

The Taraweeh Salaah, its virtues and amount.

Taraweeh Salaah, as explained by the scholars of Islam, is one which is performed exclusively in the Holy month of Ramadhan. It is done after the Isha (Salaah) and before the witr (Salaah) during the nights of Ramadhan, and brings about a tremendous amount of blessings as it falls under the act of ‘establishing the month of Ramadhan with (Ibadah) worship’. About this, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) has stated,

مَنْ صَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ، وَمَنْ قَامَ لَيْلَةَ الْقَدْرِ إِيمَانًا وَاحْتِسَابًا غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ

‘Whoever fasts the month of Ramadhan with (firm) faith and the hope of receiving rewards, all his previous sins shall be forgiven. And whoever stands in the month of Ramadhan with (firm) faith and the hope of receiving rewards, all his previous sins shall be forgiven’.¹

This tradition establishes the fact that standing in salaah and performing additional and extra acts of worship in the blessed month of Ramadhan are indeed very virtuous and rewarding acts of worship.

In another tradition, the believers are further exhorted

¹ Bukhari, Hadith No.2014,Pg.510, Vol.1, Altaf and Sons

and encouraged to increase their acts of Ibadah (worship) in the blessed month of Ramadhan. The tradition states that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِذَا كَانَ أَوَّلُ لَيْلَةٍ مِنْ شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ صُفِّدَتِ الشَّيَاطِينُ، وَمَرَدَّةُ الْحِجْرِ،
وَعُلِّقَتْ أَبْوَابُ النَّارِ، فَلَمْ يُفْتَحْ مِنْهَا بَابٌ، وَفُتِحَتْ أَبْوَابُ الْجَنَّةِ، فَلَمْ
يُعْلَقْ مِنْهَا بَابٌ، وَيُنَادِي مُنَادٍ: يَا بَاغِيَ الْخَيْرِ أَقْبِلْ، وَيَا بَاغِيَ الشَّرِّ
أَفْصِرْ، وَلِلَّهِ عِتْقَاءُ مِنَ النَّارِ، وَذَلِكَ كُلُّ لَيْلَةٍ

‘When the first night of the Holy month of Ramadhan enters, the satans and rebellious jinns are chained. The doors of Hell are locked and not a single one remains open. The doors of Jannah (Paradise) are then opened and not one from among them remains closed. An announcer then makes the following announcement, ‘O seeker of good! Come forward (and do as much good as possible) and O seeker of evil! Decrease your evil. And for Allah, there are many who are emancipated (freed) from the fire of Hell, which occurs every night’.²

² Tirmizi, Hadith No.682, Pg.331, Vol.1, Altaf and Sons (باب ما جاء في فضل شهر رمضان) /
Haakim, Hadith No.1564, Pg.528, Vol.1, Qadimi Kutub Khana (كتاب صوم) / Ibn Khuzaima,
Hadith No.1883, Pg.907, Vol.2, Maktaba Islamiya / Ibn Hibban, Hadith No.3435, Pg.221,
Vol.8, Al Resalah Al Alamiah (إنما يفسد الشياطين في شهر رمضان مردتهم دون غيرهم) / Sunan Al
Kubra, Hadith No.8501, Pg.749, Vol.4, Darel Hadith (باب في فضل شهر رمضان و فضل الصيام على)
(طريق الاختصار)

The tradition shows that Allah has ordered the closing of the doors of Hell and has commanded all the doors of Paradise to remain wide open. These are done as an encouragement to all believers to increase their good actions in the blessed month. In addition, they are openly addressed as 'seekers of good' and then told that they should advance in doing a great amount of good actions.

In view of these traditions, it is clear that the establishment of the Taraweeh salaah brings about the rewards of standing in the month of Ramadhan and also enables one to fulfill the requirement of increasing his good deeds, as highlighted in the second tradition.

Besides the above, it is also evident that the performance of Taraweeh salaah is established from the practice of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reports that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) performed salaah one night and the people performed it with him. He then performed it on the next night and the people increased (in their numbers to perform it with him). When they (the people) gathered on the third night or the fourth night, he, the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not come out (to perform the salaah with them). On the next morning, he said to them, 'I saw what you did and nothing prevented me from coming (to perform salaah with

you), except that I fear that it may be made compulsory upon you. And this was in Ramadhan'.³

In another tradition narrated by Abu Zarr (may Allah be pleased with him), he said, 'We fasted with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in the month of Ramadhan and he did not stand with us (in performing any optional salaah) until there remained seven nights (for the month to complete). He then stood with us in salaah until one third of the night passed. When it was the sixth (remaining) night, he did not stand with us. When it was the fifth (remaining) night, he stood with us until a half of the night had passed. I then said, 'O Messenger of Allah, it will be good if you had continued to perform optional salaah for us for the rest of the night'. Upon this, he the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, 'Certainly when a person performs salaah with the Imam until he (the Imam) comes to a completion and finishes, then he (the person) receives the rewards of standing for the entire night'. Abu Zarr continues by saying, 'so when it was the fourth night (remaining), he the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not stand (with us). When it was the third night (remaining), he gathered his family members and the ladies and other people and then stood with us (in salaah) until we feared that Al-Falaah will miss us. The narrator from Abu Zarr asked, 'What is Al-

³ Bukhari, Hadith No.2012, Pg.534, Vol.1, Altaf and Sons (باب فضل من قام رمضان)

Falaah?’ He (Abu Zarr) said, ‘Suhoor’ (i.e. Sehri). Abu Zarr continued by saying ‘that the Prophet of Allah did not stand with them for the remaining nights of the month’.⁴

Both the above traditions show that the performance of Taraweeh salaah was indeed a Sunnah (practice) of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself and was not a sunnah (practice) of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him). The act which was established from Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) was that he gathered the people under one Imam. Before this, they used to perform the Taraweeh in separate groups and the people would be inclined to the reciter who had the best voice. Seeing this, Umar said, ‘I see that the people have taken the Quraan as songs and melodies. By Allah, if I have the ability, I shall certainly change it’. Having said this, only a short time passed that Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) ordered Ubai (may Allah be pleased with him) to lead the people in salaah’ (i.e. Taraweeh).⁵

⁴ Abu Dawood, Hadith No.1376, Pg.203, Vol.1, Maktaba Rahmania / Tirmizi, Hadith No.806, Pg.374, Vol.1, Altaf and Sons (باب ما جاء في قيم شهر رمضان) / Shuabul Iman, Baihaqi, Hadith No.3007, Pg.553, Vol.4, Maktaba Rusd (قيام شهر رمضان) / Bazaar, Hadith No.4042, Pg.433, Vol.9, Maktaba Uloom Wal Hakam (ما رواه حبيب بن نفيير عن أبي ذر) / Nasaa’i, Pg.238, Vol.1, Qademi Kutub Khana (باب قيام شهر رمضان) / Sunan Al Kubra, Baihaqi, Hadith No.4281, Pg.90, Vol.7, Darel Hadith. Imam Tirmizi said that the Hadith is good and sound).

⁵ Recorded by Imam Bukhari in ‘Khalq Af’aalil Ibaad’ (باب التعرب بعد الهجرة قال أبو عبد الله) / Kanzul Umaal, Hadith No.23469, Pg.408, Vol.8, Muassasah Resalah).

The tradition of Abu Zarr mentioned before also shows that the Taraweeh salaah was performed in Jamaat (congregation) by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). This is further established from the following tradition, which makes it clear that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) endorsed the performance of Taraweeh salaah in Jamaat (congregation). The tradition states that Tha'laba bin Abi Malik Al-Qurazi (may Allah be pleased with him) said,

خَرَجَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ ذَاتَ لَيْلَةٍ فِي رَمَضَانَ فَرَأَى نَاسًا فِي نَاحِيَةِ الْمَسْجِدِ يُصَلُّونَ، فَقَالَ: " مَا يَصْنَعُ هَؤُلَاءِ؟ " قَالَ قَائِلٌ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، هَؤُلَاءِ نَاسٌ لَيْسَ مَعَهُمْ قُرْآنٌ وَأَبِي بْنُ كَعْبٍ يَقْرَأُ وَهُمْ مَعَهُ يُصَلُّونَ بِصَلَاتِهِ قَالَ: " قَدْ أَحْسَنُوا، أَوْ قَدْ أَصَابُوا

‘The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) came out one night in the month of Ramadhan and saw some people performing salaah in a corner of the masjid. Upon this, he asked, ‘What are these people doing?’ Someone replied, ‘O Messenger of Allah! These people do not know the Quraan and Ubai bin Ka’ab (may Allah be pleased with him) is reciting the Quraan (in salaah) and they are performing salaah with him’. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) then said, ‘They have done good and they have done the right thing’. And he did not dislike this

for them.⁶

It is therefore evident from the above mentioned traditions that the performance of Taraweeh salaah is extremely virtuous and rewarding, and believers are encouraged to perform it in the month of Ramadhan. It is further established that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself performed the Taraweeh salaah and also endorsed its performance in Jamaat (i.e. in congregation). In this regard, the celebrated scholar, Ibn Qudama (died 620 AH) wrote, 'The first person to establish the Taraweeh salaah was the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and its connection to Umar bin Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) was due to the fact that he gathered the people under Ubai bin Ka'ab, who performed the salaah for them'.⁷

Having been established as an important form of Ibadah (worship) in the blessed month of Ramadhan, a Muslim is required to know how many rakaats the Taraweeh salaah comprise of.

Based upon that which is unanimously held by the scholars of the early era of Islam, (they state that) no specific number of rakaats of Taraweeh has been highlighted in the traditions (which speak about the

⁶ Recorded by Baihaqi with a good sanad, from Tha'laba bin Abi Malik Al-Qurazi, Sunan Al Kubra, Baihaqi, Hadith No.4282, Darel Hadith. Recorded from Abu Hurairah in Ibn Khuzaima, Hadith No.2208, Pg.1056, Vol.2, Maktaba Islamiya / Ibn Hibban, Hadith No.2541, Pg.288, Vol.6, Al Resalah Al Alamiah (فصل في التراويح).

⁷ Al Mughni, Pg.166, Vol.2, Maktaba Reyadul Hadith

Taraweeh of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)). In other words, although the Messenger of Allah had performed optional salaah during the nights of Ramadhan (referred to as Taraweeh), no fixed amount has been recorded by any companion pertaining to that which they had performed with him on the given nights.

In this regard, Allama Subki writes, 'know that it has not been narrated as to how many rakaats the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) read on those nights. Was it twenty or less?'⁸

Allama Shawkani has written, 'The Sunnah has not narrated it'. (i.e. the amount of rakaats and its specification with fixed recitation).⁹

In a like manner, Allama Jalaludeen Suyuti has stated, 'The scholars have differed with respect to the amount of rakaats in the Taraweeh salaah. If this was evident through the action of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), they would not have differed.'¹⁰

Hafiz Ibn Taimiyah has also written, 'Whoever thinks that in the standing for Ramadhan (i.e. the Taraweeh salaah) there is a fixed and specific amount from the

⁸ Sharh Minhaaj

⁹ Nailul Awtaar, Pg.53, Vol.2, Darul Kutub Ilmiya

¹⁰ Al-Masabeeh, Fii Salaatut Taraweh, Pg.14, Maktaba Darul Arooba

Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) which one cannot increase nor decrease, he has committed a mistake.’¹¹

Besides the above mentioned scholars, there are many others who have all written that no fixed and specific amount of rakaats of Taraweeh have been established from the statement or action of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

It is interesting to note that while the Hadith of Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) is known and accepted to be sound, reliable and authentic; none of the great and accepted scholars have used it to establish with firmness that Taraweeh salaah is performed with only eight rakaats.

This is mainly due to the fact that the great scholars of Hadith and Fiqh from the former and latter generations have understood the hadith of Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) to be connected to “Qiyaamul Lail” ‘Standing by night’, which occurs during the whole year (referred to as Tahajjud), and not to that which was specially performed in the month of Ramadhan (being referred to as Taraweeh).

The Hadith of Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) states that she was asked,

¹¹ Fatawa Ibn Taimiyah, Pg.113, Vol.23, Ashraf Raeesa

كَيْفَ كَانَتْ صَلَاةُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي رَمَضَانَ؟ فَقَالَتْ:
«مَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَزِيدُ فِي رَمَضَانَ وَلَا فِي غَيْرِهِ
عَلَى إِحْدَى عَشْرَةَ رَكْعَةً يُصَلِّي أَرْبَعًا، فَلَا تَسَلْ عَنْ حُسْنِهِنَّ وَطَوْلِهِنَّ، ثُمَّ
يُصَلِّي أَرْبَعًا، فَلَا تَسَلْ عَنْ حُسْنِهِنَّ وَطَوْلِهِنَّ، ثُمَّ يُصَلِّي ثَلَاثًا

‘How was the salaah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in Ramadhan? She replied that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would not exceed above eleven rakaats in Ramadhan nor out of Ramadhan. He would perform four rakaats, do not ask about its beauty and length. He would then perform another four, do not ask about its beauty and its length, and he would then perform three’.¹²

As mentioned here, the above tradition speaks generally about a salaah which is not confined to the month of Ramadhan, as Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) herself said, ‘he never exceeded eleven in Ramadhan and out of Ramadhan’. This goes to show that Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) referred to the Tahajjud Salaah which was read through the year and not the taraweeh which was read only in the month of Ramadhan. Traditions show that the

¹² Bukhari, Hadith No.1147, Pg.308, Vol.1, Altaf and Sons

(باب قيام النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بالليل في رمضان وغيره)

Prophet's standing by night in Tahajjud was done in the last third of the night, and his standing by night in Tawaweeh started from the first third and went on for half of the night and, at times until the end of the last third (As recorded in the tradition of Abu Zarr [may Allah be pleased with him] mentioned before). From Aisha's tradition, it is evident that he read eight rakaats in Tahajud which will normally be performed in the last third of the night. If this be the case, the question is 'how much did he read when he performed rakaats from the first third of the night, until half the night and at times for the full night in the month of Ramadhan?'

Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) herself gives a brief account of the state of the Ibadah (worship) of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in Ramadhan, she said,

كَانَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ إِذَا دَخَلَ الْعَشْرُ شَدَّ مِعْزَرَهُ، وَأَحْيَا لَيْلَهُ،
وَأَيَّقَظَ أَهْلَهُ

'The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), when the last ten days entered, would strengthen his waist cloth (i.e. the garment for the lower half of the body), he would remain awake for the entire nights in worship and would wake up his wives'.¹³

¹³ (Bukhari, Hadith No.2024, Pg.537, Vol.1, Altaf and Sons)

(باب العمل في العشر الأواخر من (في) رمضان)

In addition, scholars of Hadith have mentioned that the hadith of Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) (which speaks about eight rakaats) cannot be used to show a fixed amount of rakaats (of the night) which the Messenger of Allah did not exceed.

This, they say is due to the fact that Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) herself has narrated that,

كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يُصَلِّي بِاللَّيْلِ ثَلَاثَ عَشْرَةَ رُكْعَةً، ثُمَّ يُصَلِّي إِذَا سَمِعَ النِّدَاءَ بِالصُّبْحِ رُكْعَتَيْنِ خَفِيفَتَيْنِ

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would sometimes perform thirteen rakaats besides the two rakaats of Fajr.¹⁴

In another tradition recorded by Imam Bukhari, Abdullah bin Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) has narrated that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) performed twelve rakaats as Tahajjud salaah, after which he performed the witr.¹⁵

While explaining the different amount of rakaats, Hafiz Ibn Hajar has stated, ‘The correct view is that every thing which Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) has

¹⁴ Abu Dawood, Hadith No.1339, Pg.198, Vol.1, Maktab Rahmania (باب في صلاة الليل)

¹⁵ Bukhari, Hadith No.183, Pg.62, Vol.1, Altaf and Sons

mentioned from the different amounts is based upon the different times and different states'.¹⁶

It is therefore evident that due to the differing amount of rakaats (the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) performed in Tahajud) which are all established in authentic traditions, it cannot be said that he never performed more than eight.

While eight rakaats cannot be said to be Tarawaeeh salaah, (since a fixed amount is not evident from the traditions), we see that during the time of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), the Muslims practiced the performance of twenty rakaats as Taraweeh which was endorsed by the great sahabas of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

As mentioned by Ibn Qudama and Imam Bukhari, the action of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) with respect to Taraweeh salaah was simply to gather the people upon one Imam, Ubai bin Kaab.

In this regard, many authentic reports have been narrated with regards to the practice of the Sahabahs and Tabieen during the Khilafat of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).

Some of these reports are:-

Yazeed bin Khaseefa narrates from Sa'ib bin Yazeed

¹⁶ Fathul Baari, Pg.26, Vol.3, Qademi Kutub Khana

that,

كَانَ النَّاسُ يُفُومُونَ فِي زَمَانِ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فِي رَمَضَانَ
بِثَلَاثٍ وَعِشْرِينَ رُكْعَةً

During the time of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), the people (Muslims) used to stand for twenty rakaats in Ramadhan (i.e. in the Taraweeh Salaah).¹⁷

Imam Maalik has narrated from Yazeed Bin Ruman that he said,

كَانَ النَّاسُ يُفُومُونَ فِي زَمَانِ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ بِثَلَاثَةٍ وَعِشْرِينَ رُكْعَةً فِي
رمضان

“The people during the time of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) used to stand for twenty three rakaats (including the witr) (in the month of Ramadhan)’.¹⁸

Abdul Azeez bin Rafee says that,

كَانَ أَبِي بِنُ كَعْبٍ يُصَلِّي بِالنَّاسِ فِي رَمَضَانَ بِالْمَدِينَةِ عِشْرِينَ رُكْعَةً، وَيُوتِرُ
بِثَلَاثٍ

“Ubai bin Kaab (may Allah be pleased with him) used

¹⁷ Sunan Al Kubra, Baihaqi with a sound sanad, Hadith No.4617, Pg.187, Vol.3, Darul Hadith (باب ما روى عدد ركعات القيام في شهر)

¹⁸ Muatta of Imam Malik, Hadith No.250, Pg.288, Vol.1, Maktaba Bushra (ما جاء في قيام رمضان)

to lead the people in Salaah in Madina with twenty rakaats and performed witr as three rakaats.¹⁹

أَدْرَكْتُ النَّاسَ وَهُمْ يُصَلُّونَ ثَلَاثًا وَعِشْرِينَ رُكْعَةً بِالْوِثْرِ

From Ata, he says, 'I met the people and they were performing twenty three rakaats with the witr salaah.'²⁰

Abul Khaseef says that,

كَانَ يُؤْمِنَا سُؤَيْدُ بْنُ عَفْلَةَ فِي رَمَضَانَ فَيُصَلِّي خَمْسَ تَرْوِيحَاتٍ عِشْرِينَ رُكْعَةً

'Suwaid Bin Ghafla used to lead us in Ramadhan with twenty rakaats.'²¹

Nafi has narrated from Abdullah Bin Umar that,

كَانَ ابْنُ أَبِي مُلَيْكَةَ يُصَلِّي بِنَا فِي رَمَضَانَ عِشْرِينَ رُكْعَةً

Abu Mulaika used to lead them in Ramadhan with

¹⁹ Abu Bakr bin Abi Shiba has narrated it in his Musannaf, Hadith No.7766, Pg.224, Vol.5, Muhammad Awwamah (كم يصلى في رمضان من ركعة)

²⁰ Abi Shayba, Hadith No.7770, Pg.224, Vol.5, Muhammad Awwamah (كم يصلى في رمضان (من ركعة)

²¹ Sunan Al Kubra, Baihaqi with a good sanad, Hadith No.4290, Darel Hadith (باب ما روى (عدد ركعات القيام في شهر

twenty rakaats.²²

In Sunan Al Kubra by Imam Baihaqi, Sa'ib bin Yazeed states that,

كَانُوا يَقُومُونَ عَلَى عَهْدِ عُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ فِي شَهْرِ رَمَضَانَ
بِعِشْرِينَ رُكْعَةً " قَالَ: " وَكَانُوا يَفْرُغُونَ بِالْمِئِينَ، وَكَانُوا يَتَوَكَّنُونَ عَلَى
عَصِيهِمْ فِي عَهْدِ عُثْمَانَ بْنِ عَفَّانَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ مِنْ شِدَّةِ الْقِيَامِ

During the time of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), the people used to perform twenty rakaats, and during the time of Uthman, they would lean on their sticks for support due to the long standing.²³

It should be understood that in all the previous reports, those who are mentioned as 'the people' or 'the Muslims' during the time of Umar were none other than the Sahabas and the Tabieen, who occupied the highest seats of learning from among the Salafus Saaliheen (the pious predecessors). Hence, their actions and unanimity upon any aspect of Islam cannot be dismissed as being insignificant.

The great ones from among the noble companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) living during the time of Umar (may Allah be pleased

²² Ibn Abi Shaiba with a sound sanad Hadith, No.7765, Pg.225, Vol.5, Muhammad Awwamah (كم يصلى في رمضان من ركعة)

²³ Sunan Al Kubra, Baihaqi with a sound sanad, Hadith No.4617, Pg.187, Vol.3, Darel Hadith (باب ما روى عدد ركعات القيام في شهر)

with him) accepted and also practiced the performance of twenty rakaats as Tarawaeeh salaah. Those who came after them from among the great Tabieen also did the same. Thus, in the blessed cities of Makka, Madina, Koofa, Baghdad, Basra and other cities, the practice of performing twenty rakaats as Tarawaeeh salaah became established by the great scholars of these places.²⁴

It is evident that besides Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) and Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) also practiced the performance of twenty rakaats as Taraweeh.²⁵

Thus, this was the opinion held by the majority of the great scholars and other Muslims living at that time which came down to the other generations and was therefore held by the great scholars and leaders of the latter times.

In this regard, the great Imams of Fiqh and Hadith like Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Ahmad, Imam Shafi, Sufyan Thawri stated that Taraweeh should be performed with twenty rakaats. Imam Malik held the opinion that it should be performed with thirty six rakaats due to the actions of the people of Madina during his time.

²⁴ See Tuhfatul Ahwazi, Baihaqi, Ibn Abi Shaiba

²⁵ Tuhfatul Ahwazi, Pg.616, Vol.3, Qademi Kutub Khana (باب: ما جاء في قيم شهر رمضان)

Imam Nawawi has written, ‘Know that the salaah of Taraweeh is sunnah according to all Muslims, and it is twenty rakaats’.²⁶

Hafiz Ibn Taimiyah has written, “It is evident that Ubai Bin Kaab (may Allah be pleased with him) used to perform twenty rakaats in Ramadhan with the people and he performed three rakaats as witr.

The majority of scholars have therefore seen that this is the sunnah and established practiced, since it was established amongst the Muhajir ad the Ansaar (from among the sahabahs) and none went against it.²⁷

Allamah Subki has stated, ‘Know well that it is not narrated as to how many rakaats the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) performed on those nights and our mazhab is that of twenty rakaats’.²⁸

Allamah Shami has stated, ‘Taraweeh is Sunnah Al Muakaddah and it is twenty rakaats. This is the statement of the majority, and upon this is the action of the Muslims, east and the west.’²⁹

Imam Tirmizi has also made the same statement in the

²⁶ Kitaabul Azkaar

²⁷ Fatawa Ibn Taimiya, Pg.112, Vol.23, Ashraf Raeesa

²⁸ Sharh Al Minhaaj

²⁹ Raddul Muhtar, Pg.45, Vol.2, Darul Fikr

following words, “And most of the people of knowledge are upon that which has been narrated from Ali and Umar and others from the Companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that Taraweeh is twenty rakaats. It is the statement of Sufyan Thawri, Abdullah bin Mubarak and Imam Shafi. Imam Shafi has said, “This is what I found the Muslims and scholars of my city, Makkah doing. They were performing twenty rakaats as Taraweeh’.³⁰

From the above narrations, it is evident that the Khulafa Ar Rashideen, (the rightly guided Khalifahs) like Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), and Ali (R.A), along with the great scholars of the Sahabahs and those after them all held on to the established practice of performing 20 rakaats as Taraweeh Salaah. As mentioned by the great scholars, this itself serves as a proof for the continuous practice of performing 20 rakaats as Taraweeh Salaah, since it is authentically evident that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

فَعَلَيْهِ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ، عَضُّوا عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِدِ

‘It is upon you to hold on to my practice and the practice of the rightly guided Khalifahs. Hold firmly on to this with the molars.’³¹

³⁰ Tirmizi, Hadith No.806, Pg.378, Vol.1, Altaf and Sons (باب ما جاء في قيم شهر رمضان)

³¹ Recorded by Imam Tirmidhi who says that it is good and sound, Hadith No.2676, Pg.261, Vol.2, Altaf and Sons (باب ما جاء في الأخذ بالسنة واجتناب البدع)

Here, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) emphasized upon his followers to hold firmly to his practice, and that of the practice of the rightly guided Khalifahs.³²

Holding on to the practice, teachings of the rightly guided Khalifahs is clearly understandable since they, being the very close companions of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would not oppose, contradict or turn away from the blessed teachings of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Instead, they lived in accordance to his teachings and sacrificed their lives to protect his Sunnah. In fact, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself testified to the great Iman, knowledge, truthfulness and status of these Khalifahs in many of his traditions.

In this regard, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spoke about Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) and said,

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِيمَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ رِجَالٌ، يُكَلِّمُونَ مِنْ غَيْرِ أَنْ
يَكُونُوا أَنْبِيَاءَ، فَإِنْ يَكُنْ مِنْ أُمَّتِي مِنْهُمْ أَحَدٌ فَعَمْرُ

‘From among the nations of the past, there were those upon whom inspiration came. If there is any such of

³² Ila As Sunan, Vol.7, Pg.80, Idaratul Quraan wal Uloom Al Islamiya, Karachi

my Ummah, it would be Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).³³

Abdullah bin Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ جَعَلَ الْحَقَّ عَلَى لِسَانِ عُمَرَ وَقَلْبِهِ

‘Certainly Allah has placed the truth (Al Haqq) upon the tongue and heart of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).³⁴

Jabir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that,

قَالَ عُمَرُ لِأَبِي بَكْرٍ: يَا خَيْرَ النَّاسِ بَعْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ،
فَقَالَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ: أَمَا إِنَّكَ إِنْ قُلْتَ ذَلِكَ فَلَقَدْ سَمِعْتُ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ: «مَا طَلَعَتِ الشَّمْسُ عَلَى رَجُلٍ خَيْرٍ مِنْ عُمَرَ»

Once Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) addressed Abu Bakr and said, ‘O best of people after the Messenger of Allah.’ Upon this, Abu Bakr said, ‘Since you have addressed me in this way, I say to you

³³ Bukhari, Hadith No.3689, Pg.1000, Vol.1, Altaf and Sons

(باب: مناقب عمر بن الخطاب أبي حفص القرشي العدوي)

³⁴ Tirmidhi, Hadith No.3682, Pg.543, Vol.2, Altaf and Sons (باب في مناقب أبي حفص عمر بن)

(الخَطَابِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) / Abu Dawood, Hadith No.2961, Pg.62, Vol.2, Maktaba Rahmania (باب

في تدوين العطاء)

that I have heard the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) saying, 'The sun has not risen on any man better than Umar.'³⁵

Uqba bin Aamir (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said,

لَوْ كَانَ نَبِيٌّ بَعْدِي لَكَانَ عُمَرُ بْنُ الْخَطَّابِ

'If there was a Prophet after me, it would be Umar bin Khattab.'³⁶

In this manner, (through inspiration from Allah), the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) spoke highly of Umar, with respect to his intelligence, love for the truth and being steadfast upon the truth. The authentic traditions also show that a number of injunctions in Islam and verses of the Holy Quran, were revealed in a manner that prior to their revelation, Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) had desired, and even suggested to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that such injunctions should be established. This is what is known among the scholars as 'Muwafaqaat of Umar', where injunctions and Quraanic verses were revealed in

³⁵ Tirmidhi, Hadith No.3684, Pg.543, Vol.2, Altaf and Sons (باب في مناقب أبي حفص عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه)

³⁶ Tirmidhi, Hadith No.3686, Pg.544, Vol.2, Altaf and Sons (باب في مناقب أبي حفص عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه) / Muajumul Kabeer, Tibrani, Hadith No.475, Pg.23844, Vol.11,

Muassasah Rayaan (عصمة بن مالك الخطمي)

conformance /agreement to the opinions of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him).

The explanations and testimonies given by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) regarding Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) and the other Khalifahs, give the Ummah the assurance that the decisions made by Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) and the other Khalifahs (from the Sahabahs) which were officially adopted and implemented in the Muslim Ummah, were not based on innovations and opposition to the teachings of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). Instead, these were all based upon the correct teachings and upon the guidance given to them by Allah. Hence, the practices which became well established in the Ummah, and were decided upon by the great Khalifahs, like the compilation of the Quraan by Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him), the official implementation of 20 rakaats of the Taraweeh Salaah by Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), the introduction of the 2nd Azan for Jumma Salaah by Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), were all in accordance with the teachings of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), and were not in opposition and contradiction to his Sunnah.

It is for this reason, when asked about the Taraweeh Salaah and the actions of Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), the great Mujtahid, Imam Abu Hanifah

(may Allah have mercy on him) replied, ‘Taraweeh (Salaah) is Sunnah Al Mu’akadah. Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) did not invent this from his own self, nor was he an innovator. He did not give an order to do it, except that he had a proof for it.³⁷

This statement of Imam Abu Hanifa (A.R.) is a very wise one which shows the great prudence of the Imam. It points to the fact that like other pious predecessors, the great Tabi’ee Imam had great trust and confidence in the actions, judgements and practices established, implemented and practiced by the illustrious Sahabah, especially the rightly guided Khalifahs. They understood very well that ‘Umar (R.A.) could not have invented a fixed amount of rakaats for any Salah, be it Sunnah or nafl. In fact, no person from the Ummah, including the sahabahs, had such an authority to specify a fixed amount of rakaats in any given salaah which has been established in the shariah. Whatever has been established in the sacred teachings of Islam from the Prophet (S.A.S) will remain as they are without being interfered with by anyone. Hence, it is a ‘far-fetched notion’ that one would think that Umar (R.A.) came up with an idea of twenty rakaats of taraweeh on his own without having any evidence whatsoever, to guide him in making this important decision which became well established in the entire Ummah.

³⁷ Tahtawi Ala Mara’iq’ul Falaah, Pg.224, Qadeemi Kitub Khana, Karachi

It is for this reason, Imam Abu Hanifa (A.R.) said, ‘He (Umar R.A.) did not give an order to do it, except that he had a proof for it’.

With regards to the performance of 20 Rakaats as Taraweeh, some scholars have also cited a tradition from Abdullah bin Abbass (R.A) which states that,

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يُصَلِّي فِي رَمَضَانَ عِشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً
وَالْوَيْتَرَ

the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) performed 20 Rakaats as taraweeh.³⁸

In explaining this narration, the great scholar of Hadith and Fiqh, Allama Zafar Ahmad Uthmani (A.R) writes, ‘We have seen that Abu Bakr bin Abi Shaiba has mentioned the following in his Musannaf, Yazeed bin Haroon has narrated from Ibrahim bin Uthman from Hakim from Miqsam from Ibn Abass (may Allah be pleased with him) who said that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to perform twenty Rakaats and the witr in Ramadhan. Al Kashi has mentioned this in his Musnad; Al Baghwi has mentioned this in his Musnad; Tibrani has mentioned it in Al Kabeer and Al Baihaqi in his Sunan. All the narrators of this tradition are strong and

³⁸ Abu Shayba, Hadith No.7774, Pg.225, Vol.5, Muhammad Awwamah (كم يصلي في رمضان) / Sunan Al kubra Baihaqi, with a different wording, Hadith No.12102, Darel Hadith (باب ما روى عدد ركعات القيام في شهر)

reliable except for Ibraheem bin Uthman, who is the grandfather of Abu Bakr bin Shaiba; the majority of scholars have considered him weak. However, the great expert in the science of Hadith and its narrators Ibn Addi says, 'For him (i.e Ibrahim bin Uthman) there are traditions which do not have weakness in them and he himself was not deemed to be weak in the narration of those tradition, and he is better (a better narrator) than Ibraheem bin Abi Haya.

Allama Zafar (may Allah have mercy on him) further writes, 'As for Ibraheem bin Abi Haya, the scholars of Hadith have differences of opinion regarding him, however, he narrates good Hadith, and is known to be a good / accepted narrator. Uthman Al Darimi has narrated from Yahya bin Mu'een that he said (about Ibrahim bin Abi Haya), 'He is a great shaykh who is reliable.³⁹

Allama Zafar says, 'When Ibraheem bin Abi Haya is considered to be a good narrator. And Ibraheem bin Uthman has been considered by the great expert, Ibn Addi, to be better than him, then it becomes clear that Ibraheem bin Uthman (who is one of the narrators of the Hadith which speaks of twenty rakaats of Taraweeh Salaah) cannot be deemed to be out rightly weak. The least he can be, is either he is a narrator about whom the scholars of Hadith have differences of opinion (that is, some have stated he is a good / reliable narrator, and some have stated that he is a

³⁹ Al Lisan, No.116, Pg.272, Vol.1, Maktaba Matbuaat Al Islamiya

weak narrator.

Or, he can be clearly considered to be a good narrator of Hadith, which is at the same level of Ibraheem bin Haya'.⁴⁰

Thus, giving consideration to the authentic statement of the expert Hadith scholars, Ibn Addi and others that Ibraheem bin Uthman is a sound / reliable narrator of Hadith and is a better narrator than Ibraheem bin Abi Haya (who is considered a good narrator), it is clear that the Hadith of Ibn Abbas regarding twenty rakaats Taraweeh will be accepted.

From these explanations, and that of the great scholars, it becomes evident that one should perform twenty Rakaats of Taraweeh Salaah in the blessed month of Ramadhan, and should not decrease from this amount.

Ramadhan is a month of great blessings, and it is one through which the believers can increase themselves in piety and closeness to Allah. As such, one must exert oneself as much as possible in increasing his Ibadah and good deeds in this month, as exemplified by the beloved Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

⁴⁰ Ila As Sunan, Vol.7, Pg.82, Idaratul Quran Wal Uloomil Islamia, Karachi, Pakistan