

Prayer during Ramadan: Salatu Tarawih

This prayer is between eight and twenty rakats (four to ten prayers of two rakats each) and is offered in the presence of others. The following prayer is recited after finishing every four rakats of the Tarawih prayers during Ramadan:

*Subhana zil-mulki wal-malakut
Subhana zil-izzati wal-'azmati wal haibati
wal qudrati wal kibriya-i wal jabarut.*

Subha-nal malikil hayyil lazi la yanamu wa la yamut.

*Subbu-hun quddu sun rabbu-na
wa rubbul mala'ikati war-ruh.*

Allahumma ajirna minan nar.

Ya mujiru, ya mujiru, ya mujiru.

*Free from all imperfections is Allah the Possessor of
Honor, Greatness, Awe, Power, Glory and Grandeur.*

*Free from all imperfections is the real King who is
ever living, Who neither sleeps nor dies.*

*For Him is Purity and Holiness (He is) our Lord and the
Lord of the angels and Gabriel.*

O Allah protect us from the fire.

O Protector! O Protector! O Protector!

The word taraweeh comes from an Arabic word which means to rest and relax. The prayer can be very long (well over an hour), during which one stands upright to read from the Qur'an and performs many cycles of movement (standing, bowing, prostrating, sitting). After each four cycles, one sits for a brief period of rest before continuing -- this is where the name taraweeh ("rest prayer") comes from.

During the standing portions of the prayer, long sections of the Qur'an are read. The Qur'an is divided into equal parts (called *juz*) for the purpose of reading sections of equal length during each of the Ramadan nights. Thus, 1/30 of the Qur'an is read on successive evenings, so that by the end of the month the entire Qur'an has been completed.

It is recommended that Muslims attend the taraweeh prayers in the mosque (after 'Isha, the last evening prayer), to pray in congregation. This is true for both men and women. However, one may also perform the prayers individually at home. These prayers are voluntary, but are strongly recommended and widely practiced.

How to Perform Tarawih

Tarawih does not have to be performed immediately after 'Isha'. Muslims can postpone it till later, but in a mosque it is performed after the people have prayed two rak'ahs of Sunnah following 'Isha' Prayer.

Tarawih consists of an even number of rak'ahs, performed two by two (as Fajr Prayer is performed). The number of rak'ahs is not fixed, but it usually is either 8 or 20. It is recommended to take a short break after every four rak'ahs. In a mosque, there may be a short religious talk or du'aa' (supplication) or dhikr (remembrance of Allah) at this time.

Tarawih Prayer is recited aloud. Muslims who are praying alone or leading others and can read Arabic, may hold the Qur'an in their hands and read aloud from it during Tarawih. (But during the fard [obligatory] Prayers Muslims must recite Qur'an from memory, although exception is made for new Muslims who are still learning how to pray.) If you cannot read Arabic, you may recite Qur'an from memory.

Tarawih may be as long or short as you like, depending on your ability to read or recite, and on your energy level. In a mosque, if one juz' is recited, the Tarawih will last for one and a half or two hours, but some mosques recite less than that. You can inquire how much they recite in each Prayer and how long it takes. If there is more than one mosque in your area, you can choose which one to attend.

After the Tarawih, there is the Witr Prayer of three rak'ahs. In Ramadan, these can be performed in congregation and aloud. In a mosque, short surahs are usually recited during these rak'ahs. After the ruku' (bowing) of the last rak'ah, it is a Sunnah for the imam to supplicate aloud before prostrating. The congregation should answer "ameen" after each line of the du'aa' (supplication). This supplication after ruku' is known as qunoot.

The Witr should be the last Prayer performed before dawn. So if you are praying Tarawih in congregation and wish to perform additional Tahajjud (optional Late Night) Prayers later, you may skip the Witr in congregation and perform it after Tahajjud.

About *TARAWEEH*

The Ramadan nightly prayer has a special merit over other nights. The Messenger of Allah said: "Whoever observes night prayer in Ramadan as an expression of his faith and to seek reward from Allah, his previous sins will be blotted out." (Muslim)

In this hadith, faith means faith in what Allah has promised the observers of night prayers. To seek reward mean, the observer's intent is not for eye service or seeking special recognition from someone.

Taraweeh is derived from the Arabic root word, *raaha*, which means to rest, relax and use as recreation. It is so called because the believers used to prolong it. After every four *raka'ats* they would stop for rest and relaxation and resume until taraweeh was complete.

Taraweeh In Jamaa`ah

The Messenger of Allah (saas) was the first to establish the Sunnah of congregational, *jamaa`ah* prayer of taraweeh in the Masjid. Then he did not continue with the Sunnah for fear that it might be made mandatory on the Ummah in Ramadan, and they might not be able to do it. In the books of Bukhari and Muslim, 'Aishah (raa) has been reported as saying:

"The Messenger of Allah (saas) observed *Taraweeh* prayer in the Masjid one night and people prayed with him. He repeated the following night and the number of participants grew. The companions congregated the third and fourth night, but the Messenger did not show up. In the morning he told them, "I saw what you did last night, but nothing prevented me from joining you except my fear that it might be made mandatory on you in Ramadan."

This hadith is a clear indication that the *Taraweeh* in congregation was not an innovation of 'Umar, the second Khalifah, despite his saying to the contrary. For it has been related that: "Umar bin Al-Khattab attended the Masjid at night in Ramadan and saw people praying individually in every corner of the Masjid with a few in groups. He did not like the sight a bit. 'Umar said, 'I thought it would be better to gather these under one Imam'. So, he combined them under 'Obayi bin Ka'ab and Tamimu Ad-Dari to alternate and lead the believers in eleven raka'ats of night prayer. The next day 'Umar was in the Masjid which was full with Taraweeh prayers. He was delighted. He said: 'Well, this is the best Bid'ah (innovation).'"

'Umar's use of the word *bid'ah* in this report has been presented and unjustifiably cited as justification for concocting up various so called good innovations. In truth, the Khalifah 'Umar's act to gather the believers in Jama'ah is not *bid'ah*. For it was the Messenger of

Allah himself who started *jama'ah* by praying in congregation the first and second day, then stopped only as he feared it would become mandatory. After his death, the fear of Taraweeh becoming mandatory (Fard) was not only remote, it was impossible. With the death of the Prophet Muhammad (saas), there will be no more revelation to change any law or rule by abrogation.

Number of Raka'ats in Taraweeh

As for the number of raka'ats in Taraweeh and Witr, the worthy ancestor, *Salaf as-Saalih* disagreed on the amount of Raka'ats. These numbers are mentioned for raka'ats: 39, 29, 23, 19, 13, and 11 raka'ats. Of all the numbers mentioned, none is sounder than 11 raka'ats. 'Aishah (raa) was asked how was the prayer of the Prophet (saas)? She replied: "He did not pray in Ramadan or some other times more than eleven raka'ats." (Muslim/Bukhari)

However, there is nothing wrong with praying more than 11 raka'ats. Perhaps that is why different numbers are observed. The Prophet himself was asked about night prayer and he said: "It may be done in two raka'ats, and if anyone fears the appearance of morning, he should pray one rak'ah as a Witr for what he has already prayed." (Bukhari/Muslim)

As this hadith indicates, if a person is to pray individually at night, by daybreak he would have prayed one hundred and one raka'ats, or more.

In their desire to pray more raka'ats, some people make Taraweeh in extreme speed. That is wrong, especially when the speed leads to a breach of certain rules of prayer. In that case, the prayer will not be valid. Similarly, it is undesirable for an Imam to pray with such speed whereby the followers will have difficulty observing the necessary deeds in Salaat.

Neglecting Taraweeh

No one should neglect Taraweeh without a good reason, for it is part of physical and spiritual training, for its observation soon after Iftar insures timely and proper digestion of food. Besides, there are spiritual rewards awaiting the observers of this prayer. No one would like to leave the Masjid before the prayer is over.

Everybody should attend the Masjid prayers, including women, provided they are properly covered. The Messenger of Allah said: "Prevent not the women servants of Allah, from going to the Masjid of Allah." However, when they attend the Masjid they should wear no perfume, nor raise their voices, and or show their beauty. Allah (SWT) states: "...they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what (must ordinarily) appear thereof..." (*Al-Qur'an, 24:31*)

What ordinarily appears, refers to the outer garments, for when the Messenger (saas) commanded women to attend Eid prayer, Umm 'Atiyah (raa) said: "O Messenger of Allah, some of us do not have the outer garment (*jilbab*). The Messenger of Allah told her to let a sister (who has more than one) give her one to wear." (Agreed upon)

It is Sunnah that they pray behind the men in the rear lines. The Messenger has been reported as saying: "The best lines for men are the front lines and the worst lines for men are the rear lines. The best lines for women is the rear and the worst lines of women are the front line. (Muslim)

The women should leave the Masjid as soon as the Imam says: *As-Salaamu 'Alaikum*. They should not delay without a valid reason. In a hadith by Umm Salmah, she said: "When the Messenger of Allah (saas) saluted to end prayer, the women would stand up to leave and the Messenger would remain in his place for a while." Umm Salmah (raa) said: Allah is the best knower, but perhaps the Messenger did that so women would leave before men could overtake them". (Bukhari)

Tarawih

subhâna dhu-l-mulki wa-l-malakût

subhâna dhu-l-'izzati wa-l-'adhmati
wa-l-haybati

wa-l-qudârati wa-l-kibâriyâ*â*'i
wa-l-jabarût

subhâna-l-maliki-l-hayyi-l-ladhî lâ yanamu wa lâ yamût

subbûhun quddûsun rabbunâ

wa rabbu-l-malâ*â*'ikati war-r-rûh

allâhumma ajirnâ mina-n-nâr

yâ mujîru yâ mujîru yâ mujîru

Glorified is the master of Mulk and Malakut*

Glorified is the possessor of greatness, awe, & power

And Glory, and Grandeur and the Jabarut*

Glorified is the King who is Ever-Living who neither sleeps nor dies

For Him is Purity and Holiness —He is our Lord

and the Lord of the angels and the Spirit

Oh Allah! protect us from the fire

Oh Protector! Oh Protector! Oh Protector!

When beginning the fast - Suhur

وَبِصَوْمٍ غَدٍ نَّوَيْتُ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ

Wa biṣawmi ghadinn nawaiytu min shahri ramadan

I intend to keep the fast for tomorrow in the month of Ramadan
[abu Dawud]

When breaking the fast - Iftar

اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي لَكَ صُمْتُ وَبِكَ اٰمَنْتُ

وَعَلَيْكَ تَوَكَّلْتُ

وَعَلَىٰ رِزْقِكَ أَفْطَرْتُ

Allahumma inni laka sumtu
wa bika aamantu
wa 'alayka tawakkaltu
wa 'ala riz-qi-ka aftarthu

O Allah! I fasted for You and I believe in You [and I put my trust in You] and I break my fast with Your sustenance

[abu Dawud]

ذَهَبَ الظَّمَأُ وَابْتَلَّتِ الْعُرُوْقُ، وَ تَبَّتِ الْأَجْرُ إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ

dhahabadh-dhama'u wab-tallatil 'urūūqi, wa thabatal ajru inshaAllah

The thirst is gone, the veins are moistened and the reward is confirmed, if Allah [Ta'ala] Wills

[abu Dawud 2:306]