Fiqh* rulings from the Quran and *Sunnah*. There are different levels of *Mujtahid*. Here we are referring to *Mujtahid-Mutlaq*. Only the founders of the four schools are considered to be *Mujtahid-Mutlaq*.

analysis regarding practically all acts of worship. Similarly, all the schools have given opinions and presented discussions regarding the units of Taraweeh. Presenting all such opinions on behalf of all the schools would require hundreds and hundreds of pages. Thus, in the interest of briefness we have presented a few extracts from a single book from each of the four schools.

(1) The Hanafi School of Thought

Imam Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Sarakhsi al-Hanafi (Death: 490 AH) mentions the following in his writing:

فإنها عشرين ركعة سوى الوتر عندنا، وقال مالك رحمه الله تعالى السنة فيها ستة وثلاثون. قيل من أراد أن يعمل بقول مالك رحمه الله تعالى ويسلك مسلكه ينبغي أن يفعل كما قال أبو حنيفة رحمه الله تعالى يصلي عشرين ركعة كما هو السنة ويصلي الباقي فرادى كل تسليتين أربع ركعات، وهذا مذهبنا

Translation: "According to us, it (i.e. Taraweeh) is twenty units excluding *Witr*. Malik (May Allah have mercy on him) said: The *Sunnah* in this regard is thirty-six units. It is said: Whoever wants to follow Malik (May Allah have mercy on him) in this matter, it is appropriate for him to perform twenty units (in congregation), as is the opinion of Abu Hanifah (May Allah have mercy on him). Then he should perform the remaining (sixteen) alone with two *Salaams* per four units. This is our school."¹

¹ al-Sarakhsi, *al-Mabsut*, 2:144

(2) The Maliki School of Thought

Imam Abul Walid Ibn Rushd al-Maliki (Death: 515 AH) mentions the following in his writing:

واختلفوا في المختار من عدد الركعات التي يقوم بها الناس في رمضان، فأختار مالك في أحد قوليه وأبو حنيفة والشافعي وأحمد وداود القيام بعشرين ركعة سوى الوتر وذكر ابن القاسم عن مالك أنه كان يتحسن ستاً وثلاثين ركعة والوتر ثلاث

Translation: "They (i.e. the scholars) have differed regarding the preferred number of units (of Taraweeh) during the month of Ramadan. Malik (in one of his two opinions), Abu Hanifah, al-Shaf'ee, Ahmad (Ibn Hanbal), Dawud (al-Zahiri) have all opined that Taraweeh is twenty units excluding *Witr*. Ibn al-Qasim mentioned that Malik preferred thirty-six units (of Taraweeh) and three *Witr*."¹

(3) The Shaf'ee School of Thought

Imam Muhi al-Din al-Nawawi al-Shaf'ee (Death: 676 AH) mentions the following in his writing:

مذهبنا أنها عشرون ركعة بعشر تسليماً غير الوتر وذلك خمس ترويحاً والترويحة أربع ركعات بتسليمتين

Translation: "Our school says that it is 20 units with ten *salaams* excluding *Witr*. This results in 5 brakes. Every break is after four units of two *salaams*."²

¹ Ibn Rushd, *Bidayat al-Mujtahid Wa Nihayat al-Muqtasid*, 1:487

Notes: According to Ibn Rushd, Imam Malik has two opinions regarding the units of Taraweeh. Firstly, twenty units of prayer the thirty-six units of prayer. Majority of the Maliki school follow twenty units of Taraweeh. Thus, even though Imam Malik brought narrations regarding eight units of Taraweeh, he did not have any opinions stating that the prayer is in fact eight units.

² al-Nawawi, *Al-Majmu' Sharh al-Muhadhab*, 3:527

(4) The Hanbali School of Thought

Imam Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi al-Hanbali (Death: 620 AH) mentions the following in his writing:

والمختار عند أبي عبد الله رحمه الله فيها عشرين ركعة وبهذا قال الثوري وأبو حنيفة والشافعي وقال مالك ستة وثلاثون

Translation: "The preferred opinion according to Abu Abdullah (this was the *Kunya* [appellation] of Ahmad bin Hanbal [May Allah have mercy on him]) is twenty units. al-Thawri, Abu Hanifah and al-Shaf'ee have the same opinion. Malik said: It's thirty-six."¹

It is clear from the discussion above that 3 of the 4 schools of thought have the opinion the taraweeh prayer is twenty units. Even though, the Maliki school of thought's chosen opinion is thirty-six units they still have an opinion mentioning twenty units. Many scholars of the Maliki school of thought hold the opinion that twenty units is the preferred Sunnah.

Thus, those who follow the opinion of Shaykh Nasir al-Din al-Albani by saying that performing more than eight units is an innovation and misguidance are calling all the *Mujtahid* Imams innovators and misguided people. We make no judgement regarding these people, as Allah is the king of kings and He knows best.

¹ Ibn Qudamah, *al-Mughni*, 2:604

Notes: At the end of this discussion, Ibn Qudamah mentions that: meaning: وهذا كإجماع "This is like a consensus". (*al-Mughni*, 2:604)

A Review of the Evidences Presented for the Performance of Eight Units of Taraweeh

According to those who do not adhere to a specific school of thought, the Taraweeh prayer is eight units. Some of these people claim that performing more than eight is an innovation and misguidance and that the performance of eight is mentioned in *Sahih al-Bukhari*. We have mentioned in the previous chapters that such a claim is not established and seems to be fictitious. The main evidence presented by the supporters of this view is a sound tradition, but the explanation given by these people is in fact flawed.

First evidence:

عَنْ أَبِي سَلَمَةَ بْنِ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ، أَنَّهُ سَأَلَ عَائِشَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا: كَيْفَ
كَانَتْ صَلَاةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي رَمَضَانَ فَقَالَتْ مَا كَانَ
يَزِيدُ فِي رَمَضَانَ، وَلَا فِي غَيْرِهَا عَلَى إِحْدَى عَشْرَةِ رَكْعَةٍ، يُصَلِّي أَرْبَعًا فَلَا
تَسْأَلُ عَنْ حُسْنِهِنَّ وَطَوْلِهِنَّ، ثُمَّ يُصَلِّي أَرْبَعًا فَلَا تَسْأَلُ عَنْ حُسْنِهِنَّ
وَطَوْلِهِنَّ، ثُمَّ يُصَلِّي ثَلَاثًا. فَقُلْتُ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، أَتَنَامُ قَبْلَ أَنْ تُؤْتِرَ قَالَ:
يَا عَائِشَةُ إِنَّ عَيْنَيَّ تَنَامَانِ وَلَا يَنَامُ قَلْبِي

Translation: Abu Salamah bin 'Abd al-Rahman asked 'Ayesha (*Radiyallahu Anha*): “How did the Messenger of Allah (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) pray during Ramadan?” She replied: “The Messenger of Allah (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) did not pray more than eleven units during Ramadan and other than Ramadan. He would pray four units. Do not ask about their elegance and length. He then would pray another four units. Do

not ask about their elegance and length. Then he would pray three units. I said: "O Messenger of Allah! Do you sleep before observing *Witr*?" He replied: "O Ayesha! My eyes sleep, but my heart does not sleep."¹

Analysis of the Evidence:

The Hadith mentioned above has been narrated in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, *Sahih Muslim*, *al-Sunan al-Arba'ah* (*Sunan Abu Dawud*, *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, *Sunan al-Nasai*, *Sunan Ibn Majah*) and other books of *Ahadith*. The tradition is undoubtedly sound (*Sahih*). However, there is ambiguity regarding whether the eight units (excluding *Witr*) refers to Taraweeh or *Tahajjud*. Those who claim performing more than eight units of Taraweeh is an innovation, uses this as one of their main evidences.

A brief analysis of the words in this Hadith clearly indicates that it refers to *Tahajjud* and not Taraweeh. the reason being that Abu Salamah was asking about the night prayer during the month of Ramadan. Although no prayer is specified, Ayesha (*Radiyahallahu Anha*) clearly replies regarding the *Tahajjud* prayer, which we can gather from the statement:

¹ *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 1:375; *Sahih Muslim*, 1:293

Notes: Abu Salamah was a famous successor (*Tabi-i'*). It is said that his real name was Abdullah or Ismail. His father was the famous companion (*Sahabi*), Abdur Rahman bin 'Auf (*Radiyahallahu Anhu*). He was born in Madinah in the year 22 AH. He narrated *Ahadith* from the mother of believers, Ayesha and Umm Salma, Uthman bin 'Affan, Zaid bin Thabit, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, Usama bin Zaid (May Allah be pleased with them all) and many other companions. From the years 48 to 54 AH, he served as a judge in Madinah. He passed away in 94 AH.

...مَا كَانَ يَزِيدُ فِي رَمَضَانَ وَلَا فِي غَيْرِهَا

Translation: "The Messenger of Allah (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) did not pray more (than eleven units) during Ramadan and other than Ramadan."

Thus, it is commonly known that the Taraweeh prayer is specifically offered during the month of Ramadan. As Ayesha (*Radiyallahu Anha*) replied the above statement, it is clear that she was referring to a prayer that can be performed both inside and outside of the month of Ramadan. Furthermore, the prayer that fits this criterion is undoubtedly *Tahajjud*, as the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) would offer this regularly, during the nights of Taraweeh as well as outside this month.

If we take the mentioned tradition to mean that the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) offered only eleven units for Taraweeh (i.e. eight units excluding the *Witr*), pushing aside the fact that Taraweeh is not performed outside of Ramadan, then this informs us that besides these eleven units, he (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) would not offer any other prayer during and outside the nights of Ramadan. In reality, this was not the case. There remain, other narrations of Ayesha (*Radiyallahu Anha*) herself, that mention the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) spending the entirety of the final ten nights of Ramadan in worship and he would encourage his family to do the same. If we look to Sunan al-Tirmidhi, Sunan Abu Dawud, Sunan al-Nasai and al-Bayhaqi, we will discover that they bring forth sound (*Sahih*) traditions mentioning that the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) increased the amount of worship he would do, during the month of Ramadan. In particular, he

would increase the amount of *Salah* he offered.

Thus, principally the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) offered more supererogatory (*Nafil*) prayers during the Ramadan, alongside other optional acts of worship. Knowing this, Abu Salamah asked the Mother of Believers, Ayesha (*Radiyahallahu Anha*), whether the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) increased his performance of *Tahajjud*, or not. Thus, he received the reply that the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) did not increase *Tahajjud* under any circumstances.

Considering the above discussion, others have given the explanation that on an ordinary night the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) offered *Tahajjud* and inside Ramadan he (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) offered Taraweeh. Two issues arise if one were to take such an explanation:

Firstly, if we take this statement to be true, then the traditions saying that the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) offered extra during the final ten nights of Ramadan would become insignificant. Why would it mention he increased his worship if it remained eleven units throughout the year?

Secondly, if we take it to be true that he (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) offered *Tahajjud* throughout the year and would offer Taraweeh (of the same units as *Tahajjud*) in the month of Ramadan, it is suggesting that the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*) missed *Tahajjud* during Ramadan. It is common knowledge that the *Tahajjud* prayer was *Wajib* (obligatory) upon the Prophet (*Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam*), thus missing such an action, be it during the month of Ramadan, would result in sin. This is a dangerous statement to be espoused by a believer.

Second evidence:

عَنْ جَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: صَلَّى بِنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ ثَمَانِ رَكَعَاتٍ وَأَوْتَرَ، فَلَمَّا كَانَتِ الْقَابِلَةُ اجْتَمَعْنَا فِي الْمَسْجِدِ وَرَجَوْنَا أَنْ يَخْرُجَ، فَلَمْ نَزَلْ فِيهِ حَتَّى أَصْبَحْنَا. ثُمَّ دَخَلْنَا، فَقُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، اجْتَمَعْنَا الْبَارِحَةَ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ، وَرَجَوْنَا أَنْ تُصَلِّيَ بِنَا، فَقَالَ: إِنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ يُكْتَبَ عَلَيْكُمْ

Translation: On the authority of Jabir bin Abdullah (Radiyahallahu Anhu), he said: "The Messenger of Allah (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) performed eight units and three *Witr* with us in the month of Ramadan. When the next day came, we gathered in the mosque and hoped that he would come out (i.e. to perform the prayer, with us, again). He did not leave until morning. When he (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) entered, we said: "O Messenger of Allah! We gathered last night in the mosque and we hoped you would perform *Salah* with us." He (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) replied: "Indeed I feared that it would be written for you (i.e. it would become compulsory upon you)."

Analysis of the Evidence:

Imam al-Tabarani (260 – 360 AH) comments the following in *al-Mu'jam al-Saghir* after mentioning this tradition:

لا يروي عن جابر بن عبد الله إلا بهذا الإسناد

Translation: "It is not narrated on the authority of

¹ al-Tabarani, *al-Mu'jam al-Saghir*, 1:190; al-Naymawi, *Athar al-Sunan*, pg. 286

Notes: This tradition is mentioned on the authority of Jabir (Radiyahallahu Anhu) in other than the two books cited.

Jabir bin Abdullah except via this chain of transmission.” Despite his many students, only Esa bin Jariyah narrated this particular tradition from Jabir (*Radiyallahu Anhu*). Yahya bin Ma’een, Abu Dawud and others have mentioned Esa bin Jariyah to be a weak narrator of *Hadith*. Ibn ‘Adi (299 – 365 AH) mentions the following regarding Esa bin Ma’een’s narration of twenty units of Taraweeh and various other narrations: **كلها غير محفوظ** (None of these are preserved)¹. Thus, this narration is *Da’eef* (weak).

Thus, one cannot base the claim that Taraweeh is eight units and performing more than eight is an evil innovation upon a sound tradition with an erroneous commentary nor upon a weak tradition.

Important Miscellaneous Rulings Pertaining to the Taraweeh Prayer

Performing the Taraweeh prayer during the nights of Ramadan is *Sunnah Mu-akkadah* (an emphasized act of *Sunnah*). In ruling, *Sunnah Mu-akkadah* is very close to *Wajib* (obligatory). Thus, it is necessary for every Muslim to know the rules and regulations of the Taraweeh prayer. I urge everyone to try and seek this knowledge.

¹ Ibn ‘Adi, *al-Kamil Fi Du’afaa al-Rijal*, 5:349

Notes: The evidences mentioned by the supporters of eight units are narrated by Ayesha (*Radiyallahu Anha*) and Jabir (*Radiyallahu Anhu*). In neither of these narrations do either one of them object to performing more than eight units of Taraweeh. Hafiz Ibn Taymiyyah clearly states: “No companion or successor raised any objection regarding the performance of twenty units of Taraweeh.” Those who claim contrary to the companions and successors should have a look into the issue in more detail, God-willing.

Some elementary and important rulings regarding the Taraweeh prayer

- ❖ As the performance of the Taraweeh prayer is deemed to be *Sunnah Mu-akkadah*, missing the prayer without a valid reason, sanctioned by *Shari'ah*, is sinful. Someone who prays a few days and misses a few is also deemed to be sinful.
- ❖ It is *Sunnah Mu-akkadah* for both males and females. It is best for men to offer the prayer in congregation. However, it is permissible to offer it alone. It is best for women to offer it at home.
- ❖ If the situation occurs wherein someone misses the '*Isha*' congregation and the Taraweeh congregation has started, one should perform four units of '*Isha*' alone before joining the congregation. Thus, if any units are missed, one should make up for them during the break that takes place every four units, if possible. If this is not possible one should make up for them after the *Witr* congregation.
- ❖ If after performing the Taraweeh, it is discovered that for one reason or another the '*Isha*' prayer was not offered validly, both the '*Isha*' and Taraweeh must be repeated.
- ❖ The Taraweeh prayer is specifically performed in Ramadan only. Thus, any *Qadhaa* is not applicable outside this month.
- ❖ Taraweeh should be performed before the *Witr* prayer. However, if the *Witr* is performed before Taraweeh because of an unavoidable circumstance, the Taraweeh must be performed immediately after. According to the book *Maraqii' al-Falah*, it is permissible to offer *Witr* before or after Taraweeh. However, offering

Taraweeh first is best.

- ❖ If you make one intention and perform all twenty units in one go, then it is valid. However, making an intention for every two units is best.
- ❖ Having two congregations of Taraweeh in one mosque is *Makruh* (disliked).
- ❖ One Imam cannot lead two different congregations of Taraweeh. However, a *Musalli* can perform Taraweeh in one mosque and join the congregation of another mosque after he/she is done. However, this can only be done after completing the *Witr* of the first congregation.
- ❖ The *Witr* prayer is only performed in congregation during the month of Ramadan. This was the way the companions performed it. One cannot perform it in congregation outside of Ramadan.
- ❖ It is permissible to perform *Witr* alone, after performing Taraweeh in the mosque and returning home. However, it is better to perform it in congregation.
- ❖ It is best to recite an entire *Khatm* of the Quran, during the Taraweeh congregations. Some people have preferred completing the *Khatm* on the 27th Night. It is *Makruh* to complete the *Khatm* before the 21st Night without a valid reason. One must continue to perform Taraweeh during the remaining nights of Ramadan, even after the *Khatm* is completed (i.e. if the *Khatm* is completed on the 27th Night, Taraweeh must continue on the 28th, 29th and 30th).
- ❖ Taraweeh can be performed in four units (five

times to equal twenty) but performing it in two units is best. If anyone makes the intention of two units and mistakenly performs four it will be permissible.

- ❖ Completing a *Khatm* during the Taraweeh prayer is *Sunnah*. It is not correct if one does not complete the *Khatm* due to laziness or inattentiveness.
- ❖ When reciting the *khatm* during Taraweeh prayer, it is necessary to recite *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*, once, loudly, as it is a verse of the Quran. Thus, if the imam does not recite the *Basmalah* out loud at least once, his *Khatm* will be complete but the *Khatm* of the *Mussalis* will be incomplete.
- ❖ Performing the Taraweeh prayer in congregation is *Sunnah al-Kifayah* (a communal act of *Sunnah*). Thus, every area must have at least one Taraweeh congregation or the whole community will be sinful.
- ❖ It is permissible to perform the Taraweeh prayer individually even when there are ongoing congregations in the area. However, one will miss out on the rewards and virtues of offering prayer in congregation. Thus, it is better to perform Taraweeh in congregation, at the mosque, rather than individually at home.
- ❖ It is permissible to end the *Khatm* of Taraweeh with the recitation of Surah al-Naas (Chapter 114). However, it is better to begin Surah al-Baqarah (after ending Surah al-Naas) in the final unit of the Taraweeh prayer. It is recommended that recitation end at "*Ulaa-ika Humul Muflihoon*" (i.e. Quran 2:5).

- ❖ With regards to making mistakes during the *Khatm*: In order to complete the *Khatm*, one must repeat any mistakes or missed out portions of recitation. When doing so, recite some of the neighbouring verses to keep the arrangement of the Quran intact.
- ❖ When appointing an Imam for Taraweeh, it is vital that one looks for an Imam with good actions, character, piety and not just focus on the sound of the person's voice.
- ❖ Rushing the actions of Taraweeh and the recitation of the *Khatm*, whilst disregarding the proper etiquette of performing Salah is *Makruh*.
- ❖ If, for any reason, it is discovered that the Taraweeh prayer offered was in fact invalid, there is an opportunity to repeat its performance until *Subh al-Sadiq* (Dawn – i.e. until the time of *Fajr* enters). Thus, when the time of *Fajr* enters one can no longer perform Taraweeh. However, some have said one can offer *Qadhaa* for the missed Taraweeh until the following night.
- ❖ Without a valid legal reason, it is *Makruh* (disliked) to offer the Taraweeh prayer whilst sitting. This is because Taraweeh is not like a normal supererogatory prayer, rather it is *Sunnah Mu'akkadah* (an emphasized act of *Sunnah*).
- ❖ It is *Mustahab* (recommended) to take a break between every four units of Taraweeh offered. However, if the breaks cause inconvenience to the *Musallis* or result in the congregation becoming smaller, one should keep minimal breaks.

- ❖ It is the decision of the *Musalli*, what he/she may do during the breaks. One may perform extra prayers, recite the Quran, recite *Tasbeeh* and *Tahleel*, send salutations upon the Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam) or even just sit silently. According to *Fatwa al-Shami*, it is virtuous to recite the following supplication:

سُبْحَانَ ذِي الْمُلْكِ وَالْمَلَكُوتِ سُبْحَانَ ذِي الْعِزَّةِ وَالْعُظَمَةِ وَالْهِبَةِ
وَالْقُدْرَةِ وَالْكَبَرِيَاءِ وَالْجَبَرُوتِ سُبْحَانَ الْمَلِكِ الْحَيِّ الَّذِي لَا يَنَامُ
وَلَا يَمُوتُ أَبَدًا أَبَدًا سُبُّوحٌ قُدُّوسٌ رَبُّنَا وَرَبُّ الْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالرُّوحِ

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ نَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ وَنَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ

- ❖ After reciting the above dua, one can make other supplications.
- ❖ If possible, and if time permits, it is good to read the following Durood after every 2 units of prayer.

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا وَنَبِيِّنَا وَشَفِيعِنَا وَمَوْلَانَا مُحَمَّدٍ صَلَّى اللهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَأَصْحَابِهِ وَبَارِكْ وَسَلِّمْ

- ❖ After the completion of the full twenty units, one can recite the following Dua:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّا نَسْأَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَنَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ النَّارِ يَا خَالِقَ الْجَنَّةِ وَالنَّارِ
بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا عَزِيزُ يَا غَفَّارُ يَا كَرِيْمُ يَا سَتَّارُ يَا رَحِيْمُ يَا جَبَّارُ يَا
خَالِقُ يَا بَرُّ اَللّٰهُمَّ اَجِرْنَا مِنَ النَّارِ يَا مُجِيْزُ يَا مُجِيْزُ يَا مُجِيْزُ
بِرَحْمَتِكَ يَا اَرْحَمَ الرَّاحِمِيْنَ

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A brief life sketch of the esteemed author

Shaykh al-Hadith Allamah Muhammad Habibur Rahman Rahimahullah was not simply a person of Hadith, he was a devoted servant of this noble science. While Bangladesh boasted numerous scholars of hadith, the title 'Muhaddis Saheb,' by which he was affectionately known, became synonymous with his esteemed persona. He graced this world in 1934 in the tranquil village of Rarai, nestled in the embrace of Zakigonj, Sylhet, Bangladesh. He hailed from a family steeped in Islamic scholarship, with his father, the late Maulana Mumtaz Ali (Rahimahullah), renowned in his own right. His educational journey started in a humble local primary school. Further steps in his educational voyage brought him to the Ahmadiyah Madrasah in Shorokher Bazar, Kanaighat, Sylhet. During his tenure at Ahmadiyah Madrasah, his teachers recognised his exceptional abilities. His educational journey continued, eventually leading him to the venerable Gasbari Jamiul Ulum Madrasah in Sylhet, one of the oldest Islamic institutions in the region. In 1955, he achieved distinction by passing his Alim Examinations with flying colours, securing the 12th place in the Merit List of the East Pakistan Madrasah Examinations Board. His dedication and brilliance continued to shine, as he accomplished his Fazil Examinations in 1957, clinching the 3rd position on the Merit List. His journey culminated in 1959 when he earned his Kamil Examinations in the Hadith specialisation, once again securing the 12th place in the Merit List.

His professional life began on 1959, at Isamati Darul Ulum Senior Madrasah. 1963, he joined Fulbari Aziriyah Madrasah, the oldest Islamic institution in Sylhet. A pivotal moment in his career arrived on 1963, when, upon the guidance of his Murshid, Hadrat Allamah Abdul Latif Chowdhury Saheb Qibla Fultali (Rahimahullah), he assumed the role of Shaykh al-Hadith at Shatpur Darul Hadith Madrasah. He dedicated over a decade to teaching Hadith until 1974. In 1977, he embarked on a journey to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where he initially served as an Imam and Khateeb in Umm Al Quwain. Subsequently, he joined the judicial services of the UAE, serving as a Justice in the Umm Al Quwain Court until his return to Bangladesh in 1981. The year 1982 marked his return to Bangladesh, where he assumed the role of Principal at Isamati Darul Ulum Madrasah. He served with unwavering dedication until his well-deserved retirement on December 31, 1999. Under his guidance, Isamati Darul Ulum Madrasah underwent significant transformations, both in infrastructure and accreditation for Alim, Fazil, and Kamil programs. His contributions remain a testament to his devotion and determination to elevate this noble institution. For more than half a century, he poured his heart and soul into teaching and propagating the Qur'an and Sunnah, traveling far and wide to spread the message and teachings of Islam. His international travels for Dawah were numerous and impactful:

United Kingdom: His journey to the United Kingdom in 1981 marked the beginning of a series of visits in response to his Murshid's guidance. He travelled extensively across the UK, followed by a pilgrimage to Hajj with his Murshid, before returning to his duties in the UAE. In 2009, he embarked on his lengthiest stay in the UK, spanning nearly nine months, upon the request of his numerous students. During this extended visit, he diligently taught the renowned Hadith collection 'Shama'il al-Tirmidhi' at Darul Hadis Latifah in London.

USA: In 1995, at the invitation of his devoted students, he travelled to the United States of America. There, he tirelessly propagated Islamic teachings, inspiring the Muslim community to establish mosques and madrasahs across various states and cities.

Syria: His visit to Syria in 2008 was marked by meetings with the Ulama of Damascus and engaging discussions. During this visit, renowned Hanafi jurist Shaykh Dr. As'ad Muhammad Sayyid Sagharji (Rahimahullah) requested him to grant ijazah of Hadith.

Morocco: In April 2010, he journeyed to Morocco, where he made ziyarah of the graves of notable luminaries such as Imam Jazuli (Rahimahullah), Imam Qadi Iyad (Rahimahullah), and Imam Suhaili (Rahimahullah) in Marrakesh, aptly known as the 'Madinatul Awlia' - The City of the Saints.

India: He made multiple trips to the Assam Province of India, where he attended various programs and propagated the message of Islam. He also delivered enlightening Hadith sessions for Ulama.

Egypt: In October 2018, he travelled to Egypt. During this visit, he had the privilege of delivering lessons on Hadith at the famed Al-Azhar Mosque.

Through the illumination of his teachings and the footprint of his travels, the unwavering commitment of Shaykh al-Hadith Allamah Habibur Rahman to the sacred science of Hadith shines brightly. With heavy hearts, the world mourned the passing of Muhaddis Saheb on the 7th of February 2022.



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