

Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem

THE POSITION OF TWENTY RAKAATS TARAWEEH IN THE SHARIAH

The twenty Rakaats Taraaweesh Salaah in congregational form as observed today by Muslims throughout the world, originated in the time of the second Khaleefah of Islam, Sayyiduna Umar bin Khattaab *radhiyallahu anhu*. It was in the second year of his Khilaafat¹ that he initiated the twenty Rakaats Taraaweesh in Jamaat or congregational form, and this practice of Hazrat Umar was endorsed by all The Sahaabah *radhiyallahu anhum* in his era. Taraaweesh Salaah of twenty rakaats in Jamaat is thus established by the *Ijmaa* or consensus of The Sahaabah. Not only did they agree in principle with Hazrat Umar on the twenty Rakaats Taraaweesh Jamaat, they also practised this themselves. We will in due course cite numerous statements of the Muhadditheen to substantiate this.

Furthermore, this practice was not confined to Madinah only. Instead, Imam Muhammad bin Sa'd narrates in his *Tabaqaat* that when Hazrat Umar *radhiyallahu anhu* had established this practice in the year 14 Hijri in Madinah, he wrote to the other provinces of the Islamic state instructing them to do the same. The 20 Rakaats Taraaweesh in Jamaat thus became the standard practice of the entire Islamic empire in the lifetime of Sayyiduna Umar *radhiyallahu anhu*.

¹

Tabaqaat Ibni Sa'd vol. 3, p.281; Tareegul Khulafaa, Suyooti p.93.

After the demise of Hazrat Umar, the succeeding Khulafaa, Sayyiduna Uthman and Sayyiduna Ali *radhiyallahu anhuma* continued this procedure by establishing regular Taraaweeh Jamaat of twenty Rakaats. During this period other Sahaabah too abided by the same teaching of Hazrat Umar and performed twenty Rakaats Taraaweeh.

In short, from the year 14 Hijri this procedure of twenty Rakaats Taraaweeh in Jamaat became the standardized form of Taraaweeh throughout the Islamic world. It continued to be so until this very day, upheld and supported by all the Fuqahaa and Muhadditheen throughout the corridor of Islamic history.

This means that for a period of over 1400 years (14 A.H. to 1418 A.H.) twenty Rakaats in Jamaat was the accepted and practised method of Taraaweeh in all Islamic states and communities. In the light of such unanimity among the great Ulema of past and present, it is inconceivable that all these luminaries in the firmament of Islamic Ilm could unite on an issue which is baseless and unfounded in Islam. Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* said:

"Verily Allah shall never ever unite my Ummat (or the Ummat of Muhammad) on falsehood. And The Hand of Allah is over the united group; whosoever breaks away, breaks away into the fire of Jahannam."
(Mustadrak Haakim 115/1)

It must be noted that the action of Hazrat Umar was not unprecedented in the establishment of 20 Rakaats. What he

did was merely a perpetuation of the already established practice of performing twenty Rakaats Taraaweeh, but this time in Jamaat form. So the purpose of this treatise is merely to prove that twenty Rakaats Taraaweeh in Jamaat has been and still is a standard practice of Islam. The 20 Rakaats Taraaweeh, be it in Jamaat or individually, should never be in dispute since it was already a forgone and well established fact that Taraaweeh Salaah consisted of twenty Rakaats, and not less. It must be we are discussing Taraaweeh in congregational form. The fact that Taraaweeh comprises 20 Rakaats is supposed to be an entrenched practice among Muslims by now. The dispute which this treatise attempts to settle is Taraaweeh in Jamaat form.

PROOF OF 20 RAKAATS TARAWEEH AMONG SAHAABA

- 1) Abdur Rahman bin Abd narrates that "once during Ramadhaan I accompanied Hazrat Umar to the Masjid. People were scattered about, some performing their Taraaweeh individually, while others had small groups following them. Hazrat Umar then said:

"I feel it will be most appropriate if I unite all these people behind one Qaari."

He thereupon established one congregation behind Ubay bin Ka'b *radhiyallahu anhu*.

Abdur Rahman says: "A few nights later I again visited the Masjid with Hazrat Umar and saw everyone behind one Imam. Upon this Hazrat Umar remarked:

"This is indeed a good innovation. (Muatta Imam Malik)

Hazrat Umar selected Hazrat Ubay bin Ka'b *radhiyallahu anhu* for two reasons: one, that Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* described him as the most learned of Sahaabah in the Qiraat of The Qur'aan, and two, that he used to lead people in Taraaweeh Salaah even in the time of Nabi Muhammad *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.²

- 2) Imam Malik narrates from Yahya bin Saeed that Hazrat Umar *radhiyallahu anhu* had appointed a man to lead them in twenty Rakaats Taraaweeh Salaah. (Musannaf Ibni Abi Shaiba 393/2)
- 3) Hazrat Ubay bin Ka'b *radhiyallahu anhu* used to lead people in twenty Rakaats Taraaweeh and three Witr in Madinah during the month of Ramadhaan. (Musannaf Ibni Abi Shaiba)
- 4) Imam Malik narrates from Yazeed bin Rooman that during the reign of Hazrat Umar people used to perform 23 Rakaats in Ramadhaan. (Muatta)

Imam Ibni Ishaq says that this is the most sound narration to reach him as regards the Taraweeh Salaah. (Naylul Owtaar 60/3)

NOTE: Twenty Rakaats were Taraaweeh while the last three were Witr.

² Narrated by Imam Baihaqi - I'laa us Sunan 60/7.

- 5) Abul Hasnaa narrates that Hazrat Ali *radhiyallahu anhu* had instructed a man to lead the people in twenty Rakaats Taraaweeh. (Kanzul Ummal 409/8)
- 6) Hazrat Ibni Abi Mulaika, Ali bin Rabee'a and Abul Bakhtari *radhiyallahu anhum* all used to lead people in twenty Rakaats Taraaweeh and three Witr during Ramadhaan. (Musannaf Ibni Abi Shaiba 393/2)
- 7) Hazrat Ataa (a tabi'ee) says: "I found the Sahaabah reading twenty Rakaats Taraaweeh and three Witr during Ramadhaan." (Al Fathur Rabbani 18/5)
- 8) Imam A'mash says that Abdullah bin Mas'ud *radhiyallahu anhu* used to perform twenty Rakaats Taraaweeh and three Witr.³ (Ahasanul Fatawa 541/3)
- 9) Imam Baihaqi narrates the statement of Hazrat Saa-ib bin Yazeed *radhiyallahu anhu*, that the Sahaabah used to observe twenty Rakaats Taraaweeh during the reign of Hazrat Umar, and the same occurred in the time of Hazrat Uthman and Ali *radhiyallahu anhum*. (Umdatul Qaari 178/7)

Imam Ibni Qudaama states in Mughni that the above narration is akin to Ijmaa' or consensus (Umdatul Qaari). Because of the

³ Towards the end of this treatise readers will learn of how highly *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* extolled the guidance and advice of Ibni Mas'ud.

existence of the above narrations the author of the famous Hanafi book on Fiqah, *Al-Hidayah* states that the practice of twenty Rakaats Taraaweeh in Jamaat is Sunnat **because the Khulafaa e Rashideen observed it without fail**. The above quotations quite clearly support this claim.

Imam Abu Abdullah Hakim states in his kitab *Al Mustadrak*: *It is clear from the Hadeeth that Taraaweeh Salaah in the Masaajid of the Muslims is a standard Sunnah practice, and Hazrat Ali had strongly urged Hazrat Umar to establish this until he eventually did so.* (Mustadrak 440/1)

Allama Ibni Hajar Shafi'ee says: The Sahaabah are unanimous that the Taraaweeh is twenty Rakaats (Mirqaat 194/3).

About the concept of *Ijmaa'*, the author of *Kitabul Fiqh alal Mazha-hibil Arba'a*, Shaikh Abdur Rahman Al Jaza-iri states the following:

Ijmaa= is a Daleel (valid proof), because the total agreement of the Sahaabah signalling their consent to what he (Hazrat Umar) had done is proof of the fact that they were convinced of some basis or source for that ruling. And, as stated in the books of Usool, it is not necessary that we know of the basis of Ijmaa (vol.4 p.341).

Imam Jaza-iri here confirms the significance of the Ijmaa of Sahaabah, stating that in itself it represents a valid Shar'ee proof, after which one need not even bother to ascertain the source of this Ijmaa.

PROOF OF TWENTY RAKAATS TARAWEEH AFTER THE SAHAABA

Here we cite references to establish that it was the standard practice of most of the Ulema and Imams after the Sahaabah to perform 20 Rakaats Taraaweeh during Ramadhaan.

1. Imam Tirmizhi states in his kitab:

Some of the Ulema maintain that forty one Rakaats should be performed during Ramadhaan, including three Witr.⁴ This is the opinion of the Ulema of Madinah (such as Imam Malik) and such is their practice in Madinah. However, the practice of most of the Ulema is according to what has been narrated from Umar and Ali, as well as other Sahaaba of Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, i.e. twenty rakaats. This is also the opinion of Sufyan Thowri, Abdullah bin Mubarak and Shafi'ee. Imam Shafi'ee says: This is what I have seen in our

¹ There are two versions of the Maliki mazh-hab regarding the number of taraweeh rakaats. According to one they read 41 rakaats, and according to the other, 39 rakaats. Some Ulema have advanced the following reason for this difference:

In Makka people would perform tawaaf during the pause after every four rakaats of taraweeh, so their number of rakaats remained 20, as we shall see later. The people of Madinah, to emulate this action of the Makka residents, would perform four rakaats nafl salaah during the pause (as a substitute for the tawaaf which they obviously were unable to perform). This means that they offered an extra 16 rakaats. Add to this the three witr and you end up with a figure of 39 rakaats (20 taraweeh + 16 nafl in between + 3 witr = 39). According to some narrations they used to make five rakaats witr, which then gives a total of 41 rakaats. So in actual fact the Maliki too read 20 rakaats of taraweeh proper. (I'laa-us Sunan from Mughni. 74/7; Umdatul Qaari 178/7))

city of Makka, i.e people reading twenty rakaats. (Tirmizhi 166/1)

It is worth noting here that Imam Tirmizhi mentions two schools of thought regarding the number of taraweeh rakaats: forty one rakaats and twenty rakaats; which implies that there is definite consensus on the minimum amount, which is twenty rakaats. No mention is made of eight rakaats taraweeh by Imam Tirmizhi *rahmatullahi alaihi*.

2. Allama Ibni Rushd Al-Hafeed states in his book *Bidayatul Mujtahid*:

The Ulema are unanimous that the taraweeh which Hazrat Umar imposed upon the people in his time should be greatly encouraged. They differed, however, with regard to the accepted version of how many rakaats people should perform in Ramadaan. Hence, Imam Malik (in one version), Imam Abu Haneefa, Imam Shafi'ee, Imam Ahmad and Imam Dawood Zhahiree have chosen twenty rakaats besides the witr. Ibnul Qasim narrates from Imam Malik (in a second version) that he preferred thirty six rakaats and three witr. (Bidayatul Mujtahid 152/1)

3. The following appears in the book *Fiqhus Sunnah* of Shaikh Sayyid Sabiq:

It has been authentically established that people used to read twenty rakaats in the time of Umar, Uthman and Ali *radhiyallahu anhum*, and this is the view of the majority of Fuqaha among the Hanafi and Hambali Mazh-habs, and Imam Dawood Zhahiree. (vol.1 p.174)

4. Allama Ibni Hajar narrates that it was the practice of Imam Bukhari *rahmatullahi alaihi* to lead his students in taraweeh salaah during Ramadaan. He would recite twenty verses in each rakaat of taraweeh until he completed the entire Quran. (Muqaddama Fathul Bari p.481)

This clearly indicates that Imam Bukhari too practised upon 20 rakaats taraweeh. If we assume from the above that he only read 8 rakaats or even 10 rakaats taraweeh, it would not be possible for him to complete the whole Quran in Ramadaan. To complete the Quran at a rate of 20 verses per rakaat requires the full twenty rakaats and nothing less. This gives an average of 400 verses per night, thus allowing a completion of Quran by the 16th night. The Ulema are unanimous that the Holy Quran contains over 6,200 verses.

THE BASIS OF HAZRAT UMAR'S PRACTICE OF 20 RAKAATS

Asad bin Amar narrates from Imam Abu Yusuf that once the latter asked Imam Abu Haneefa about the taraweeh and this practice of Hazrat Umar (of twenty rakaats). The respected Imam replied:

"The taraweeh is sunnate muakkadah and Hazrat Umar did not concoct it from his own side, nor was he an innovator in this regard. He established this taraweeh only because of some origin and basis which he knew of in the time of Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam." (Maraqil Falah 224)

The above statement puts the issue of twenty rakaats taraweeh in its proper perspective. This is clear evidence that Hazrat

Umar's decision was in actual fact founded on a strong and genuine source in the life of Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, even though we may not be aware of such a source as yet. It is not possible that Hazrat Umar would make an addition to the rakaats of a salaah whilst knowing that these additional rakaats were not part and parcel of that salaah in the time of Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. Nor would any of the Sahaaba allow him to proceed with such a venture while knowing that this was contrary to the teachings of Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.

At the start of this treatise we pointed out that Allah Ta'ala would never allow the Sahaaba and those Ulema who came after them to unite in belief and practice on an issue which deviates from the true path of Islam. Therefore, the implication here is quite obvious. If Hazrat Umar and the rest of the Sahaaba were unanimous in the establishment of 20 rakaats taraweeh, and the Imams of the various mazhaahib followed suit, it can only mean that the performance of twenty rakaats taraweeh was definitely practised or commanded by Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* at some stage in his lifetime.

There exists a principle of Fiqah which all Muslim Jurists of the past have recognised, that any devotional rite or ritual which is not decided through *qiyaas* (reasoning or logic), but rather through Divine Decree, must necessarily be based on *nass* (a categoric statement of Allah or narration from Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*). At no stage can such deeds be subject to reason or rational arguments. This principle further states that if the Sahaaba-e-Kiraam *radhiyallahu anhu* instituted certain amendments or made additions to such devotional acts, then surely they did so on the basis of some narration which they definitely heard from Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* himself. Such a move by the illustrious Sahaaba *radhiyallahu anhum* cannot be motivated by their personal opinion or reasoning, since the nature of the act is rooted in The Divine Directive of Almighty Allah, and has not been left to the discretion of the servant.

If it was possible to establish the number of rakaats in salaah through logical deduction and inference then the institutionalising of twenty rakaats taraweeh by Hazrat Umar could still be contested. However, the ritual of salaah is **only** and **only** established through *Wahi* (Divine Revelation) and this we receive from one source; The Noble Messenger of Allah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. Since discretion and reason does not feature in determining the number of rakaats in salaah, it is clear that the increase in the rakaats of taraweeh by the Sahaaba was in fact based on sound evidence in the lifetime of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. According to the author of *Kitabul Fiqh alal Mazha-hibil Arba'a*, Shaikh Abdur Rahman Al Jaza-iri, whose statement appeared earlier, upon the establishment of *Ijmaa'* among Sahaaba on any act, one does not require the basis or source of that *Ijmaa'*. However, in this particular case we will later on in this treatise, mention the basis for the 20 rakaat increase by the Sahaaba.

In short, Hazrat Umar was in fact implementing a practice which he knew was part of The Sunnah of Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. He never used any logical reasoning to figure out how many rakaats should be performed in taraweeh since this issue is not a logical or rational one, instead it is a rite which has been ordained by Allah and His Rasool. All acts of worship are of this nature. The earlier statement of Imam Abu Haneefa very explicitly bears out what we have thus far stated.

Having thus assured ourselves that Hazrat Umar, in establishing a twenty-rakaat taraweeh salaah in Jamaat, was

most certainly acting within the framework of The Sunnah, it now rests upon us to try and ascertain from the hadeeth of Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* whether this practice is to be found in the Holy Era of Nubuwwat. For this we cast a brief glance at the ibadat of Rasoolullah during the holy month of Ramadaan.

THE PRACTICE OF RASOOLULLAH ﷺ IN RAMADAAN

Abdur Rahman bin Ouf *radhiyallahu anhu* reports that Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* said:

"Verily Allah has made the fast of Ramadaan compulsory upon you, and I have made its salaah (at night) sunnat for you. Therefore, whosoever fasts and performs taraweeh in this month with faith and hope for reward, emerges from his sins like the day he was born." (Nasaai 239/1)

This hadeeth proves that taraweeh salaah is the sunnat of Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. In addition to this verbal injunction of The Holy Prophet we also have his practice on the taraweeh salaah, which further emphasises the sunnat nature of taraweeh.

Hazrat Ayesha *radhiyallahu anhaa* narrates several important points about the ibadat of Rasoolullah during Ramadaan, as enlisted hereunder:

a) Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* would strive in the ibadat of Ramadaan more than any other month. (Muslim)

b) When the month enters he would begin a strenuous system of worship and would not even take to his bed (for much rest or fulfilment of conjugal rights). (Baihaqi in *Shu'abul Imaan* 310/3)

c) Upon the commencement of Ramadaan his complexion would change, fear could be discerned on his face, his salaah would increase and there was greater urgency in his duas. (Baihaqi)

The phrase "**his salaah would increase**" is of particular importance in our context, since it signifies an amount of salaah over and above the normal. Increase in salaah indicates additional rakaats, as opposed to lengthening the salaah, which implies longer qiraat and tasbeeh in ruku' and sujood.

It is however clear that *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* increased his ibadat in Ramadaan, and this is born out from several other ahadeeth. The implication of such increased form of ibadat should rightly be, inter alia, extra salaah.

PROOF OF 20 RAKAATS TARAWEEH BY RASOOLULLAH *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*

Looking further afield we come across categoric evidence of such increase in salaah (i.e. additional rakaats) in the amal of Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas *radhiyallahu anhu* narrates:

Verily Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* used to read twenty rakaats taraweeh and the witr during Ramadaan." (*Musannaf Ibni Abi Shaiba 394/2*)

This hadeeth, which is also narrated by Imams Baihaqi, Tibrani, and Bagawi (I'laa us Sunan 71/7), gives us a basis for the practice of Hazrat Umar *radhiyallahu anhu*.

THE CHAIN OF TRANSMISSION

All the narrators in the chain of transmission to the above hadeeth are, according to all Ulema, reliable and trustworthy, except one, viz. Ibraheem bin Uthman. Some Imams have branded him as unreliable, and as such have classified this hadeeth as *Dha'eef* or weak. The proponents of eight rakaats taraweeh are quick to latch onto this point and totally reject out-of-hand the concept of twenty rakaats. Regarding this we would like to highlight the following points:

(a) The Ulema are not unanimous in their criticism of the narrator Ibraheem bin Uthman. For instance, Yazeed bin Haroon, the Ustaazh of Imam Bukhari, and one who associated much with Ibraheem bin Uthman has spoken very highly of his integrity and character. Imam Ibnul Adee has also vouched for the honesty and fidelity of Imam Ibraheem bin Uthman, and has placed him on a rank higher than a man such as Ibraheem bin Abi Hayya, whom many Ulema have enlisted among authentic narrators of hadeeth. If he is then superior in rank to a man who has unanimously been declared as reliable, surely Ibraheem bin Uthman must enjoy the same, if not a higher status.

When it can be proven that all ulema did not censure the integrity and righteousness of a narrator, instead some gave their unequivocal approval of his authenticity, such a narrator of hadeeth can definitely be accepted, especially when we see the amal or practice of the majority of Ulema in total consistency with his narration, as is the case with the twenty rakaats taraweeh.

(b) On the assumption that the twenty rakaat hadeeth mentioned above is indeed unsound and not authentic enough to be practiced upon, we would then base our claim on another widely accepted principle among the Ulema of Fiqah and Hadeeth known as *Ta-aamul*.

It is stated in the books of Usool that if any hadeeth is practised upon extensively by Sahaaba and the Ulema after them, then such widespread practice is conclusive evidence of the strength and acceptance of such a hadeeth. This Ta-aamul or prevalent practice among the Ummat offsets the weakness, if any, in that particular hadeeth and makes practising upon it perfectly lawful.

An example of Ta-aamul upon apparently 'weak' traditions:

Imam Tirmizhi narrates a hadeeth about a group of Sahaaba who were on a journey with Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* on a very dark night. Since they could not determine the qiblah, they used their discretion and each one performed salaah in a direction he felt was qiblah. The following

morning when this was mentioned to The Holy Prophet of Allah, he sanctioned this practice of theirs and decreed their salaah valid.

Thereafter Imam Tirmizhi avers that this hadeeth is weak because one of the narrators has been branded as unreliable. But, immediately after having declared the hadeeth as *dha'eef* (weak), he goes on to state that **the majority of Ulema have taken this view**, i.e. most of them practice according to this weak hadeeth, and he mentions names such as Sufyan Thowri, Ibni Mubarak, Ahmad bin Hambal and Ishaq. (Tirmizhi 80/1)

How is it possible that a weak hadeeth can serve as a basis for amal or practice? The answer is given by Allama Ibraheem Halabi, who states in his book *Kabeeri*:

Indeed, this hadeeth has become strengthened by *Ijmaa'* or unanimous practice among the Ulema of the mazhaa-hib. (Kabeeri 221)

In other words, the consensus of Ulema on any ruling lends great credibility to the weak hadeeth containing that ruling. The idea is that since the great majority of Ulema and Imams practiced upon such a hadeeth, there must be some authenticity to it.

It must be remembered that our Islam is not confined **only** to books. We must consider how the Sahaaba practised on the Deen as well. The practical life of the Sahaaba was also handed down from generation to generation, and because of such practical observations many Ulema may issue rulings according to apparently weak traditions. But this does not

mean that they base their rulings on weak and unreliable traditions. Far from it, they in fact base their rulings on the practical life of the Sahaaba which they observed, or which was handed down by word of mouth, about which they have absolutely no doubt at all. And needless to say, the amal of the Sahaaba is the amal of Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.

(c) When a dha'eef hadeeth does not conflict with or contradict a strong hadeeth, and the prevalent practice of the Sahaaba and Ulema conforms to that weak hadeeth, then it will be permissible to act according to that dha'eef hadeeth.

We note here that all authentic ahadeeth on the taraweeh of Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* do not categorically negate the performance of twenty rakaats.

NUMBER OF TARAWEEH RAKAATS PERFORMED BY RASOOLULLAH (Sallallaahu Alayhi wa Sallam)

It is established from various ahadeeth that Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* lead the Sahaaba in taraweeh salaah, but only performed **eight rakaats**. He did this (eight rakaats taraweeh in jamaat) for a few nights and then stopped.

Each night the jamaat of Sahaaba behind him grew in number, until by the third night the Masjid was packed to capacity. Upon observing this Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* discontinued the taraweeh in jamaat. He gave the following reason to the Sahaaba:

"The fear that this taraweeh may become compulsory upon you prevented me from coming out to continue." (Bukhari)

This episode tells us the following:

* Rasoolullah *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* had initially established taraweeh in jamaat form, which is exactly what Hazrat Umar did, thus continuing the sunnah practice of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.

* Hazrat Umar was able to standardize this practice since there existed no danger of the taraweeh becoming fardh or compulsory in his time. Such a possibility existed only in the lifetime of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, for he was the recipient of Divine Revelation and the Deputy Legislator of Allah's law on earth.

* The Holy Prophet of Allah performed 8 rakaats taraweeh in jamaat. However, there exists no denial or refutation in the hadeeth of any amount of rakaats over and above eight. In fact there are narrations which prove that the taraweeh of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* was not confined to eight rakaats.

According to reports of Hazrat Ayesha *radhiyallahu anhaa* *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* sometimes made **13 rakaats** including the witr, and at times she narrates **15 rakaats**, including witr and the two sunnats of Fajr salaah. This means the taraweeh consisted of ten rakaats. (Ahsanul Fatawa 529/3, from Tuhfatul Ahwazhi vol.2 p.3)

On this basis many of the Ulema such as Allama Ibn Taimiyah, Allama Subki Shafi'ee, Allama Suyooti, Allama Showkani and others maintain that there is no fixed amount of rakaats for taraweeh to be determined from the life of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.⁵

Those people who firmly believe in and practice upon only eight rakaats of taraweeh should ponder carefully and sincerely over the observations made by these renowned Ulema.

The hadeeth of Bukhari Shareef quoted above in which *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* is said to have performed eight rakaats jamaat for a few nights is silent as regards the salaah offered by The Holy Prophet within his home.

Imam Haithami cites the following hadeeth in his book *Majma'uz Zawaa'id* under the section on taraweeh salaah:

Hazrat Anas *radhiyallahu anhu* reports that *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* used to perform salaah at night during Ramadaan. People would come and fall in behind him. He would then shorten the salaah and go home. There he would again offer salaah. Later on he would emerge and once again perform short salaah. When morning came, they beseeched him:

O Prophet of Allah! We stood behind you last night, but then you went home and only emerged after a while. (They were expressing their disappointment at not being able to offer

⁵ Ahsanul Fataawa 533/3.

salaah behind him for a longer period.) To this *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* replied:

"I only did this for your sake." (i.e. to avoid the taraweeh salaah being made compulsory on you, as stated earlier.) (Majma'uz Zawaa'id 172/3; the author also ratifies the authenticity of this narration)

This hadeeth adds a new dimension to the Ramadaan salaah of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. Hazrat Anas *radhiyallahu anhu*, the favourite servant of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, was almost part and parcel of the Holy Prophet's household, hence his observations carry much weight as regards the actions of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* within his home. It now becomes clear that apart from the salaah he offered with the sahaaba in the masjid, *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* would perform extra rakaats within the confines of his home too. In this there was no danger of any salaah becoming fardh upon the Ummah, and this was totally in keeping with the Holy Prophet's extended program of ibadat in Ramadaan.

THE SAHAABA - BEACONS OF HIDAYAT

Whenever we encounter difficulty or confusion in ascertaining the correct mode or manner of ibadat performed by *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* our best and safest recourse is to study the practice of the Sahaaba *radhiyallahu anhum*, for they were most excellently placed to provide us with a truer and more lucid reflection of *Rasoolullah's* (*sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) practical life. The Sahaaba were in the best position to understand the context and

circumstances of every hadeeth. This is exactly what *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* had in fact instructed the Ummat to do. In this regard the following hadeeth is most appropriate.

It is reported from Hazrat Irbaadh bin Saariya *radhiyallahu anhu* that *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* once said: ***Adhere compulsorily to my Sunnat, and the Sunnat of the rightly guided khaleefas. Cling fast to it, Hold firmly onto it....***

(Narrated by Imam Ahmad, Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah, Tirmizhi and Hakim - Al Fathur Rabbani 190/1)

This hadeeth has in no uncertain terms ordained allegiance to the four Khulafaa as compulsory. Nabi Muhammad *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* uses three phrases to emphasise his point, "*Adhere compulsorily, Cling fast, Hold firmly...*" These terms leave no doubt in the mind of the listener as to the importance of following the path set down by the illustrious companions of Nabi Muhammad *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, especially the Khulafaa after him.

Huzhaifa bin Yamaan *radhiyallahu anhu* reports that *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* said:

"Follow the two sahaaba after me (i.e. Abu Bakr and Umar), take direction from the guidance of Ammar, and cling fast to the advice of Ibni Mas'ud." (Faizul Qadeer 56/2; Mustadrak Hakim 75/3)

Again we have firm and clear instructions from *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* to adhere to the teachings of Abu

Bakr and Umar. This is clear endorsement from *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* for the teachings of the Khulafa-e Rashideen.

The purport derived from the above is that whatever the Khulafa introduced for the benefit of the Ummah at large enjoys the complete and unequivocal ratification of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. If they introduced twenty rakaats taraweeh salaah, this too carries the full approval of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. And what's more, it is also regarded as part and parcel of the Sunnat of Nabi Muhammad *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.

Hazrat Abu Huraira *radhiyallahu anhu* reports that *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* said:

" Verily, the Bani Israel split up into seventy two sects, and my Ummat shall split up into seventy three sects. All of them shall be in the fire except one.

The Sahaaba beseeched: "Which sect is that, O Prophet of Allah?" He replied:

" Those who are upon my path and the path of my Sahaaba." (Tirmizhi 93/2)

It is conclusively proven from this hadeeth that whosoever follows the path of the Sahaaba is guaranteed salvation. He who adopts the teachings and practice of Sahaaba is on the path of Haqq, hence the safety and deliverance of such a person from the fire of Jahannam is guaranteed by *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* himself.

There are countless examples of practices and issues which never existed in the time of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* but were later on introduced to the Muslim Ummah by the righteous Caliphs after him, in particular, Sayyiduna Umar *radhiyallahu anhu*. Today the entire Muslim world has accepted and adopted these practices in their Ibadaat. Here are a few examples:

* Hazrat Abu Bakr *radhiyallahu anhu* was the first person to compile The Quran Shareef in book form, something which was not undertaken by *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.

* Hazrat Umar increased the penalty for drinking wine from forty lashes (which was in vogue during the era of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*) to eighty.

* He introduced the ban on women attending the Masaajid for fardh salaah.

* He convened a meeting of Sahaaba after they disputed the number of takbeers to be recited in the Janaaza Salaah, and finally decided that four takbeers should be read. (Naylul Owtaar 66/4)

* He ordained payment of zakaat upon horses. (Tareegul Khulafa, Suyooti p.97)

* Hazrat Uthman *radhiyallahu anhu* introduced the first azhaan for Juma salaah. In the time of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, Abu Bakr and Umar *radhiyallahu anhu* there was only one azhaan, immediately before the khutba.

Hazrat Uthman brought about the first azhaan, which Muslims world wide continue to practice.

* Hazrat Uthman also compiled The Quran in book form, in which the order of surahs was different and major changes were made to the script and collation of qiraats. This too was a very significant move, something unprecedented in the golden era before him.

These are but some examples of major Islamic issues introduced by the Khulafa e Rashideen to the Ummat after *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*. These innovations all have their origin in the practice of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, hence they were universally accepted by the Ummat. Furthermore, *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* himself directed the Ummat to follow what the Khulafa had set, done as modes of practice and worship.

The Sahaaba who lived in their time also gave their total consent and approval, either explicitly or implicitly, to these changes, hence we say that such actions have been established through the Ijmaa' or consensus of the Sahaaba *radhiyallahu anhum*. These issues gained world-wide acceptance since they were all intended to safeguard and fortify the Islamic practice of the Ummat. And they all were accomplished through the mandate of Nubuwwat.

When twenty rakaats taraweeh have been thus proven from the practice of Hazrat Umar *radhiyallahu anhu*, what grounds do muslims have of rejecting or even doubting this to be sunnat, when we have accepted so many other issues from the

likes of these great Sahaaba Abu Bakr and Umar? What grounds is there for disagreement when *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* himself declared the practices of his Khulafa as sunnat and compulsory to follow? When *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* explicitly commanded us to follow the two Khaleefas after him, it does not behove us as Muslims to oppose this command and attempt to abandon the practices of these great Khulafa.

Moreover, we have cited references above to prove that twenty rakaats taraweeh has some origin in the lifetime of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, and at no stage was this something entirely new to the Ummat.

TO SUMMARIZE:

Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam had established the salaah of taraweeh in jamaat form. The number of rakaats he performed varied. Some narrations say eight, others say ten, and in one hadeeth 20 rakaats are mentioned. These reports in no way contradict each other, since some of his salaah was offered inside his home. The reason for not offering the full taraweeh in jamaat was, in the words of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* himself, to ward off the possibility of it becoming fardh.

Hazrat Umar, in the second year of his khilafat, enacted the practice of twenty rakaats taraweeh in jamaat behind one Imam. This enactment was supported fully by all Sahaaba. It was thus the Ijmaa or unanimous decision of the Sahaaba that later on paved the way for this to become standard procedure

among the Muslims world-wide during Ramadaan. The practice of all the Ulema of past and present conforms to this.

THE BASIS OF KHATMUL QURAN IN TARAWEEH

We learnt earlier that it was the practice of Imam Bukhari *rahmatullahi alaihi* to complete The Holy Quran in taraweeh during Ramadaan. And if a practice was adhered to by a man such as Imam Bukhari, it is evident that such a practice has some origin in the hadeeth of Nabi Muhammad *sallallahu alaihi wasallam*.

Once during the time of *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* he saw a group of people in his masjid performing taraweeh in jamaat behind Hazrat Ubay bin Ka'b *radhiyallahu anhu*. Upon enquiring he was informed that these people do not possess The Quran, so they are following Ubay bin Ka'b. The Holy Prophet *sallallahu alaihi wasallam* approved of this. (I'laa-us Sunan from Baihaqi, 60/7)

The commentators explain that the words do not possess the Quran does not mean that they could not read Quran at all, since this is highly unbecoming of Sahaaba. It can only mean that they did not possess **the whole Quran**, i.e. they were not complete hafiz of Quran. This indicates that their Imam was reciting the entire Quran to them in taraweeh salaah.

Imam Bukhari has narrated a hadeeth in his famous book *Al Jaami-us-Saheeh* under the chapter on *Wahi*, wherein it appears that Jibreel *alaihis-salaam* used to visit *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam* every night of Ramadaan and

recite to him whatever amount of Quran that had been revealed till then. During the last year of his life the entire Quran was recited to him. This also proves that completing The Quran at night in Ramadaan is a sunnat practice. What's more, there exists numerous ahadeeth on the virtue of reciting The Holy Quran in salaah. And we have proven that the salaah at night in Ramadaan is taraweeh.

Hazrat Umar *radhiyallahu anhu* once called up three Qaaris of The Quran. The one who could read at a good speed was instructed to recite thirty verses in each rakaat of taraweeh. The second who read at a medium pace was told to lead the jamaat with twenty verses per rakaat. And the third, who read very slow was told to recite ten verses per rakaat. (Umdatul Qaari from Baihaqi,178/7)

Here too Hazrat Umar intended to make the recitation of Quran in taraweeh easy for the people. The first two Qaaris whom he instructed would undoubtedly make full completions of The Quran in taraweeh. In fact the first one would quite comfortably complete The Quran twice in taraweeh.

Hence the khatam or completion of the whole Quran in taraweeh is also a sunnat of Hazrat Umar *radhiyallahu anhu* which we are commanded to follow. Again, Hazrat Umar inherited this practice from *Rasoolullah sallallahu alaihi wasallam*, as explained above.

It has been the regular and strict practice of Ulema and Auliya over the centuries to make several completions of Quran-e-Kareem in Ramadaan, especially in taraweeh. This

too is an extension of a deed that has its roots in the Sunnat of the Greatest Benefactor of mankind (upon whom be the perpetual salutations of Allah).

We pray to Allah that the few words offered here may serve to provide a proper understanding of the 20-rakaat taraweeh, Insha-Allah.

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