



...: The Tarawih Prayer :...

Hadrat Abu Hurairah reported that the Messenger of Allah has said,

من قام رمضان إيمانا واحتسابا غفر له ما تقدم من ذنبه

“...whoever prays during the night in Ramadhan sincerely; seeking his reward from Allah, his former sins are forgiven.”

[Sahih al-Muslim, Vol. 1, Page 259, Hadith 1815]

Hadrat Sa'ib ibn Yazid has stated that,

كانوا يقومون على عهد عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه في شهر رمضان بعشرين ركعة

“We, (the Companions of the Beloved Prophet,) used to pray twenty rak'ats Tarawih prayer in the era of the Caliph 'Umar ibn al-Khattab.”

[Sunan al-Bayhaqi, Vol. 2, Page 224, Hadith 4801]

It has been stated in Mirqat al-Mafatih:

إسناده صحيح

The chain of narration of this Hadith is sound (Sahih).

[Mirqat al-Mafatih – Vol. 2, Page 175]

Hadrat Yazid ibn Ruman reports that,

كان الناس يقومون في زمان عمر بن الخطاب في رمضان بثلاث وعشرين ركعة

“...during the time of Hadrat 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, people used to pray 23 Rak'ahs during Ramadhan (20 rak'ahs for Tarawih prayer and 3 rak'ats for witr.)” [Muwatta

Imam Malik, Vol. 1, Page 115, Hadith 251]

Sayyiduna Ibn Abbas Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anhu narrates, said that,

أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم كان يصلي في رمضان عشرين ركعة سوى الوتر

During the month of Ramadhan, aside from the praying of witr the beloved Prophet Sallallahu Alaihi wa Aaihi wa Sallam would also pray 20 rak'ahs of Tarawih.

Ibn Abi Shayba, Musannaf, Vol. 2, Page 164, Hadith 7692

At-Tabarani, Mu'jam al-Awsat, Vol. 1, Page 243, Hadith 798

At-Tabarani, Mu'jam al-Awsat, Vol. 5, Page 324, Hadith 5440

At-Tabarani, Mu'jam al-Kabir, Vol. 11, Page 393, Hadith 12102

Al-Bayhaqi, Sunan al-Kubra, Vol. 2, Page 496, Hadith 4391

Abd bin Hamid, Musnad, Vol. 1, Page 218, Hadith 653

Khatib al-Baghdadi, Tarikh, Vol. 6, Page 113
Al-Haytami, Majma' az-Zawaid, Vol. 3, Page 172
Ibn Abd-al Barr, al-Tamhid, Vol. 8, Page 115
Al-Asqalani, Fath al-Bari, Vol. 4, Page 254, Hadith 1908
Al-Asqalani, al-Diraya, Vol. 1, Page 203, Hadith 257
As-Suyooti, Tanwir al-Hawaliq, Vol. 1, Page 108, Hadith 263
Zahbi, Mizan al-Ae'tidal, Vol. 1, Page 170
Al-San'ani, Subul Islam, Vol. 2, Page 10
Al-Mizzi, Tahzib al-Kamal, Vol. 2, Page 149
Al-Zela'i, Nasb al-Rayah, Vol. 2, Page 153
Zurqani, Sharh Alal Muwatta, Vol. 1, Page 342

The consensus (Ijma') of the Companions

A companion of Sayyiduna Ali Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anhu, Sayyiduna Shutayr bin Shakil narrates that,

During the month of Ramadhan Sayyiduna Ali would read 20 rak'ahs of Tarawih and 3 wit'r.

Ibn Abi Shayba, Musannaf, Vol. 2, Page 163, Hadith 7680
Al-Bayhaqi, Sunan al-Kubra, Vol. 2, Page 496, Hadith 4395

Sayyiduna Abu Abd-ar Rahman Sulami Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anhu said,

In the month of Ramadhan, Sayyiduna Ali Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anhu sent for all the Qur'anic reciters, and instructed one of them to lead 20 rak'ahs Tarawih, and Sayyiduna Ali himself would lead the wit'r prayer.

[Al-Bayhaqi, Sunan al-Kubra, Vol. 2, Page 496, Hadith 4396]

It is narrated that,

Sayyiduna Ali Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anhu ordered a person to lead the Muslims in the prayer of 20 rak'ahs of Tarawih, and this was aside from the wit'r.

[Ibn Abd-al Barr, al-Tamhid, Vol. 8, Page 115]

Sayyiduna Yahya bin Sa'id Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anhu said that,

Sayyiduna Umar Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anhu ordered an individual that he lead them in the prayer of 20 rak'ahs of Tarawih.

[Ibn Abi Shayba, Musannaf, Vol. 2, Page 163, Hadith 7682]

Sayyiduna Naf'i bin Umar Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anhu states that,

Ibn Abi Malkiya would lead us in the prayer of 20 rak'ahs of Tarawih in the month of Ramadan.

[Ibn Abi Shayba, Musannaf, Vol. 2, Page 163, Hadith 7683]

Sayyiduna Abd-al Aziz bin Rafi' Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anhu states that,

Sayyiduna Abi Bin Ka'ab Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anhu would lead the people of Madinah al-Munawwarah during the month of Ramadan in the praying of 20 rak'ahs of Tarawih and 3 wit'r. [Ibn Abi Shayba, Musannaf, Vol. 2, Page 163, Hadith 7684]

Sayyiduna Hata' Radi Allahu Ta'ala Anhu states that,

I have observed worshippers praying 23 rak'ahs of Tarawih comprising of the wit'r.

[Ibn Abi Shayba, Musannaf, Vol. 2, Page 163, Hadith 7688]

Malik al-'Ulama Hadrat 'Allama 'Ala al-Din Abubakr ibn Mas'ud al-Kasani states:

It has been narrated that Hadrat 'Umar al-Faruq assembled all the companions in the month of Ramadhan to perform Tarawih behind Hadrat Ubayy ibn Ka'b. so, he (Hadrat Ubayy ibn Ka'b) lead them in the Tarawih prayer performing twenty (20) Rak'ats every night. No one from them ever refuted or disapproved of this. Thus, the Ijma' (consensus) of all the companions was on performing twenty rak'ats for the Tarawih prayer.

[Bada'i al-Sana'i – Vol. 1, Page 288]

Imam Badr al-Din al-'Aini states in his renowned commentary on Sahih al-Bukhari entitled, "Umdat al-Qari":

'Allama ibn 'Abd al-Barr has states that it is the ruling of the majority of the scholars that tarawih is twenty Rak'ats. The scholars and jurists of Kufa, Imam al-Shafi'i and the majority of the Fuqaha have stated this, and this is the sound opinion as transmitted from Hadrat Ubayy ibn Ka'b that no companion had a difference of opinion in it.

[Umdatul Qari – Vol. 5, Page 355]

Hadrat Ubayy Ibn Kaab (Allah be pleased with him) used to lead the prayers by performing twenty Rak'ats tarawih and three Rak'ats witr.

[Abu Dawood pg.202]

Abdul Aziz bin Rafai (Rahimahullh) mentions that,

Ubay bin Kaab (Allah be pleased with him) used to perform twenty Rak'ats for the people and thereafter three Rak'ats of witr.

[Atharus Sunan pg.53]

Shaykh al-Islam, al-Imam al-Hafiz ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani states:

It is the Ijma’ of the companions upon the fact that the Tarawih prayers consists of twenty rak’ats.

Abdullah Ibn Masud (Allah be pleased with him) also used to perform twenty rak’ats. [Tuhfatul Ahwazi vol.2 pg.75]

It has been stated in Maraqiy al-Falah the commentary of Nur al-Idah that:

Tarawih is twenty rak’ats, as the Ijma’ of the companions is upon this.

‘Allama ‘Abd al-Hayy Faranghi Mahalli states:

It has been proven that the companions used to perform tarawih twenty rak’ats in the blessed eras of Hadrat ‘Umar, Hadrat ‘Uthman, Hadrat ‘Ali and all those who came after them. Such reports have been transmitted by Imam Malik, ibn Sa’d, Imam Baihaqi and others.

[‘Umdah al-Ri’ayah hashiyah Sharh al-Waqayah – Vol. 1, Page 175]

Imam Mulla ‘Ali al-Qari states:

The companions all agree (it is their consensus) upon the fact that Tarawih is twenty rak’ats. [Mirqat al-Mafatih – Vol. 2 Pg. 175]

The ruling of the Majority

Imam Tirmidhi states:

The majority of the scholars practice what has been transmitted from Hadrat ‘Umar Faruq, Hadrat ‘Ali and the other companions that Tarawih is twenty rak’ats. Imam Sufiyan al-Thawri, Imam ‘Abdullah ibn Mubarak and Imam al-Shafi’i have stated the same (that Tarawih is twenty rak’ats). Imam Shafi’i has stated that we have found the residents of our city Makkah al-Mukarramah performing twenty rak’ats for the Tarawih prayer.

[Tirmidhi – Chapter on worshipping the nights of Ramadhan – Page 99]

Imam Mulla ‘Ali al-Qari has stated:

It is the conformity of all the muslims upon the twenty rak’ats for Tarawih. This is because Imam Baihaqi narrates with a sound chain of transmission that in the blessed

era of Hadrat ‘Umar, Hadrat ‘Uthman and Hadrat ‘Ali, the companions and all those who followed them (Tabi’un) performed twenty rak’ats for the Tarawih prayer.

[Babu Fath al-‘Inayah Sharh al-Nuqayah]

It has been stated in the commentary of Tahtawi on Maraqiy al-Falah that:

By the continuous practice of Hadrat Abubakr al-Siddiq and the other Rightly-Guided Caliphs, it has been proven that Tarawih is twenty rak’ats. [Page 224]

‘Allama ibn ‘Abidin al-Shami states:

Tarawih is twenty rak’ats; this is the ruling of the majority of the scholars and the common practice of all Muslims from east till west.

[Radd al-Muhtar – Vol. 1, Page 195]

Shaykh Zain al-Din ibn Nujaim al-Misri states:

Twenty rak’ats Tarawih is the ruling of the majority of the scholars. This is because it has been reported in the Muwatta of Imam Malik on the authority of Hadrat Yazid ibn Ruman that in the blessed era of Hadrat ‘Umar al-Faruq the companions used to perform twenty-three rak’ats (twenty rak’ats for Tarawih and three rak’ats for the Witr.)

[al-Bahr al-Ra’iq – Vol. 2, Page 66]

Imam Ali Qari al-Hanafi (d. 1014 AH), He said in Sharh al-Naqayah:

"Imam Bayhaqi has reported on genuine authority (sahih) about the performance of 20 rak’ahs of Tarawih during the periods of Umar, Uthman and Ali Radi Allahu Ta’ala Anhum, and hence there has been consensus (Ijma’) on it."

It has been stated in al-‘Inayah the commentary of al-Hidayah that:

Until the beginning of the Khilafah (reign) of Hadrat ‘Umar al-Faruq, the companions used to perform the Tarawih individually. Thereafter, Hadrat ‘Umar stated that, "I find it better to assemble all the companions (to perform the Tarawih) behind one Imam." Thus, he assembled all the companions to perform the Tarawih with congregation behind Hadrat Ubayy ibn Ka’b. Hadrat Ubayy lead them in the Tarawih performing 5 sets of four-rak’ats (tarwiha) i.e. performed twenty rak’ats.

In al-Kifayah it states:

Tarawih is twenty rak’ats in total. This is our (Hanafi) ruling and that of the school of Imam al-Shafi’i.

In Sharh al-Waqaya it has been stated:

Twenty rak’ats for the Tarawih is the Sunnah. [Vol. 1, Page 175]

In Bada'i al-Sana'i it has been stated:

The number of rak'ats for the Tarawih prayer is twenty; five tarweha with one salam; every two salaams is a tarweha (i.e. one salaam made after every 2 rak'ats. Therefore, two salaams means after four rak'ats). This is the ruling of the scholars in general.

[Vol. 1, Page 288]

Imam al-Ghazzali states:

Tarawih is twenty rak'ats, its method is well known and it is sunnah muakkadah.

[Ihya 'Ulum al-Din – Vol. 1]

Sayyid Abdul Qadir Jailani writes,

Tarawih prayer is a sunnah and it comprises of twenty rak'ats.

[Ghunyatut Talibin pg.464]

In Fatawa-e-'Alamgiri (also known as "al-Fatawa al-Hindiyyah") it states:

Tarawih consists of five Tarweha; each tarweha is four rak'ats with two salaams (made at the end of two rak'ats). This has also been stated in al-Sirajiyah. [Vol. 1. Page 108]

Hafiz Ibn Hajar Asqalani (852 A.H.) states,

The practice of twenty rakaat has remained in vogue. [Al Masabih]

Allamah Badrudin Aini (855 A.H.) has,

Proved conclusively in his annotation of Sahih Bukhari, the authenticity of twenty rakaat taraweeh. [Aini Sharh Bukhari]

Shah Waliyullah Muhaddith-e-Dehlwi states:

The number of rak'ats for the Tarawih is twenty. [Hujjatullahil Baligha – Vol. 2, Page 18]

Ibn Taymiyah writes,

It has been accepted that Ubayy Ibn Kab used to lead the prayer for the people by performing twenty rak'ats in Ramadhan and three rak'at witr. Accordingly, most of the Ulama regarded twenty rak'ats as sunnat because Ubayy used to lead the congregation of the Muhajiroon and the Ansar and none of them rejected his act.

[Fataawa Ibn Taymiyyah vol.23]

Taraweeh is an additional salaah?

It is an accepted fact among the true scholars of Islam that for centuries, taraweeh prayer was and is an additional prayer in the month of Ramadan. Only the Shias reject taraweeh. The modern khawarij also reject the fact that there is an additional prayer in Ramadan. Their belief is that tahajjud prayer which is performed during the latter portion of the night was brought forward in Ramadan. Thus there is no addition in Ramadan.

Prayer is the highest form of physical worship in Islam. When the month of Ramadan arrives, the common masses begin increasing their prayer by performing extra nawafil (optional prayers). Can it then be possible for the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him & give him peace) that he encouraged excess worship in this month while he himself did not increase his nightly worship? If he merely transferred his tahajjud prayer to an earlier time, then it implies that there was no increase in his prayer. So why did he ask his followers to perform an additional prayer in Ramadan?

More than 20 Rakaats?

Some of the narrations report more than twenty rak'ahs. In fact, for more than 150 years, the standard practice in Madinah was of thirty six rak'ahs. The reason for this number (36) is that some Saints used to perform four rak'ahs individually at every interval (tarwihah), thus adding an additional number of sixteen to the total of twenty. However, only twenty rak'ahs were performed with congregation. Eventually the additional four rak'ahs of every interval were omitted and twenty rak'ahs became the standard practice of every city. Although the names of all the Ulama are not explicitly mentioned in the books of Fiqh, nonetheless this much is certain that after the Khairul Quroon (the era of the Prophet Allah bless him & give him peace and the Sahaba), all the Ulama of the Ahle Sunnat wal Jamaat gave a verdict of twenty rak'ahs.

Abdullah Ibn Masud (32 A.H.), Suwaid Ibn Ghafilah (81 A.H.), Ali Ibn Rabiah, Sufyan Thauri, Abdullah Ibn Mubaarak (181 A.H.) of Khurasan, Dawud Zahiri, Imam Abu Hanifa (150 A.H.) and all his followers, Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (241 A.H.) and all his followers, Imam Shafi and all his followers used to perform twenty rakaat.

This in short was the practice of the pious precursors from the era of Umar (Allah be pleased with him) till about the middle of the third century in the main centres of learning such as Makkah, Madinah, Kufa, Basrah, Baghdad, Khurasan, etc. All the authentic books of the four mazhabs amongst others are unanimous on the practice of twenty rakaat. (for more details see Bidayatul Mujtahid vol.1 pg. 210; Tirmidhi vol.1 pg.112; Kashful Qana pg.276; Sharh Muhtahil Iradat vol.1 pg. 256, Mughni Ibn Qudamah; Sharh Nawai ala Muslim)

Hadith of Hazrat Aisha (Allah be pleased with her)

For those that like to present the hadith of Hazrat Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) which states that the Prophet (sallalaho alaihi wasallam) used to pray 11 rakaat for the night prayer fail to realise that there is another hadith by Hazrat Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) which states that the Prophet (sallalaho alaihi wasallam) used to pray 13 rakaat. To this the commentators of hadith such as Hafiz Ibn Hajar have reconciled

these two differing ahadith by stating that they refer to different conditions and times. At some occasions the Prophet (Allah bless him & give him peace) used to perform thirteen rakaat and at others only eleven rakaat. (Fathul Bari vol.3).

This hadith of thirteen rakaat categorically negates the claim that the Prophet (Allah bless him & give him peace) never performed more than eleven rakaat. Also think about it, if Hazrat Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) believed the Prophet (sallalaho alaihi wasallam) only prayed 8 rakaat tarawih then why did she never use this hadith against those who performed twenty rakaat during the eras of Umar, Uthman and Ali (Allah be pleased with them). In fact, this hadith of tahajjud has been narrated by many Sahaba (Allah be pleased with them) but not one of them has quoted it against those who performed twenty rakaat tarawih. After the era of the Sahaba (Allah be pleased with them), the Tabieenn and Taba-Tabieen also performed twenty rakaat but not one of them used this hadith against those who performed twenty rakaat.

Tahajjud and Tarawih are Seperate Salats

It is mentioned in a hadith,

"It is a month in which Allah has made fasting compulsory while I (the Prophet Allah bless him & give him peace) have made the Tarawih sunnah."

(Nisai vol.1 pg.308; Ibn Majah pg.94)

To follow any act of the Prophet (sallalaho alaihi wasallam) is sunnah. We all know that the tahajjud salah was compulsory (farz) upon the Prophet (sallalaho alaihi wasallam) since the days of Makaah. Therefore if the Sahaba also prayed the tahajjud (as a voluntary prayer) it was already a sunnah for them. But in this hadith we are learning about a new sunnah, this is a new prayer that the Prophet (sallalaho alaihi wasallam) introduced, this was the prayer as we know it today Taraweeh!

The following statement is mentioned in Muqanna, an authentic book of the Hanbali Mazhab:

"Tarawih is twenty rakaat performed in Ramadan in congregation. If a person wants to perform tahajjud as well, then he should not read witr after tarawih. Witr should be delayed till after the tahajjud." (Muqanna pg.184)

From the above quotation it can be clearly seen that even Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (241 A.H.), the teacher of Imam Bukhari understood tarawih and tahajjud to be separate prayers. Imam Bukhari also had a similar practice. He used to perform tarawih prayer with his students in the early part of the night during which he used to complete one Quran. At the time of sehri he used to perform prayer (tahajjud) individually. (Tarikh Baghdad). So think about it, if Imam Bukhari has narrated the hadith of hazrat Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) to justify taraweeh and tahajjud are the same salaah and they consist of eight rakaat, then why did Imam Bukhari himself not act upon this hadith as such. But rather we learn that Imam Bukhari prayed twenty rakaah taraweeh immediately after Isha and prayed tahajjud separately later in the night.

Besides our blessed Prophet (sallalaho alaihi wasallam) never said that there is a prayer which is called tahajjud for eleven months and taraweeh in the twelfth!?!?

Did the blessed Prophet (Allah bless him & give him peace) say that this prayer is nafl for eleven months and sunnat in the twelfth?!?

Did the blessed Prophet (Allah bless him & give him peace) say that the time of this prayer for eleven months is the last part of the night and in the twelfth month it is immediately after Isha?!?

Did the blessed Prophet (Allah bless him & give him peace) say that one should perform this prayer individually for eleven months and with congregation in the twelfth?!?

Did the blessed Prophet (Allah bless him & give him peace) say that for eleven months it is not sunnat to complete the Quran but in the twelfth month it becomes sunnat?!?

Are those muhaddithin and fuqaha who have written separate chapters for tahajjud, taraweeh and witr rejectors of hadith?!?

Alternative Views, Explanations and Evidence

In a handout by al-Albani's followers in England, by the title "**Some common questions answered**" (dated October 1990), there appeared the following question and answer (No. 22):

(a) Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) reports that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) never prayed more than 8 rak'aats in taraweeh, so how come nobody disapproves of 20?

(b) Is it true that Umar (Allah be pleased with him) introduced it?

Ans. 22 (a) As regards the taraweeh prayer - people agree that the Sunnah of the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and the best way is 11 rak'aats. As regards any addition - then this is DISAPPROVED of and DECLARED AS A BID'AH (A bad innovation) by Shaykh al-Albani and by a few earlier scholars - that being reported from Imam Malik, Ibn ul-Arabee and as-San'aanee (see *Salat-ut-taraweeh* of Shaykh al-Albani).

(b) It is not true that Umar (Allah be pleased with him) either prayed or ordered 20 rak'aats. Rather he ordered Ubayy ibn Ka'b to lead the people with 11 rak'aats (*al-Muwatta*1/137, with a Sahih Isnad).

I do not wish to go into much detail on this issue, but *Insha'Allah* a separate publication is what is really required, to show which opinion is the most correct. But any way it should be said that the vast MAJORITY of the scholars of hadith, Fiqh, and even the four Mujtahid Imams are in agreement that 20 rakats are the most appropriate, followed by 3 rakats of witr, and this is also the opinion of the Imam of the "Salafiyya", Ahmad ibn Taymiyya!

First, it should be said that the hadith reported from Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) about 11 rakats is not at all to do with taraweeh, according to the majority of scholars, but in fact concerns the number of rakats of TAHAJJUD prayer! The hadith in question is as follows:-

Narrated Abu Salama ibn Abdur Rahman that he asked Aisha (Allah be pleased with her), "How was the prayer of Allah's Apostle (Peace be upon

him) in Ramadan?" She replied, "He did not pray more than eleven *raka'at* in Ramadan or in any other month. He used to pray four *raka'at* - let alone their beauty and length - and then he would pray four - let alone their beauty and length - and then he would pray three *rak'aat (witr)*." She added, "I asked, 'O Allah's Apostle! Do you sleep before praying the *witr*?' He replied, 'O Aisha, My eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep.'" (*Bukhari*, 3/230, English edn)

According to the author of "*Fatawa Rahimiyyah*", Mufti Abdur Rahim Lajpuri (vol. 1, pg. 275); in his defence of 20 *rakats* of *taraweeh*: "**The commentator of *al-Sahih al-Bukhari* and the erudite traditionist, Shaykh Shamsud-Din al-Kermani (d. 786 AH; Rahimahullah) said: 'In the hadith (above), the *tahajjud* prayer is meant. Abu Salama's question and Hadrat Aisha's answer concerned the *tahajjud*.'** He adds further: '**If the *tahajjud* prayer is not meant, then this tradition will be at variance with the tradition that states that the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) led twenty *rakats* each for two nights, and in the case of such clash the tradition of twenty *rakats* which is affirmative (*muthbit*) shall have precedence because according to the principles of hadith, the affirmative takes precedence over the negative (*naaf*)'**" (vide: *Al-Kawakib ud-Durari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 9, pg 155-156). I say, does this not mean that people who perform 8 *rakats* of *taraweeh*, should pray 20 *rakats* instead? Since according to the principles of hadith (as affirmed by al-Albani), "**The affirmative takes precedence over the negative in certain cases.**"

A great fact that should also be noted by the reader is that the Imam's of hadith have placed the hadith from Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) under the section of *tahajjud* prayers, which indicates their belief that the hadith applies to *tahajjud* only. The Imam al-Muhaddithin al-Bukhari (Rahimahullah) has placed the hadith from Aisha under at least two sections of his *Sahih*, first under the section of '21: The *tahajjud* Prayer at Night' (see *Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 2, chapter 15, no. 248, English ed'n) and then under the section of '32: The Book of *taraweeh* Prayers' (see *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 3/230, pg. 128 English ed'n). This means that Imam Bukhari believed that the prayer mentioned by Aisha was that of *tahajjud* only, and since the *tahajjud* prayer is performed also in Ramadan, then Imam Bukhari also quoted the same hadith under 'The book of *taraweeh* prayers', but Allah knows best. Imam Muslim (*Rahimahullah*) has also placed the hadith from Aisha under the *tahajjud* prayer section (see *Sahih Muslim* 1/1607, pg. 356, English ed'n). Also Imam Malik (*Rahimahullah*) has placed Aisha's hadith under the Book of *tahajjud* (see *Al-Muwatta*, Book 7, section 7.2, no. 9, pg. 5, English ed'n). The Imam Abu Dawood (*Rahimahullah*) has also placed the same hadith under the chapter 'On the number of *rakats* of the prayer at night (*tahajjud*)' (see *Abu Dawood* 1/1336, pg. 351, English version). Even Imam's Tirmidhi and Nisai (Allah's mercy be upon them) placed Aisha's hadith under the *tahajjud* section (see *Tirmidhi*, vol. 1, pg. 58 and *Nisai*, vol. 1, pg. 154). Even one of the most prominent Imams of the 'Salafiyya', Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya placed the aforementioned hadith in the section of *tahajjud* prayers in his book *Zaad al Ma'ad* (vol. 1, pg. 86)!

Mufti Abdur Rahim said about Aisha's hadith: "And if this tradition may have been quoted in some book under the devotions of Ramadan along with the *taraweeh*. Like the *taraweeh*, the *tahajjud*, too, is a prayer of Ramadan, and because of this affinity, it can be mentioned along with the *taraweeh* (as Imam Bukhari did). Hence, supposing it may have been mentioned in some book, it cannot be made thereby a categorical argument. 'When uncertainty creeps in, the argument is falsified.' Moreover, Hafiz al-

hadith Imam Qurtubi's (d. 671/1273; *Rahimahullah*) statement regarding this hadith (of Aisha) should not be overlooked that, 'many a man of knowledge considers the aforesaid hadith *mudtarib* (i.e. confounded).'" (vide: Imam Ayni in his *Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari*, vol. 2, pg. 187).

In short, the aforesaid report is in no way a proof for eight *rakats* of *taraweeh*. In contradistinction to this, as regards the twenty *rakats* the Companions Consensus (*Ijma-as-Sahaba*) has taken place over the approval of Ibn Abbas' hadith (about 20 *rakats* being performed by the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him) and practically the majority of Ulama have accepted it." (*Fatawa Rahimmiyah*, vol. 1, pg 276-277).

Although Aisha (Allah be pleased with her) had said: "He did not pray more than 11 Raka'at," we also have reports from her that the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) also prayed more than 11 Raka'ats! The proof for this was given by her in another narration involving Abu Salama ibn Abdal Rahman (*Rahimahullah*). Abu Salama asked Aisha about the prayer of the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him), she said, "He observed 13 Raka'ahs (in the night prayer). He observed 8 raka'ahs and would then observe (three *rakats* of) *witr* and then observe two raka'ahs sitting (nafl prayer), and when he wanted to bow he stood up and then bowed down, and then he observed two raka'ahs in between the Adhan and Iqama of the dawn prayer (i.e. *fajr*)." (See *Sahih Muslim* 1/1603, pg. 357 and also al-Albani's *Sifah Salah an-Nabee*, appendix 7, pg. 110). So does this not mean that the 'Salafiyya' should perform 13 Raka'ats of *taraweeh* in Ramadan?

Now, the statement 'the best way is 11 rak'aats' is only the opinion of a small group of the ulama, in fact there are more than 50 opinions to say that the best way is 20 *rakats* according to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) and his Companions (Allah be pleased with them all) practise! What is more interesting to note is that the four great Mujtahids, Abu Hanifah, Malik, Shafi'i and Ahmad ibn Hanbal (Allah's mercy be upon them) are in agreement that the *taraweeh* consists of twenty *rakats*. The statement that Imam Malik approved of eight *rakats* needs to be proved, most likely this ascription was made to him because he quoted the hadith which is used to prove eight *rakats* of *taraweeh* in his *al-Muwatta* (see *Muwatta*, 6.2, no. 4, pg. 48) by a small group of scholars. Although Imam Malik (*Rahimahullah*) quoted this hadith in his book, it has no bearing on what his actual opinion and practise was, on the contrary Imam Malik believes in thirty-six *rakats* of *taraweeh* (i.e. 20 *rakats* and 16 *rakats* of extra nafl prayers, see later for the official verdict of the Maliki Madhhab)! Also the hadith which seems to prove 11 *rakats* of *taraweeh* (including three *rakats* of *witr*) in Imam Malik's *Muwatta* has been explained away by many other convincing arguments.

Recently I came across a booklet by the title, "Is *taraweeh* 20 rakats?" (Published by Madrasah Arabia Islamia, Azaadville, South Africa, author unknown). In this booklet the hadith quoted from the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik (*Rahimahullah*), about 11 *rakats* of *taraweeh* (including three *witr*) was quite eloquently analysed.

The actual hadith in question was related by Yahya ibn Yahya al-Laythi, who related from his teacher Imam Malik, who related from Muhammad ibn Yusuf, who said that as-Saib ibn Yazid said, "Umar ibn Khattab (Allah be pleased with him) ordered Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Tamim ad-Dari (Allah be pleased with them) to watch the night in prayer with the people for eleven *rakats*. The reciter of the Qur'an would recite the Mi'in (a group of medium sized surah's) until we would be leaning on our staffs from having stood so long in prayer. And we would not leave until the approach of dawn." (see above reference in *al-Muwatta*).

It was stated in the aforementioned booklet (chapter 7, pg. 20), after quoting the above narration, "If we analyse the chain (*Isnad*) of this hadith, we notice that Muhammad ibn Yusuf narrates from Saaib ibn Yazid. Muhammad (ibn Yusuf) has 5 students and the narration of each student differs from the next (i.e. the text of the hadith is different from each student). The five students are:

(1) Imam Malik (2) Yahya ibn Qattan (3) Abdul Aziz ibn Muhammad (4) Ibn Ishaq and (5) Abdur Razzaq

Their narrations are as follows :

(1) Imam Malik says that Umar ordered Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Tamim Dari to perform 11 rakats. (What practise occurred thereafter is not mentioned, nor is Ramadan mentioned).

(2) Yahya ibn Qattan says that Umar made the people gather with Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Tamim Dari and both of them began performing 11 rakats. (Hadrat Umar's command is not mentioned, nor is any mention of Ramadaan made).

(3) Abdul Aziz (ibn Muhammad) says that we used to perform 11 rakats in the era of Umar. (Neither is the command mentioned, nor is Ubayy ibn Ka'b or Ramadan mentioned).

(4) Ibn Ishaq says that we used to perform 13 rakats in Ramadaan during the era of Umar. (Neither is the command of Umar mentioned. Instead of 11 rakats, 13 are mentioned).

(5) Abdur Razzaq says that Umar gave the command of 21 rakats. (In this narration 21 rakats are mentioned instead of 11).

Besides the narration of Imam Malik (Rahimahullah), 11 rakats can not be established from the other narrations. Due to this difference, the narrator Ibn Ishaq gave preference to 13 while Ibn Abdal Barr al-Maliki preferred 21 (from the narration of Abdur Razzaq). Therefore this narration is *Mudtarib* (A hadith that is transmitted in different manners, so that the contents of each transmission differ, and it is not possible to give preference to any particular transmission) with regards to the number (of *rakats*) and hence unacceptable.

The above was an analysis of Muhammad ibn Yusuf's narration via Saaib ibn Yazid. Now let us examine the narration of Yazid ibn Khaseefah via Saaib (ibn Yazid), which is mentioned in the *Sunan al- Kubra* of al-Bayhaqi (vol. 2, pg. 496): Abu Zi'b narrates from Yazid ibn Khaseefah, who reports from Saaib ibn Yazid that the people used to perform 20 rakats in the month of Ramadan during the era of Umar.

Imam Nawawi, Iraqi and Suyuti (all three were great scholars of hadith) amongst others have accepted the authenticity of this hadith (see *Tuhfatul Akhyaar*, pg. 192 and *Irshaadus Saari*, pg. 74, (by Imam al-Qastallani]).

Muhammad ibn Jafar (another narrator in the chain) has quoted the statement from Yazid (ibn Khaseefah) as Abu Zi'b (had). This narration is mentioned in *Marifatul Sunan* of al-Bayhaqi. Allamah Subki and Mullah Ali al-Qari have stated in *Sharh Minhaj* and *Sharh Muwatta* respectively that the chain of narrators of this hadith are correct. (*Tuhfatul Ahwazee*, vol.2, pg 75).

From the above narration we can clearly see that both the students of Yazid (ibn Khaseefah), unanimously narrate the fact that during Umar's (Allah be pleased with him) era 20 rakats was the standard practise. On the contrary, the 5 students of Muhammad ibn Yusuf quote Saaib (ibn Yazid) differently.

In such a situation the correct approach would be to rely on the narration of Yazid ibn Khaseefah. However the *Ahl al-hadith* (another name for the "Salafiyya") have unjustly discarded this narration and adopted the doubtful one of Muhammad ibn Yusuf, which has differing versions. This goes against the principles of hadith." Here ends the quote .

Another hadith that is used by the protagonists of eight *rakats* of *taraweeh* has been related by Jabir ibn Abdullah (Allah be pleased with him): "The Prophet (Peace be upon him) led the people in prayer during Ramadan with 8 *rakats* and the *witr*. We gathered in the Mosque the following night hoping that he would come again. We remained waiting till the next morning (until he came out). The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, 'I feared that the *witr* may become incumbent on you.'" (related by Ibn Nasr al-Marwazi in *Qiyamul-Layl*, pg. 90, al-Tabarani and Ibn Hibban - see below for the actual hadith)

The above hadith has been analysed by Shaykh Abdur Rahim in his "Fatawa" (vol. 1, pg. 278-9) with the conclusion that the hadith is *da'ef*. The shaykh said: "The strange thing about this hadith is that its chain of authorities (*Isnad*) is not trustworthy. Please examine the statements of the Imams of this science concerning the narrators of this chain. In this chain one narrator is Ibn Hameed Razi, about whom the opinions of the great and august critics of hadith are as under:

(1) 'He is weak.' - Hafiz al-Dhahabi (see his *Mizanul I'tidal*, vol.3, pp. 49-50)(2) 'He narrates many disowned (*munkar*) hadiths.' - Ya'qub ibn Shaybah(3) 'He is objectionable.' - Imam Bukhari(4) 'He is a liar.' - Abu Zur'ah(5) 'I testify that he is a liar.' - Ishaq Kausaj(6) 'He narrates hadiths about everything; I have not seen a man bolder than him vis-a-vis God.' - Sauleh Jazrah(7) 'By God! He is a liar.' - Ibn Kharash(8) 'He is not reliable.' - Imam Nisai

Now, about the second narrator, Ya'qub ibn Abdullah Ash'ari al-Qummi:-

(1) 'He is not strong.' - Daraqutni (see *Mizanul I'tidal*, vol. 3, pg. 324).

About the third narrator, Isa ibn Jariyah:-

(1) 'He has had disowned (*munkar*) hadiths.' - Ibn Ma'een(2) 'His hadiths are disavowed.' - Nisai(3) 'His hadiths are rejected (*matruk*).' - Nisai(4) 'His hadiths are disavowed.' - Abu Dawood - synopsis(5) 'He is counted among the weak.' - (see *Mizanul-I'tidal*, vol. 2, pg. 311, by Hafiz al-Dhahabi)." Here ends the quote.

Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (Rahimahullah) has reported a similar narration to the above hadith in his *Bulugh al-Maram min Adillat al-Ahkam* (no. 396, pg. 159), on the authority of Hafiz Ibn Hibban (Rahimahullah): "Narrated Jabir ibn Abdullah (Allah be pleased with him): Allah's Apostle (Peace be upon him) prayed during the night in Ramadan; the people waited for him on the next day, but he did not come out; and he said, 'I feared that the *witr* might be enjoined on you.'" Note the above narration does not even state how many *rakats* were performed by the Prophet (Peace be upon him)!! The above two hadiths can not be used as justifiable proof in favour of 8 *rakats* of *taraweeh* on their own.

Al-Imam Malik (Rahimahullah) has in fact quoted a hadith which proves the performance of 20 *rakats* of *taraweeh* in Ramadan; and that is as follows:-

Yahya related to me from Malik that Yazid ibn Ruman said, "The people used to watch the night in prayer during Ramadan for 23 *rakats* (i.e 20 *rakats* of *taraweeh*, followed by 3 *rakats* of *witr*) in the time of Umar ibn al-Khattab." (vide: *al-Muwatta*, 6.2, No. 5, pg. 48, English ed'n)

Although the above hadith is *Munqati* (a link is missing in the chain) and has thus been declared to be *Da'eef* by some scholars (including al-Albani), it never the less has been used as proof. Besides, the hadith has been given a full *Isnad* (chain) by either Imam Ibn Abdal Barr al-Maliki (d. 463/1071; Rahimahullah) or Shaykh Muhammad Habibullah ibn Mayabi ash-Shanqiti (Rahimahullah), in their thorough research to complete all the chains of transmission (*Isnad*) which have an incomplete chain; as found in the *Muwatta* of Imam Malik!

In fact the latest edition of the English version of *al-Muwatta* (translated by A. A. at-Tarjumana and Yaqub Johnson) says (pg. xxxiv): "Ibn Hajar (al-Asqalani) said, 'The book of Malik is sound by all the criteria that are demanded as proofs in the *mursal*, *munqati* (two types of hadith which have a missing link) and other types of transmission.' Then as-Suyuti followed what Ibn Hajar said here; and said, 'Themursal hadith in it are a proof with him (i.e. ash-Shafi'i) as well because the *mursal* is a proof with us when it is properly supported. Every *mursal* in the *Muwatta* has one or more supports as will be made clear in this commentary (i.e. Suyuti's commentary on *al-Muwatta* called *Tanwir al-Hawalik*). It is absolutely correct to say that the *Muwatta* is sound without exception.'

Ibn Abdal-Barr collected together all the *mursal*, *munqati* and *mu'addil* hadiths in the *Muwatta* and said that the total number of hadiths in the *Muwatta* which do not have an *Isnad* are sixty one. He stated that he found the *isnads* of all of them in other sources with the exception of four hadiths. The erudite scholar of hadith, Shaykh Muhammad Habibullah ibn Mayabi ash-Shanqiti says in *Ida'a al-Halik* that he had found witnesses for these four hadith and he then mentioned these witnesses. He said, 'Some of the people of knowledge made these *Isnads* complete.' He mentioned from Ibn Abdal-Barr that there was no *munkar* (rejected) hadith in the *Muwatta*, nor anything fundamentally refuted."

In the light of what the erudite scholars of hadith have said above, we may emphatically state that the apparently '*munqati*' hadith from Yazid ibn Ruman has a complete *Isnad*; hence it may be used as a proof, since Imam Ibn Abdal-Barr has said that there is, "No *munkar* hadith in the *Muwatta* nor anything fundamentally rejected." Hence, many scholars of hadith and *Fiqh* have used the above hadith as a proof in favour of 20 *rakats* of *taraweeh*.

The quote from "Some common questions answered," also claimed that, "Rather he (Umar) ordered Ubayy ibn Ka'b to lead the people with 11 rakats." I say, this is half of the truth, since it is clearly stated in *al-Muwatta* : "Umar ibn Khattab ordered Ubayy ibn Ka'b AND Tamim ad-Dari(see *Muwatta*, 6.2, no. 4, pg. 48)!!

Al-Albani has said that if anyone performs more than 11 *rakats* of *taraweeh*, then he or she is basically committing a *Bid'ah* (a very bad innovation)! We seek refuge in Allah from such a disgusting statement! Since this tantamountally means that the foremost Imams of the saved sect (*al-Firqat an-Najiyah*) of *Ahl-al-Sunnah wa'l Jama'ah* have been committing a gross innovation (Allah forbid). Al-Albani seems to be implying that the venerable Companions (may Allah be pleased with them and increase their rank), the four great Mujtahid Imams (Allah's mercy be upon them), as well as the foremost scholars of hadith and *Fiqh* of the last 1400 years have 'innovated' the practise of 20 *rakats* of *taraweeh*, if considered in the light of penetrative elaboration, implicitly and covertly! What alternative conclusion can one derive, if the "Albani *Madhhab*" says,

"As regards any addition (to 11 *rakats*) - then this is disapproved of and declared as a *bid'ah* by 'Shaykh' al-Albani?"

I ask you, are the so called "Salafiyya" in the true path of the original and true *Salaf-as-Salihin* (the pious predecessors of the first three generations of Islam), when they have declared the practise of 20 *rakats* to be a *bid'ah*, even though the Salaf have been reported to have practised 20 *rakats*?

The actual hadith which states that the Holy Prophet (Peace and blessings be upon him) performed 20 *rakats* of *taraweeh* has been reported by Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him). He said, "Verily, the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) in the month of Ramadan, used to perform 20 *rakats* and the *witr* prayer (afterwards) without congregation." (Reported in *al-Sunan al-Bayhaqi*, vol.2, pg. 496, *Musannaf* Ibn Abi Shaybah, *Kabiri* of Imam al-Tabarani, Ibn Aadi in his *Musnad*, and by Imam Baghawi in his *Majmua-as-Sahabah*)

Although some scholars have declared this hadith to be *Daeef* on its own, it does not mean that it should be whole heartedly rejected; since *Daeef* does not mean *Maudu* (fabricated). Please refer to the next section on *Daeef* hadiths, and when they are acceptable to scholars for further elaboration. The hadith related from Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) is supported by many other narrations coming from great Companions like Uthman, Ali, Ibn Masood...(Allah be pleased with them all), as well as their successors (*Tabi'in*). Besides, some of the scholars of hadith have even declared some weak Ahadith to be *Sahih*, if it has a firm basis. It was stated in the book "Criticism of hadith among Muslims with reference to *Sunan* Ibn Maja," (pg. 131, by one of the leading "Salafi" Shaykhs in Britain, Suhaib Hasan): "Shafi'i also recognises a weak hadith as authentic (*sahih*) if it is found to be accepted by the whole Ummah (see al-Sakhawi: *Fath al-Mugith*). But he does not accept Malik's view of restricting the practise to the people of Madinah. According to the later scholars of the Hanafi school like Ibn al-Humam, a hadith will be declared *Sahih*, if it is supported by the practise of the Ummah (see Abdal Rashid Nu'mani: *Ma tamusu ilaihe al-Haja*, pg. 18). Among traditionalists, Tirmidhi often remarks, after quoting a less authentic hadith: 'It is being practised by the people of learning (*Ahl al-Ilm*).' Suyuti deduces: 'It indicates that the hadith is supported by the sayings of the people of learning. More than one scholar has said that a hadith is declared *Sahih* if supported by the sayings of the people of learning, even if it lacks a proper Isnad (see Suyuti: *al-Ta'aqubat*, folio 20)."

As stated above, the great research scholar (**Muhaqqiq**) Hafiz Kamal ibn al-Humam (d. 861/1457; Rahimahullah) had actually said: "One of the factors from which the authenticity of a hadith is known is that the learned (Ulama) may conform to it, which is a proof of its being sound (vide: *Fath al-Qadir*, vol. 3, pg. 349).

There are many quotes from scholars which prove a near universal juridical acceptance of 20 *rakats* of *taraweeh*, but I content myself by quoting a select few from some of the foremost scholars of the *Ahl-as-Sunnah*, as well as the Imam of the "Salafiyya" (when it suits their whims and desires), Ahmad ibn Taymiyya.

1) Hafiz Taqi-ad-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya al-Hanbali (d. 728/1328)
He has said in his *Fatawa Ibn Taymiyya* (vol.1, pg. 191):

"It has been proven without doubt that Ubayy ibn Ka'b (Allah be pleased with him) used to lead the Companions, during Ramadan, for 20 *rakats* and 3 *rakats* of *witr*. Hence it is the principle (*maslak*) of most of the *Ulama* that this is the Sunnah, because Ubayy ibn

Ka'b led 20 *rakats* of prayer in the presence of the Muhajirin (the emigrants) and the Ansars (the helpers) and not a single Companion repudiated it!"

2) Shaykh al-Islam Ahmad ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 852/1449; R.A.)

The Hafiz of hadith, Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani has reproduced from Imam Rafi'i (Allah's mercy be on him):

"For two nights the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) led twenty *rakats* of prayer each night; on the third night the people gathered but the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) did not come out. Then the next morning, he told the people, 'It so occurred to me that it would be made obligatory for you, and you would not be able to discharge this obligation.'"

After reproducing this tradition, Hafiz Ibn Hajar said:

"All the traditionalists (Muhaddithin) are unanimous about the soundness of this report." (see *Talkhis al-habir fi takhrij ahadith al-Rafi'i al-Kabir*, vol. 1, pg. 119, by Hafiz ibn Hajar).

3) Imam al-Azam Abu Hanifah (d. 150 AH; Rahimahullah)

It was stated in *Fayd ul-Bari Sharh Sahih al-Bukhari* (by Shaykh Anwar Shah Kashmiri):

"Imam Abu Yusuf (Rahimahullah) asked Imam Abu Hanifah (Rahimahullah), 'Did Hadrat Umar (Allah be pleased with him) have any compact from the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) for 20 *rakats* of *taraweeh*?' The Imam replied, 'Hadrat Umar was not one to invent on his own; certainly he had some proof with him for this!'" (also found in *Maraqi ul-Falah*, pg. 81, by Imam al-Shurunbulali and *Bahr ur Ra'iq*, vol.2, pg. 66, by Imam ibn Nujaim al-Misri).

4) Imam al-Tirmidhi (d. 279/892; Rahimahullah)

Imam Tirmidhi said:

"Umar, Ali as well as other Companions (Allah be pleased with them all) and Sufyan al-Thauri, Ibn al-Mubarak and Imam al-Shafi'i (Allah's mercy be upon them), all believed in 20 *rakats* of *ftaraweeh*, and Imam Shafi'i has stated that he had seen the people of Makkah saying 20 *rakats* (see *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, vol.1, pg. 99).

5) Imam Malik ibn Anas (d. 179 AH; Rahimahullah)

It was written in the most authentic book on Maliki Fiqh, *al-Mudawwanah* (vol.1, pg. 193-94), by Qadi Sahnun (Rahimahullah):

"Ibn al-Qasim said, 'The *rakats* (of *taraweeh*) with *witr* are 39.' Imam Malik said, 'This is what the people have agreed upon from amongst the predecessors, and the people have not stopped doing it.'" (For an explanation of why it was 36 *rakats* see the quote below from Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri).

6) Hafiz Ibn Humam (d. 861/1457; Rahimahullah)

Allamah Ibn Humam asserts that it has been established from genuine authority that the Companions and their Successors (*tabi'in*) used to say twenty *rakats* of *taraweeh* during the auspicious time of Umar (Allah be pleased with him); this authority of Yazid ibn Ruman has been reported from Sa'ib ibn Yazid that, 'during Umar's auspicious time we used to say twenty *rakats*.' The genuineness of this authority has been verified by Imam Nawawi in the synopsis (see *Fath al-Qadir*, vol.1, pg. 407 and *Nasb-ur-Rayah*, vol.1, pg. 294, by Hafiz al-Zaylai). Hafiz Ibn Humam also said in *Fath al-Qadir* (vol.1, pg. 470):

"At last unanimity was formed on 20 *rakats* of prayer and this alone is in succession." This last statement has also been said in similar words by Ibn Taymiyya in his *Minhaj us-Sunnah* (vol.2, pg. 224).

7) Imam Ata ibn Abi Rabah (Rahimahullah)

The august successor (*Tabi'in*) and Mufti of Makkah in his time said:

"I have seen the Companions, and other people in Makkah saying 23 *rakats*, including the *witr*."

This report is *Hasan* (good). (see *Musannaf* Ibn Abi Shaybah, pg. 406, *Fath al-Bari*, vol.4, pg. 219, of Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Qiyam ul-Layl*, pg. 91, by Imam Ibn Nasr al-Marwazi).

8) Imam Muwaffaq al-Din Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi (d. 620/1223; R.A)

The Imam of the Hanbali's in his time, Ibn Qudama al-Maqdisi, said in his book *al-Mughni* (vol.1, pg 803):

"There has been the Companion's consensus (*Ijma-as-Sahaba*) on 20 *rakats* of *taraweeh*."

9) Allamah Anwar Shah Kashmiri (d. 1352 AH; Rahimahullah)

It was stated in his published lecture, *Tirmidhi al-ma'ruf ba-Arfa'sh-Shazzi* (vol.1 pg. 329) :

"Not even one of the the four Imams believes in less than 20 *rakats* of *taraweeh*; the practise and belief of the majority of the Companions was also this. Imam Malik (Allah's mercy be upon him) believes in more than 20 *rakats*; he is positive that they are 36. According to Imam Malik's practise only 20 *rakats* of *taraweeh* will be said in congregation, but the general practise and method of the citizens of Madinah was that during the brief rest interval (after every 4 *rakats*), when the Imam sat down after 4 *rakats*, they used to perform 4 more *rakats*. The men who said the *taraweeh* in the sacred mosque at Makkah, used to circumambulate (*Tawaf*) the Ka'ba during this brief recess. The people of Madinah, naturally, could not circumambulate the Ka'ba and hence, instead, they used to perform 16 *rakats* more (in total) during these brief recesses."

10) Imam al-Ayni (d. 855/1451; Rahimahullah)

Allamah Ayni wrote in his *Sharh al-Bukhari*:

"The number of *rakats* in the *taraweeh* is twenty. Imam Shafi'i and Imam Ahmed (Allah's mercy be upon them) assert the same thing. Their proof is the report which Bayhaqi has, with genuine authority, narrated from Sa'ib ibn Yazid. The great Companions, including Umar, Uthman and Ali (may Allah be pleased with them), as also the revered Successors (*Tabi'in*), used to perform twenty *rakats*."

Then he said:

"The most excellent and the most advisable course to conform to is that of the Holy Prophet's and his (Peace and blessings be upon him) Companions (practise)." (*Umdat ul-Qari Sharh-al-Bukhari*, vol. 7, pg. 178).

So please ask yourselves: "Who are the 'Salafiyya'; are they the people who conform to the way of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him), his Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), and their successors (this includes the four *Mujtahid* Imams, Allah's mercy be upon them) consensus on 20 *rakats*, or is it the likes of al-Albani and his followers?"

May Allah guide them.

Many of us who are practising Muslims or otherwise, are familiar with the epithet 'Wahhabi'. The founder of this sect was Muhammad ibn Abdal Wahhab (d. 1206 AH), from Najd. He is also known as Shaykh an-Najdi by his opponents and his followers have been labelled as either 'Najdi's' or 'Wahhabi's' by the *Ahl al-Sunnah*. He claimed to be a Hanbali in Fiqh. It is well known that he fully digested the `aqida and ideas of Ibn Taymiyya. The scholars of his time warned the Muslims to be on their guard from accepting his 'reformatory' ideas; and this work is still existent among the scholars of the *Ahl al-Sunnah* even today. The neo- 'Salafi's' of today respect Ibn Abdal Wahhab quite highly by bestowing upon him such great titles like 'Shaykh al-Islam'. I do not want to say much about his movement and activities, but a few quotes from three well known scholars should suffice for now.

(1) The foremost Hanafi scholar of his time, Imam Muhammad Amin ibn Abidin (d. 1252/1836 Rahimahullah) said in his celebrated work *Hashiyya radd al-Mukhtar* (vol. 3, pg. 309): "In our time Ibn Abdal Wahhab (Najdi) appeared, and attacked the two noble sanctuaries (Makkah and Madinah). He claimed to be a Hanbali, but his thinking was such that only he alone was a Muslim, and everyone else was a polytheist! Under this guise, he said that killing the *Ahl as-Sunnah* was permissible, until Allah destroyed them (Wahhabi's) in the year 1233 AH by way of the Muslim army."

(2) Shaykh Zayni Dahlan (Rahimahullah) said in his book *Futuhat al-Islamiyya* (vol. 2, pg. 268): "The sign of the Khawarij (the first deviant sect that appeared in the time of the Companions) concerning the shaving of the head, was not found in the Khawarij of the past, but only in the Najdi's of our time!"

(3) Shaykh al-Islam Hussain Ahmad al-Madani (Rahimahullah) said in his book *ash-Shihab as-saqib* (pg. 42): "Ibn Abdal Wahhab arose in the beginning of the thirteenth Islamic century in the Najd. His thinking was false, and his beliefs were corruptional; on these grounds he opened the way for killing the *Ahl as-Sunnah*."

(4) A more contemporary view on the Wahhabite sect has been expressed by Abdal-Hakim Murad in the journal *Islamica* (pg. 9): "Ibn Abdal Wahhab, however, went far beyond this (i.e; of Ibn Taymiyya). Raised in the wastelands of Najd in Central Arabia, he had little access to mainstream Muslim scholarship (I say: This may be disputed by his supporters). In fact, when his *da'wah* appeared and became notorious, the scholars and muftis of the day applied to it the famous hadith of Najd: Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) reported the Prophet (Peace be upon him) as saying: "Oh God, bless us in our Syria; O God, bless us in our Yemen." Those present said: "And in our Najd, O Messenger of God!" But he said, "O God, bless us in our Syria; O God, bless us in our Yemen." Those present said, "And in our Najd, O Messenger of God!" Ibn Umar said that he thought that he said on the third occasion: "Earthquakes and dissensions (*fitnah*) are there, and there shall arise the horn of the devil." (*Sahih al-Bukhari*). And it is significant that almost uniquely among the lands of Islam, Najd has never produced scholars of any repute.

The Najd-based *da'wah* of the Wahhabi's, however, began to be heard more loudly following the explosion of Saudi oil wealth. Many, even most, Islamic publishing houses in Cairo and Beirut are now subsidised by Wahhabi organisations, which prevent them from publishing traditional works on Sufism, and remove passages in other works considered unacceptable to Wahhabist doctrine.

The neo-Kharijite nature of Wahhabism makes it intolerant of all other forms of Islamic expression. However, because it has no coherent *fiqh* of its own - it rejects the orthodox madhhabs - and has only the most basic and primitively anthropomorphic '*aqidah*', it has a fluid, amoebalike tendency to produce divisions and subdivisions among those who profess it. No longer are the Islamic groups essentially united by a consistent *madhhab* and the Ash'ari '*aqidah*' (see later). Instead, they are all trying to derive the Shari'ah and the '*aqidah*' from the Qur'an and the Sunnah by themselves. The result is the appalling state of division and conflict which disfigures the modern salafi condition."

Another person who is a reference for today's neo-"Salafi's", is Muhammad ibn Ali al-Shawkani (d. 1250/1834). He was a leading scholar of the Zaydi (Shi'ah) sect found mainly in the Yemen. He claimed to have departed from his old Shi'ite ways and joined the *Ahl al-Sunnah*. He was attacked by the scholars of his day for saying *Taqleed* was completely *haram*, as well as other important issues. Some scholars had accused him of still holding on to his deviant Zaydiyyah-Mu'tazilite (rationalistic thinking that was propounded by one of the first deviant sects of Islam) thinking, while pretending to be within the fold of orthodox Sunni Islam; but Allah knows best! It is a well known fact that he denied the consensus of the Companions (*Ijma as-Sahaba*), as well as rejecting the validity of the Fatwa of a Companion! One may refer to Anwar Ahmad Qadri's book *Islamic Jurisprudence in the Modern World* (pg. 142) for a lengthier discussion.

Many scholars have noticed the extreme tendencies within the "Salafiyya" sect around the world, for its lack of respect for the scholars of the four Madhhabs, its '*aqida*' and some untenable juristic positions it has produced over a short period of Islam's history. The scholars have not been afraid of declaring the neo- "Salafi's" to be neo-Kharijites in their behaviour and attitude to other Muslims. Note, the scholars are not saying that the neo-"Salafi's" are Kharijites, but rather they seem to have certain traits which were only found amongst the Kharijites of the past. One of the most striking things I have noticed amongst these 'neo-Kharijites', is their direction of Qur'anic verses that were revealed specifically for the unbelievers, as referring to the believers who do not seem to have their way of thinking! This was a well known practise of the Kharijites of old; as we shall see below.

A well known scholar of the "Salafiyya", Dr. Yusuf al-Qardawi (who has himself been attacked by other members of the "Salafiyya", especially for holding some untenable positions in his book *al-Halal wal Haram fil Islam*) said in his book *Islamic awakening between Rejection and Extremism* (pg. 41-3):

"Imam al-Shatibi (Rahimahullah) wrote (in his book *al-I'tisam*, 2. 182-4): 'Ibn Abbas (Allah be pleased with him) was right. When a person knows the reason behind a certain verse or surah, he knows how to interpret it and what its objectives are. However, ignorance of that leads people to misinterpret it and to have different opinions, without an insight and knowledge which could lead them to the truth, and prevent them from indulging ignorantly in such matters with no support or evidence from *al-Shari'ah*, and therefore go astray and lead people astray. This can be demonstrated by what is reported by Ibn Wahab from Bakir who asked Nafi': What does Ibn Umar (Allah be pleased with him) think of al-Haruriyyah (i.e; al-Khawarij who were also called al-Haruriyyah after the place - Harawra - where they gathered and were found by Ali ibn Abu Talib and the

Companions of the Prophet [may Allah be pleased with them all] who supported him)? Nafi' answered: He thinks they are the most evil of people. They applied the verses which pertain to the *kuffar* on the believers.' (NB- Imam al-Bukhari has recorded Ibn Umar as saying in his *Sahih* [vol.9, pg.50; English edn]: These people (the Khawarij and heretics) took some verses that had been revealed concerning the disbelievers and interpreted them as describing the believers).

Al-Qardawi also said (pg. 42):

One of the causes of such shallowness is that extremists never listen to people who hold different views (and I can personally testify to that), never accept any dialogue with them or imagine that their own views could be tested in the light of others, and may thereby be either accepted or rejected. Most of them have not been taught by reliable Muslim ulama who are specialised in the field. Rather, they have received semi-knowledge directly from books and newspapers without any opportunity for revision or discussion which could test the learner's understanding and analyze the depth of his knowledge. They simply read, 'understand', then deduce what they wish. However, their reading, understanding, and deduction may well be wrong or deficient. There might be someone somewhere who opposes their opinions on stronger and more valid bases, but they are not aware of that because nobody has drawn their attention to such a possibility. These devout young people have ignored the facts that if they want to study al Shari'ah, they must seek the help of reliable Muslim scholars. They cannot venture into this extensive and entangled discipline without the guidance of reliable Muslim scholars who can interpret and explain obscurities, define terms, and point out the relationships between the parts and the whole and also equate similarities. Those who venture into it alone will meet with the same catastrophic results which could certainly befall the unskilled swimmer who ventures into dangerous waters. Proper knowledge of *al-Shari'ah* cannot be perfected without practice and close contact with the experts, especially in those areas where opinions diverge, evidences seem to contradict each other, and certain matters seem to be under suspicion. This is why our venerable 'ulama' have warned us not to seek to study and understand al Qur'an al Karim through a person who has only memorized it without any knowledge of its contents, nor to seek knowledge through a person who has acquired his own "knowledge" from reading newspapers and journals only, without being properly instructed by reputable and qualified scholars."

This topic began with a brief discussion on *Taqleed* and I would like to finish with the following two questions for you to ponder over. (A) Would it not be classified as being *Taqleed* if one were to accept the classifications of Hadiths, exegesis of the Qur'an etc; by a renowned Islamic scholar, if one was not to go back to the original sources which are used to authenticate the Hadith and so on? (For example, if a scholar claimed that a Hadith found in the *Sunan* of Imam Abu Dawood was *Sahih* and you accepted it as being *Sahih* - since you trust him, then are you not practising *Taqleed*; if you, yourself do not go back to the original sources used to classify the Hadith in question, since sometimes a Hadith classified to be *Sahih* by one scholar can be classified as being *Da'eef* by another!). (B) Is it not true that those who are calling for the

abandonment of *Taqleed*, are calling for the *Taqleed* of their own books and speeches; hence creating their own little '*Madhhabs*'?

Conclusion

From the facts quoted above it becomes manifestly clear that the practice of the entire ummah from the era of Umar till recently was of twenty rakaat or more. The establishment of twenty rakaat by Hadrat Umar's command, or by his tacit approval cannot be denied by any scholar of hadith.

The khawarij of today have differed with the blessed Prophet (Allah bless him & give him peace) in the following practices:

The khawarij begin taraweeh in the first night of the month with congregation whereas the blessed Prophet (Allah bless him & give him peace) did not do this throughout his life. This is not a sunnah of the Prophet (Allah bless him & give him peace) but a sunnah of the Khulafah (Allah be pleased with them).

Nowadays, the khawarij perform taraweeh during the whole month of Ramadan with congregation whereas the Prophet (Allah bless him & give him peace) told the people to perform their prayer at home. Performing taraweeh for the whole month in congregation is a sunnah of the Khulafah and not a sunnah of the Prophet (Allah bless him & give him peace). Plus there are many more...

So when they adopt all the sunnah of the Khulafah when praying taraweeh, why do they have a problem to also accept their ruling on the number of twenty rakaats too! Of course there is no reason, but to cause fitnah for which they will have to answer to Almighty Allah.

May Almighty Allah grant us all the correct understanding of Deen and protect us from the deviations of the misguided.

Suffah Foundation

