

SUNNA AL RAWATIB

SUNNAH PRAYERS ASSOCIATED WITH FARDH PRAYERS

BUILD A PALACE IN JANNAH

The Prophet ﷺ said: "[*Allaah will build a house in Heaven for whoever is diligent in observing 12 Sunnah Rak'aat \(as follows\):*](#)

4 Rak'aat before and 2 after the Dhuhr (Midday) Prayer, 2 after the Maghrib (Sunset Prayer), 2 after the Isha (Evening) Prayer and 2 before the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer."

[Hadith sahih narrated by at-Tirmidhi No. 379 and by others. Hadith No. 6183 in Sahih al-Jaami].

If we think about it, most of us who are consistent in our obligatory prayers, also offer the two rak'at of sunnah for Fajr, Dhuhr, Maghrib and Isha more often than not. So it is usually the four rak'at before Dhuhr that is neglected.

Narrated Aisha R.A., the Prophet ﷺ never missed four rak'at before the Zuhr prayer and two rak'at before the Fajr prayer. (Sahih Bukhari)

Think about it – just four extra rak'at, in addition to the sunnah prayers that many of us already offer, and Allah will build a house for us in Jannah! How much easier can the glorious Deen of Allâh be?

Virtue of the Two Rakahs before Fajr

Aisha radhiyallahu 'anha narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said : "[*The two rakaats before dawn \(fajr\) prayer are better than the world and all that it contains.*](#)" (Sahih Muslim).

Aisha radhiyallahu 'anha narrated that the Prophet ﷺ was never more regular and strict in offering any Nawafil than the two rakaats (sunnah before) dawn (fajr) prayer. (Al-Bukhari and Muslim).

He ﷺ would not leave these two rakahs even while he was travelling.

It is Sunnah to Surah Kaafiroon in the first Rakah and Surah Ikhlas in the second Rakah of this Sunnah prayer. (Reported in Sahih Muslim)

Similarly it Sunnah to recite the same in the Two Rakahs Sunnah after Maghrib (Reported by Ibn Majah & Tirmidhi)

Other Prayers narrated in the Sunnah to pray around the Obligatory prayers

These are prayers apart from the 12 Sunan Al Rawatib mentioned above, so these are in addition to them.

Narrated `Abdullah bin Mughaffal: The Prophet ﷺ said, "*There is a prayer between the two Adhans (Adhan and Iqama), there is a prayer between the two Adhans.*" And then while saying it the third time he added, "*For the one who wants to (pray).*" (Bukhari & Muslim)

ZOHR

Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: The Prophet ﷺ never omitted four Rak`ah supererogatory prayer before Zuhr prayers. [Al-Bukhari].

Umm Habibah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "*Whoever observes the practice of performing four Rak`ah before Zuhr prayer and four after the Zuhr prayer, Allah will shield him against the Fire (of Hell).*" [Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi].

`Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) reported: If the Prophet ﷺ could not perform four Rak`ah before Zuhr prayer, he would perform them after it (i.e., after the obligatory prayer). [At-Tirmidhi].

ASR

Ibn `Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: The Prophet ﷺ said, "*May Allah have mercy on a man who performs four Rak`ah before the `Asr prayer.*" [Abu Dawud and At-Tirmidhi].

`Ali bin Abu Talib (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet ﷺ used to perform four Rak`ah before the `Asr prayer, separating them with Taslim (i.e., offering blessings) on the favourite angels who are near Allah's proximity and the Muslims and the believers who come after them. [At-Tirmidhi].

MAGRHB

`Abdullah bin Mughaffal (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet ﷺ said, "*Perform two Rak`ah before Maghrib prayer.*" He ﷺ repeated it twice; when repeating it for the third time he added: "*He who may so wish.*" [Al-Bukhari].

Anas bin Malik (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: When we were in Al-Madinah, the moment the Mu`adhhdhin finished the Adhan of the Maghrib prayer, the people hastened to the pillars of the mosque and performed two Rak`ah prayer behind them. A stranger coming into the mosque would think that the obligatory prayer had already been performed because of the number of people performing them. [Muslim].

ISHA

It is proven from the Prophet ﷺ that after 'Isha', when he returned to his house, he would pray four rak'ahs. That was narrated in a hadith from Ibn 'Abbaas (may Allah be pleased with him), who said:

I stayed overnight in the house of my maternal aunt Maymoonah bint al-Haarith, the wife of the Prophet ﷺ, and the Prophet ﷺ was with her because it was her night. The Prophet ﷺ prayed 'Isha', then he came to his house and prayed four rak'ahs. Then he went to sleep, then he ﷺ got up and said: "*The little boy has gone to sleep*", or similar words. Then he ﷺ went and stood (to pray) and I stood on his left, but he ﷺ made me stand on his right. He ﷺ prayed five rak'ahs, then he ﷺ prayed two rak'ahs, then he went to sleep, until I could hear him breathing deeply. Then he went out for the prayer. Narrated by al-Bukhaari (117).

A number of narrations show that this Sunnah was widespread among the Sahaba & Taabaen. It comes under the heading of qiyaam al-layl (voluntary prayers at night).

OFFERING SUNNAH PRAYERS AT HOME

Zaid bin Thabit (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Prophet ﷺ said, "*O people! perform your (voluntary) Salat (prayers) in your homes because the best Salat of a man is the one he performs at home, except the obligatory Salat.*" [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Ibn `Umar (May Allah be pleased with them) reported: The Prophet ﷺ said, "*Observe part of the [Nawafil (voluntary)] Salat (prayers) in your homes. Do not turn your homes into graves.*" [Al-Bukhari and Muslim].

Jabir (May Allah be pleased with him) reported: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "*When you have finished your (Fard) Salat (prayer) in the mosque, you should observe some of your (Sunnah and Nawafil) Salat at home; Allah will bless your homes because of your Salat (in your homes).*" [Muslim]

MOVING PLACES AFTER FARD TO OFFER SUNNAH PRAYERS

It is mustahabb to separate between the obligatory and naafil prayers by speaking or moving to another spot.

The best way of doing so is by moving to offer the naafil prayer at home, because the best prayer a man can offer is a prayer that he offers at home, apart from the obligatory prayers, as was narrated in a saheeh report from the Prophet ﷺ. The evidence for the separation mentioned is the report narrated by Muslim in his Saheeh (1463) from Mu'aawiyah (may Allah be pleased with him) who said: *When you have prayed Jumu'ah, do not follow it immediately with another prayer until you speak or leave (the mosque), because the Messenger of Allah ﷺ instructed us to do that, not to follow one prayer immediately with another until we spoke or left (the mosque).*

Abu Dawood (854) and Ibn Maajah (1417) narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet ﷺ said: *“Is any one of you incapable, when he prays, of stepping forwards or backwards, or to his right or left?”* – meaning in order to offer a naafil prayer, i.e., a naafil prayer after an obligatory prayer. (Classed as saheeh by al-Albaani).

By separating the obligatory and naafil prayers, one is distinguishing one of them from the other. Some of the scholars (including Imam An Nawawi) mentioned another reason for that, which is to increase the number of places where one prostrates, so that they will testify in one’s favour on the Day of Resurrection.

Ar-Ramli said in Nihaayat al-Muhtaj (1/552): It is Sunnah to move in order to offer a naafil or obligatory prayer from the place where one offered an obligatory or naafil prayer, so as to increase the number of places where one prostrates, for they will testify in one’s favour, and because that means filling more spots with worship. And if one does not move to another spot, then one should separate the prayers by speaking to someone. End quote.

THEIR TIMINGS

The time for the regular Sunnah prayers that come before the obligatory prayer begins when the time for the obligatory prayer begins. So when the adhaan is given for Fajr, Zuhr or ‘Asr, then the time for the regular Sunnah prayer has also begun. Then when one has finished the obligatory prayer, the time for the regular Sunnah prayer that comes after the obligatory prayer begins, and its time lasts until the time for that prayer ends.

RULING ON MAKING UP MISSED SUNNAH PRAYERS

The Muslim should not be careless with regard to offering the regular Sunnah prayers, or delay them from the appropriate time, unless he has an excuse, such as if he forgot or is sick or is distracted with something that cannot be avoided, because this will cause him to miss out on the great reward that is bestowed upon the one who regularly offers these Sunnah prayers.

But if he did not have an excuse, then it is not prescribed to make them up, because if an act of worship is connected to a specific time, once that time is over it cannot be made up.

al-Hajjaawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Zaad al-Mustaqni’: If a person misses any of them (the regular Sunnah prayers), it is Sunnah for him to make them up.

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said: That is, if he misses any of these regular Sunnah prayers, it is Sunnah for him to make them up, on condition that he had a valid excuse for missing them.

The evidence for that is what is proven in the hadith of Abu Hurayrah and Abu Qataadah, about the story of how the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions slept whilst travelling and missed Fajr. The Prophet ﷺ prayed the regular Sunnah of Fajr first, then the obligatory prayer.

Also Qays ibn 'Amr said: The Prophet ﷺ saw a man praying two rak'ahs after Fajr. The Prophet ﷺ said: *"Fajr prayer twice?"* The man said to him: I did not pray the two rak'ahs that come before it, so I prayed them (now). And the Prophet ﷺ did not say anything. (Ibn Majah; classed as saheeh by al-Albaani).

'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that if the Prophet ﷺ did not pray four rak'ahs before Zuhr, he would pray them afterwards. (Tirmidhi, classed as hasan by al-Albaani).

Then there is also the hadith of Umm Salamah, according to which the Prophet ﷺ was distracted from praying the two rak'ahs after Zuhr, then he made them up after 'Asr. He ﷺ was asked about them and he said: *"O daughter of Abu Umayyah, you asked about the two rak'ahs after 'Asr. That is because some people from 'Abd al-Qays came to me and distracted me from the two rak'ahs that come after Zuhr; these are they (i.e., I prayed them just now)."* (Bukhaari & Muslim).

Moreover, there is the general meaning of the words of the Prophet ﷺ: *"Whoever sleeps and misses a prayer, or forgets it, let him offer it as soon as he remembers it."* This includes both obligatory and naafil prayers, and applies if a person missed it for a valid reason, such as forgetting, falling asleep or being distracted by something that is more important not applicable to those who miss it deliberately, because the regular Sunnah prayers are acts of worship that are connected to particular times, and for a person to deliberately perform acts of worship that are connected to particular times after the time for them is over, is not accepted.

Offering Sunnah of Fajr when Fard (congregation) has started

Imam Shafi and Imam Ahmad Bin Hanbal are of the view that if a person arrives at the masjid at such a time where the congregation of the Fajr prayer has started he should join the congregation and perform the two rakats of Fajr sunnah after the fardh salah either before sunrise or after that. On the other hand according to Imam Malik & Imam Abu Haneefah if one expects to find at least one rakaat or the congregation he will be allowed to pray the sunnah of Fajr.

The stronger view seems to be that to not start the Sunnah prayer once the iqama has been pronounced, as the Prophet ﷺ said: *"When the iqamah for prayer is given, there is no prayer except the prescribed prayer."* (Sahih Mulsim).

This hadeeth indicates that once the iqamah has been given for prayer, then no one should start to offer a naafil prayer.

Ibn Qudaamah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "When the iqamah for prayer is given, do not be distracted from it by naafil prayer, whether one fears missing the first rak'ah or not. This is the view of Abu Hurayrah, Ibn 'Umar, 'Urwah, Ibn Sireen, Sa'eed ibn Jubayr, al-Shaafa'i, Ishaq and Abu Thawr." Al-Mughni, 1/272.

As stated in the hadeeth of Qays ibn Amr above, the Sunnah of Fajr can be made up right after the Fard prayer or after the sun has risen and the prohibited time for prayer has passed.

May Allah give us all the Hidayah to uphold these prayers and be consistent in it!