

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Question:

What do the Ulama (scholars) and the Muftis of the Sharī‘ah say regarding the following issue: Are the rak‘ahs of Tarāwīḥ eight or twenty? Kindly clarify this matter with credible and authentic references.

Answer (الجواب بعون الوهاب):

The foundational principles of Islam are four: the **Qur’an**, the **Hadith**, **consensus (Ijmā‘)**, and **analogy (Qiyās)**.

Some matters are established from the Noble Qur’an, some from the Ahadith of the Blessed prophet ﷺ some from the consensus of the Ummah, and some from Analogy (Qiyas). If the proof for a matter is found through any one of these four principles, then acting upon it becomes obligatory for the Muslim Ummah.

As far as the rak‘ahs of Tarāwīḥ are concerned, it is accepted and proven that twenty rak‘ahs of Tarāwīḥ is the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, the Sunnah of the Companions رضي الله عنهم اجمعين, and the Sunnah of the Muslim Ummah. Performing eight rak‘ahs of Tarāwīḥ is contrary to the Sunnah.

Ibn Abī Shaybah narrates from **al-Ṭabarānī** in *al-Kabīr*, *Imām al-Bayhaqī* from *‘Abd ibn Humayd*, and *Imām al-Baghawī* narrated from **Sayyidunā ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās**:

”إِنَّ النَّبِيَّ كَانَ يُصَلِّي فِي رَمَضَانَ عِشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً سِوَى الْوُتْرِ“
”وَرَادَ الْبَيْهَقِيُّ فِي غَيْرِ جَمَاعَةٍ“

Indeed, the Prophet ﷺ used to pray twenty rak‘ahs in Ramadan besides the Witr, and *Imām al-Bayhaqī* added “in other than Jama‘ah (congregation)”.

It has been established from this Hadith that the Prophet ﷺ himself used to perform twenty rak‘ahs of Tarāwīḥ. As for the narrations that he prayed Tarāwīḥ for only three nights means he prayed with Jama‘ah for only 3 nights. That is, without congregation he used to pray regularly, but with congregation he led it only for three nights. This solves the apparent contradiction. It also establishes that Tarāwīḥ is Sunnah Mu‘akkadah ‘alā al-‘ayn, because the Prophet ﷺ would always pray it and encourage others to pray it as well.

Malik al-'Ulamā', 'Allāmah 'Alā' al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn Mas'ūd al-Kāsānī writes:

"رُويَ عَنْ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ جَمَعَ أَصْحَابَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ عَلَى أَبِي بِنِ كَعْبٍ فَصَلَّى فِي كُلِّ لَيْلَةٍ عِشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً لَمْ يَنْكُرْ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ فَيَكُونُ إِجْمَاعًا مِنْهُمْ عَلَى ذَلِكَ"

It is narrated that 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb gathered the Companions of the Messenger of Allah during the month of Ramadan behind Ubayy ibn Ka'b, who would lead them in twenty rak'ahs every night, and none of them rejected or went against this. Proving that there was consensus (Ijma') of them on that.

(Badā'i' al-Ṣanā'i', vol. 1, p. 288)

In 'Umdat al-Qārī Sharḥ al-Bukhārī (vol. 5, p. 255) it is written:

"قَالَ ابْنُ عَبْدِ الْبَرِّ وَهُوَ قَوْلُ جُمْهُورِ الْعُلَمَاءِ وَبِهِ قَالَ الْكُوفِيُّونَ وَالشَّافِعِيُّ وَأَكْثَرُ الْفُقَهَاءِ وَهُوَ الصَّحِيحُ عَنْ أَبِي بِنِ كَعْبٍ مِنْ غَيْرِ خِلَافٍ مِنَ الصَّحَابَةِ."

'Allāmah Ibn 'Abd al-Barr states that this is the opinion of the **majority (جمهور) of scholars** and **The scholars of Kufa**, and **Imām al-Shāfi'i**. and this is the **correct (صحيح) opinion**. It is reported from Ubayy ibn Ka'b, and there is no disagreement among the Companions regarding it.

'Allāmah Ibn Hajar also stated:

"إِجْمَاعُ الصَّحَابَةِ عَلَى أَنَّ التَّرَاوِيحَ عِشْرُونَ رَكْعَةً"

There is consensus of Sahaba that Tarāwīḥ is twenty rak'ahs.

Similarly, in **Marāqī al-Falāḥ** it is stated:

"وَهِيَ عِشْرُونَ رَكْعَةً بِإِجْمَاعِ الصَّحَابَةِ"

It (Tarawih) is twenty rak'ahs by consensus of the Sahaba upon it. Mawlānā 'Abd al-Hayy Farangī Mahallī writes in 'Umdat al-Ri'āyah Ḥāshiyah Sharḥ al-Wiqāyah (vol. 1, p. 175):

"تَبَّتْ إِيْتِمَامُ الصَّحَابَةِ عَلَى عِشْرِينَ فِي عَهْدِ عُمَرَ وَعُثْمَانَ وَعَلِيٍّ فَمَنْ بَعْدَهُمْ أَخْرَجَهُ مَالِكٌ وَابْنُ سَعْدٍ وَالْبَيْهَقِيُّ وَغَيْرُهُمْ."

The attention and care of The Companions on twenty rak'ahs has been established during the eras of 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī, and after them as well. This narration has been reported by Imām Mālik, Ibn Sa'd, al-Bayhaqī, and others.

Mullā ‘Alī al-Qārī writes:

"أَجْمَعَ الصَّحَابَةُ عَلَى أَنَّ التَّرَاوِيحَ عِشْرُونَ رَكْعَةً."

The Companions unanimously agreed that Tarāwīḥ consists of twenty rak‘ahs.

(*Mirqāt*, vol. 2, p. 175)

Likewise, *Imām al-Tirmidhī*, *Imām al-Shāfi‘ī*, *Allāmah al-Shāmī*, *Shaykh Zayn al-Dīn Ibn Nujaym*, *Yazīd ibn Rūmān*, *Imām al-Ghazālī*, and *Shah Walī Allāh Muhaddith Dehlawī* (may Allah have mercy on them) and hundreds of other great scholars of the Ummah have written in their works that all the Companions agreed upon twenty rak‘ahs of Tarāwīḥ.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

"أَصْحَابِي كُلُّهُمْ عُدُولٌ"

“All of my Companions are upright.”

And he ﷺ also said:

"أَصْحَابِي كَالنُّجُومِ بِأَيِّهِمْ أَقْتَدَيْتُمْ اهْتَدَيْتُمْ."

“My Companions are like stars; whichever of them you follow, you will be guided.”

All praise is for Allah that the Ahl al-Sunnah act in accordance with the noble statements and guidance of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, and in shā’ Allāh will remain upon it until the end of life.

Those who claim that Tarāwīḥ is eight rak‘ahs have **no authentic evidences**, and their statements oppose the Ijmaa’ of the Sahaba رضي الله عنهم جميعا indeed it is a corrupt and invalid view.

And Allah the Exalted knows best-

والله تعالى أعلم



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