

222334 - Is it permissible to pray Taraweeh with thirty rak'ahs?

the question

What is the ruling on praying supererogatory (naafil) prayers in Ramadan? What is the number of rak'ahs that it is prescribed to pray in Taraweeh? I have seen some deviant groups, such as the Sufis and others, praying Taraweeh with thirty rak'ahs. Is there any evidence for that?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Offering supererogatory (naafil) prayers in Ramadan, especially voluntary night prayers (qiyaam), comes under the heading of that which is mustahabb (encouraged), because of the general encouragement to do acts of worship in Ramadan, both prayers and other things, and because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) recommended praying qiyaam in Ramadan especially. He said: "Whoever prays qiyaam in Ramadaan out of faith and in the hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven." Narrated by al-Bukhaari (37) and Muslim (759). An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) included it in a chapter entitled: Chapter: Encouragement to pray qiyaam in Ramadan, which is Taraweeh.

So it is encouraged for the Muslim in Ramadan to regularly offer the Sunnah prayers both before and after the obligatory prayers, and to regularly offer Taraweeh prayers in congregation with the Muslims. It is also encouraged for him to offer supererogatory prayers in general, except at the times when doing so is makrooh.

For more information, please see the answer to question no. [21740](#).

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Secondly:

The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not offer more than eleven rak'ahs [in qiyaam al-layl], either during Ramadan or at other times, although occasionally he prayed thirteen rak'ahs. Al-Bukhaari (3569) and Muslim (738) narrated from Abu Salamah ibn 'Abd ar-Rahmaan that he asked 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her): How did the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) pray during Ramadan? She said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not pray more, in Ramadan or at any other time, than eleven rak'ahs. He would pray four rak'ahs, and do not ask how beautiful and long they were. Then he would pray four, and do not ask how beautiful and long they were. Then he would pray three. 'Aa'ishah said: I said: O Messenger of Allah, do you sleep before you pray Witr? He said: "O 'Aa'ishah, my eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep."

Al-Bukhaari narrated that 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would pray thirteen rak'ahs at night, then he when he heard the call for Fajr prayer, he would pray two brief rak'ahs.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

And it is narrated from 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) in al-Bukhaari that he prayed seven or nine rak'ahs. After that, al-Bukhaari and Muslim narrated the hadith of Ibn 'Abbaas that he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would pray thirteen rak'ahs at night, and two rak'ahs after dawn, the Sunnah prayer of Fajr. According to the hadith of Zayd ibn Khaalid, he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would pray two brief rak'ahs and two long ones... and he narrated the hadith, at the end of which he said: And that was thirteen rak'ahs.

Al-Qaadi said: The scholars said: In these hadiths, Ibn 'Abbaas, Zayd and 'Aa'ishah each spoke of what they saw. End quote.

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Thirdly:

The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not specify any maximum number (of rak'ahs) for Taraweeh prayer, and the matter is broad in scope, in sha Allah. So there is nothing wrong with someone praying more than eleven rak'ahs, because of the general meaning of the words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): "The night prayers are two by two, then if one of you fears that dawn may come, he should pray one rak'ah, which will make what he has prayed odd-numbered." Narrated by al-Bukhaari (472) and Muslim (749).

This is also the view of the fuqaha' of madhhabs in various regions. According to the Hanafi madhhab it is twenty rak'ahs, as is also the view of Imam Ahmad. According to Imam Maalik, it is thirty-six rak'ahs, and there is nothing wrong with a person doing any of these options, or others.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said, after mentioning the difference of opinion among the scholars concerning that:

The correct view is that all of that is good, as was stated by Imam Ahmad (may Allah be pleased with him), and there is no particular number with regard to qiyaam al-layl in Ramadan. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not specify any number for that. As that is the case, one may offer more or fewer rak'ahs, according to how long or short one wants to make the standing. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to make his standing lengthy, as it is proven from him in as-Saheeh, in the hadith of Hudhayfah, that he used to recite in one rak'ah al-Baqarah, an-Nisa' and Aal 'Imraan. Making the standing lengthy suffices instead of praying a greater number of rak'ahs. When Ubayy ibn Ka'b led them in praying qiyaam, when they were a single congregation, he would not make the standing lengthy for them, so he prayed a greater number of rak'ahs, instead of making the standing lengthy, and they made the number of rak'ahs double that of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), for he used to pray eleven or thirteen rak'ahs of qiyaam al-layl. Then after that the people in Madinah grew too weak

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to make the standing lengthy, so they increased the number of rak'ahs until it reached thirty-nine.

End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa (23/113; see also 23/120).

The scholars of the Standing Committee for Issuing Fatwas said:

No specific number has been proven with regard to the number of rak'ahs in Taraweeh prayer, and the scholars differed concerning that. Some of them think that it is twenty-three, some think it is thirty-six, some think that it is more and some think that it is less. At the time of 'Umar the Sahaabah prayed it with twenty-three rak'ahs in the mosque of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), but the Prophet never prayed more than eleven or thirteen rak'ahs, whether in Ramadan or otherwise, and he did not set any specific number for the people to pray in Taraweeh and qiyaam al-layl. Rather he used to urge the people to pray qiyaam al-layl and to pray qiyaam in Ramadan in particular. He would say: "Whoever prays qiyaam in Ramadaan out of faith and in the hope of reward, his previous sins will be forgiven", and he did not specify the number of rak'ahs, which varies according to the nature of the standing. Whoever makes his prayer lengthy may reduce the number of rak'ahs, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did, and whoever makes the prayer more brief, out of kindness towards the people, may make the number of rak'ahs greater, as the Sahaabah did at the time of 'Umar. There is nothing wrong with increasing the number of rak'ahs in the last ten nights of Ramadan, making it greater than in the first twenty nights, and dividing them into two sections, one to be offered at the beginning of the night and made brief, like Taraweeh in the first twenty nights, and another section to be offered at the end of the night and made lengthy, to be regarded as tahajjud. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to pray tahajjud in the last ten nights as he never did at any other time.

End quote from Fataawa al-Lajnah ad-Daa'imah, vol. 2, 6/82

Conclusion:

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There is no specific number of rak'ahs for Taraweeh prayer, such that it is not allowed to do more or less than that. Whoever prays Taraweeh with thirty rak'ahs, or more or less than that, there is no blame on him and he is not innovating by doing that.

Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

There is no specific number for Taraweeh prayer. Whoever prays twenty, there is nothing wrong with that; whoever prays thirty, there is nothing wrong with that; whoever prays forty, there is nothing wrong with that; whoever prays eleven, there is nothing wrong with that; whoever prays thirteen, there is nothing wrong with that; and whoever prays more or less than that, there is nothing wrong with that. The matter is broad in scope.

End quote from Fataawa Noor 'ala ad-Darb (9/437)

For more information, please see the answer to question no. [9036](#)

And Allah knows best.