

407542 - What is the ruling on praying Tarawih as four rak`ahs with two tashahhud or with one tashahhud?

the question

Everywhere in Istanbul they pray Tarawih as four rak`ahs with two tashahhuds and one taslimah [like Zuhr], and the imam recites out loud in all four rak`ahs. He does that five times, thus making twenty rak`ahs. Can you give me a detailed explanation if that is wrong, so that I can show it to other people? Should we pray with them in the mosque? With regard to Witr, they pray it in the normal way, except that in the final rak`ah, after reciting al-Fatihah and another surah, the imam says takbir but they remain in the same position [standing], and I believe that they recite the supplication, but their hands remain in the same position [they do not raise their hands]. Then the imam says takbir and then bows, and so on. Is this valid and permissible? If it is not, then can you give a detailed explanation of the reason, so that I can explain it to others? Can I offer the night prayers at home to attain the reward that is mentioned in the hadith, and if so, what is the minimum number of rak`ahs?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

The Sunnah in Tarawih, and qiyam al-layl (voluntary prayers at night), in general is to pray two [rak`ahs] by two, saying the taslim after each two rak`ahs, then pray Witr. That is because of the report narrated by al-Bukhari (472) and Muslim (749) from `Abdullah ibn `Umar, who said: A man asked the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), when he was on the minbar: What do you say about the night prayers? He said: "Two by two, then when he fears that dawn is approaching, let him offer one rak`ah, and that will make what he had prayed odd-numbered for him."

This is what the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said and it is what he did.

With regard to what was narrated from `A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her), that he used to pray four [rak`ahs], what this means is that he used to say the taslim after each two rak`ahs, and rest briefly after praying four rak`ahs.

Ibn Battal (may Allah have mercy on him) said: `A'ishah's words, "he used to pray four [rak`ahs]," are connected to the Prophet's words, "The night prayers are two by two," because they are an explanation of what was said in general terms. This explanation appears in some narrations of this hadith. Ibn Abi Dhi'b narrated from Ibn Shihab, from 'Urwah, from `A'ishah who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to pray eleven rak`ahs at night, including Witr, saying the taslim between each two rak`ahs. Narrated by Muslim. (*Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, 3/142).

Secondly:

With regard to praying Tarawih with four rak`ahs and one taslim, and with one or two tashahhuds, this is disliked (makruh) according to the majority of scholars, and it is prohibited according to some of them, in contrast to the Hanafis, who say that it is permissible.

Al-'Adawi al-Maliki (may Allah have mercy on him) said: He should say the taslim after every two rak`ahs; in other words, it is recommended, and it is disliked to delay the salaam until after completing four rak`ahs. (*Hashiyat al-'Adawi*, 3/442).

Al-Khatib ash-Sharbini ash-Shafa'i (may Allah have mercy on him) said: If he prays four [rak`ahs] with one taslim, that is not valid, because it is contrary to what is prescribed, unlike the Sunnah prayers of Zuhra and 'Asr [which may be done as four rak`ahs with one taslim]. The difference between them is that in the case of Tarawih, because it is prescribed to be done in congregation, it is similar to the obligatory prayers, so it should be done in the manner prescribed. (*Mughni al-Muhtaj*, 3/159).

Al-Bahuti al-Hanbali (may Allah have mercy on him) said: If he prays more than two [rak`ahs] at night – even if he does more than eight, whether he is certain of the number or forgot – with one salaam, it is disliked (makruh), but is valid. (*Kashshaf al-Qina'* 3/308).

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Some imams, in Tarawih prayer, put four or more rak`ahs together with one taslim, without sitting after two rak`ahs, and they claim that this is Sunnah. Is there any basis for doing that in Islamic teachings?

He replied: Doing that is not prescribed; rather it is disliked or prohibited according to most of the scholars, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "The night prayers are two by two." Its authenticity is agreed upon; the hadith was narrated from Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).

And it was soundly narrated from 'A'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to pray eleven rak`ahs at night, saying the taslim between each two rak`ahs, and praying one rak`ah of Witr at the end. Its authenticity is agreed upon; there are many hadiths with the same meaning.

With regard to the famous hadith of 'A'ishah – in which she said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would pray at night four rak`ahs, and do not ask how beautiful and long they were. Then he would pray four, and do not ask how beautiful and long they were. (Agreed upon) – What is meant is that he would say the taslim after every two rak`ahs. She did not mean that he would pray four rak`ahs continuously and say one taslim at the end, because of the hadith quoted above, and because it is soundly narrated from him (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that he said: "The night prayers are two by two," as noted above. The hadiths confirm one another and explain one another, so what is required of the Muslim is to take all of them into consideration and to understand what is stated in general terms in the light of what is stated in more specific terms. (*Fatawa Ibn Baz*, 30/38).

With regard to the Hanafis, they are of the view that that is permissible and not disliked (makruh).

Al-Kasani al-Hanafi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: To say the taslim and start a new prayer after every two rak`ahs is not essential in our view. That is, if he sits at the end of the first two rak`ahs for as long as it would take to recite the tashahhud. But if he does not sit, then his

prayer becomes invalid according to Muhammad, but according to Abu Hanifah and Abu Yusuf, it is valid. (*Bada'i as-Sana'i*, 3/151).

Al-Qaduri al-Hanafi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: If he wants to pray four [rak'ahs], he should say the takbir when getting up for the third rak'ah, and this takbir will be equivalent to the opening takbir. ... As for sitting, it is obligatory according to one of the two reports.

They said: It is Sunnah, if he gets up for the third rak'ah of a supererogatory prayer, to start with the opening supplication. As for the taslim, the tashahhud and as-salaah [al-Ibrahimiyyah], they are not obligatory in our view; rather they are Sunnah, so he should recite them when sitting for the first and second [tashahhud] of a supererogatory prayer. (*At-Tajrid*, 2/82 2).

Based on that, if someone prays behind an imam who prays Tarawih and says one taslim after every four rak'ahs, there is nothing wrong with that, especially in a country in which the Hanafi madhhab is prevalent, even if he does not usually do that himself, if he prays by himself or leads others in prayer.

Thirdly:

Praying Witr with three rak'ahs and two tashahhuds like Maghrib is not allowed, and at the very least it is disliked. But if the imam prays like that, there is nothing wrong with praying behind him, as we have explained in the answers to questions no. [38230](#) and [66613](#).

There is nothing wrong with offering the supplication of qunoot before bowing, whether it is said quietly or out loud.

With regard to saying takbir before qunoot, that was narrated from some of the Sahabah, including 'Umar and 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with them). It is the view of the Hanafis and is mentioned in one report from Ahmad, and it is a matter in which differences of opinion are acceptable.

From the above, it is clear that there is nothing wrong with praying behind someone who prays Tarawih four by four [rak'ahs], prays Witr with three rak'ahs like Maghrib, and says takbir before qunoot.

But the best is to follow the Sunnah that is accepted by the majority of jurists.

Fourthly:

The minimum for the night prayers is two rak`ahs, so whoever does that and also prays `Isha` and Fajr in congregation, there is the hope that he will attain the reward mentioned in the hadith: "Whoever prays qiyam in Ramadan out of faith and in the hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven." Narrated by al-Bukhari (37) and Muslim (759).

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: You should understand that the virtue of praying qiyam al-layl and reciting Quran therein may be attained whether you do a little or a lot, but the more you do the better. However, it is disliked to spend the entire night in prayer every night, so that you do not cause too much hardship to yourself.

The evidence that that may be attained by doing a little is the hadith of `Abdullah ibn `Amr ibn al-`As (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever prays qiyam and recites ten verses will not be recorded among the heedless; Whoever prays qiyam and recites one hundred verses will be recorded among the devout, and whoever prays qiyam and recites one thousand verses will be recorded among those who accumulate great reward." Narrated by Abu Dawud and others. Ath-Tha'labi narrated that Ibn `Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Whoever prays two rak`ahs at night, [it is as if he] has spent the night prostrating to Allah and standing in prayer. (*At-Tibyan fi Adab Hamlat al-Quran*, p. 65).

And Allah knows best.