

*Bismillāh*

The Department of Quranic Affairs

The Muslim Judicial Council

## ***Tarāwīḥ* Matters**

### **Questions and answers pertaining to the *Tarāwīḥ* prayer**

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The first seven questions are posed in consideration of the pace in which the *Tarāwīḥ* prayer is performed. Every additional activity lengthens the prayer and as such, it is important for the Imām and congregants to know what may be left out and what may be shortened.

**1. Does the *Tarāwīḥ* Imām have to read the *Du`ā al-Istiftāḥ* for every two units of prayer before starting with *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*?**

Saying the *Du`ā al-Istiftāḥ* in *Ṣalāh* is a *Sunnah*. It is of the kind that is titled *Hay'āt* (structural or form-based) *Sunnah* which does not affect the validity of the *Ṣalāh*. Leaving it out does not affect the *Ṣalāh* whether Farḍ or *Sunnah* but one is eligible for reward if it is recited.

**2. Is the *Tarāwīḥ* Imām allowed to utter the phrase of glorification in the *Rukū`* and *Sujūd* only once instead of thrice?**

The phrases uttered in the *Rukū`* and *Sujūd* are *Sunnah*. What is required is that one observes a moment of calm and pause in these positions of prayer. Uttering the phrase of glorification only once is allowed but more importantly is the observance of a pause and moment of calm.

**3. What is the *Tarāwīḥ* Imām allowed to say and suffice with in the *Jalsah* between the two *Sujūds*?**

In this position between the two *Sujūds*, one should observe a brief pause as well. This is important. Uttering any of the reported prayers in this position is acceptable. One may suffice with *اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي*

**4. Is the *Tarāwīḥ* prayer valid if the Imām or congregants do not utter anything in the *Rukū`*, *ʾIṭidal*, *Sujūd* or *Jalsah*?**

Yes, it is valid. However, as previously mentioned, a brief pause and moment of absolute calm should be observed in these postures, and one should not hurriedly move through them.

**5. Is the *Tarāwīḥ* prayer valid if the *Imām* or congregants do not utter the *Tashahhud* and *Ṣalawāt*?**

No. it is not valid. Unlike the previous utterances, the *Tashahhud* (*Taḥiyyah*) and *Ṣalawāt* have to be uttered at the end of every two units of the *Tarāwīḥ* prayer.

**6. Should the *Tarāwīḥ Imām* complete the entire *Ṣalawāt* after the *Tashahhud* for every two units of prayer or is he allowed to only say part of it?**

He and the congregants may suffice with the start of the *Ṣalawāt* i.e., *Allāhumma Ṣalli `alā Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa `alā āli Sayyidinā Muḥammad*.

So, the *Tashahhud* (*Taḥiyyah*) has to be completed in full. They may suffice with the above section of *Ṣalawāt* and then complete with prayer with *Taslīm*, turning the heads to the right and to the left.

**7. Should the *Tarāwīḥ Imām* pause after reciting *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*, as normal, to allow the congregation to recite *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* or may he immediately start with recitation after saying ‘*Āmīn*’?**

Pausing after *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* is encouraged to allow the congregants to recite *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* as well. However, considering the *Tarāwīḥ* prayer and its expected pace, the *Imām* is allowed to leave out this pause and immediately start with his recitation after the congregation has said *Āmīn*.

However, what is noted is that the congregants are still required to recite *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*. An allowance is made for them to do so whilst the *Imām* is reciting *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* himself. They are to do so softly, reciting along to every verse of *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah* that he recites and, in so doing, they complete it when he does.

This is taken from an authentic prophetic narration where Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ prohibited the Companions to recite along with him in prayer except with *Sūrah al-Fātiḥah*. He only allowed them to recite along when he recited this chapter.

**8. To ensure that no congregant reaches the *Sujūd* before the *Imām*, from where is the *Imām* allowed to proclaim the *Takbīr* when moving down from the *I`tidāl* to the *Sujūd*? (The same goes for when moving from the *Sujūd* up to the *Qiyām*)**

The *Imām* should say the *Takbīr* during his movement to *Sujūd* when descending from the standing posture. He should start saying the *Takbīr* when still upright, in the standing posture. And likewise, when rising from *Sujūd* to the standing posture, he should say it during his movement and not right at the start when he raises his head from *Sujūd*.

**9. What should the *Tarāwīḥ Imām* do if he sat for *Tashahhud* after the first *Rak`ah* and the congregants inform him of this by saying ‘*SubḥānAllāh*’?**

He should rise for his second *Rak`ah*, complete the prayer as normal and he may then conclude with *Sujūd as-Sahw*, the prostrations of forgetfulness.

These two prostrations are made at the end of the prayer before *Taslim* i.e., the *Imām* sits for the *Tashahhud* and *Ṣalawāt* at the end of the second *Rak`ah* and then performs two *Sujūds*, sitting in between them. He then rises to the sitting posture and immediately makes *Taslim*, turning his head to the right and then to the left, without reciting any other phrases before it.

**10. What should the *Tarāwīḥ Imām* do if he sat for *Tashahhūd* after the first *Rak`ah* but the congregants only inform him of this after he made *Taslīm* and all came out of the prayer?**

He should briefly confirm his error and then merely stand and complete the remaining *Rak`ah* (single unit) of prayer. He may perform *Sujūd as-Sahw* at the end as well.

**11. What should the *Tarāwīḥ Imām* do if he stood up for a third *Rak`ah* by mistake and the congregants inform him of this by saying ‘*Subḥānāllah*’?**

If he is closer to the sitting position, he may return to the sitting posture and complete his prayer and may perform *Sujūd as-Sahw*.

If he is closer to the standing position, he should remain standing and complete the third *Rak`ah* and end the prayer as normal. He may then add *Sujūd as-Sahw* at the end.

In the second scenario, where the *Imām* remains standing for the third *Rak`ah*, the congregants who were seated for *Tashahhud* have two options. They may either remain in that position and make the *Taslīm* with the *Imām* when he reaches that position after he completed the entire third *Rak`ah*. Their other option is to make an intention of *Mufāraqah* (separation from the *Imām*) within themselves. They then conclude the prayer with *Taslīm* by themselves, without waiting for the *Imām*.

**12. What should happen if the *Imām*'s *wuḍū'* breaks and he leaves the congregation to take a new *Wuḍū'*?**

What is ideal is that the *Imām* appoints a congregant before the time. He appoints one who is eligible and competent enough to lead and complete the *Ṣalāh* in the event that he leaves it. The congregant then merely steps forward and continues where the *Imām* left off.

If he has not appointed one before the time, then when he has to leave, he merely beckons to one behind him to step forward and lead in his place.

**13. What should the *Imām* and his congregation do if a late group starts with the prayer of *ʿIshā* before he starts with the prayer of *Tarāwīḥ*?**

It is best that he and the congregation wait until that group have completed with their prayer.

**14. Are two congregations allowed in one masjid at the same time, one performing *Tarāwīḥ* and the other performing *ʿIshā*?**

No. two congregations are not allowed in one prayer space at the same time.

**15. What is the recommended practice when an individual or group enters the masjid late and the congregation has already begun with the *Tarāwīḥ* prayer:**

One who enters the masjid late and has not yet performed the *ʿIshā* prayer may join the *Tarāwīḥ* congregation with his *niyyah* of *ʿIshā*. He thus gets the reward of performing in congregation and he does not become the cause of two groups performing simultaneously in one prayer space.

It is completely allowed and acceptable that a person performing a voluntary prayer leads one who is performing a *Fard* and vice versa as long as the structure of the prayer is the same, i.e., the units of prayer all consist of the same movements.

For clarity, those entering the masjid late, and still need to perform the *Fard* of *ʿIshā*, may join the *Tarāwīḥ* congregation and then merely add the additional *Rakaʿāt* of *ʿIshā* when the *Tarāwīḥ* congregation concludes with their two units of prayer. This is exactly like one who is *Masbūq* (one who has missed part of a congregational prayer).

**16. If one arrives late and finds the congregation about to start the *Tarāwīḥ* prayer, can he join the *Tarāwīḥ* so as not to miss what is to be recited in it of the *khatm* of the Holy Qurʿān and then perform his *ʿIshā* prayer later?**

No. This not allowed as the *Tarāwīḥ* prayer is to be performed after the *ʿIshā* prayer. One cannot perform *Tarāwīḥ* prayer and then later perform the *ʿIshā* prayer. The *ʿIshā* should first be performed.

**17. If one has missed two or more units of *Tarāwīḥ* prayer and wishes to perform it later, can one recite the missed sections of the *Khatm* of the Holy Qurʿān whilst reading from a *Muṣḥāf*? (or mobile phone)**

Yes. This is allowed for one who leads a prayer or is performing prayer by himself.

As for one who is following an *Imām*, it is discouraged that he follows the *Imām*'s recitation from a *Muṣḥaf* or mobile phone for he is required to listen to the Qurʿān when it is being recited.

A *Muṣḥāf* is a printed copy of the Holy Qurʿān that simply means 'Bound scrolls'.

**18. If one has left the *Tarāwīh* congregation and returns when they are to perform the *Witr* prayer, can one join for *Witr* and then later perform what was missed of the *Tarāwīh*?**

This is discouraged. One has to leave the *Witr* prayer as the last of the night and not perform any *Tarāwīh* after it.

**19. In the above scenario, can one join the *Witr* prayer with the *niyyah* of *Tarāwīh* and then later perform the missed *Witr* prayer?**

Yes. He may do so. He is to join the congregation's *Witr* prayer with his *niyyah* of *Tarāwīh*. As previously mentioned, it is allowed that he joins with a different intention to get the reward of performing in congregation.

**20. Latched on to the above scenario, if one only rejoins the congregation when they are to perform the single *Witr Rak`āh*, can one join them with the *niyyah* of *Tarāwīh* and simply add another single *Rak`ah* like a *Masbūq*?**

Yes. This is allowed. When the congregation have completed their individual unit of *Witr*, he then rises to complete his second unit as normal.

When he has completed all that he has missed, he then performs his *Witr* prayer by himself.

**Additional cautionary note:**

According to the *Madhhab* of al-Imām ash-Shāfi`ī, there is **no** verse of prostration in Sūrah Ṣād (ch. 38).

When studying verse 25 and the preceding verse of this chapter, one will note that the Almighty informs us of a bowing and potential prostration of gratitude performed by Prophet Dāwūd عليه السلام. There is no instruction for us to perform a *Sajdah* here and neither is there a general statement of prostration regarding believers, as found in other verses of prostration. These verses record a particular incident in the life of Prophet Dāwūd عليه السلام after which he bowed in humility and gratitude to the Almighty.

If an *Imām* follows the *Shāfi`ī Madhhab* and performs a *Sajdah* in this chapter ignorantly, then his prayer and the prayer of those following him remains valid. If he performs it whilst knowing what the *Madhhab* states regarding it then his prayer is invalid. However, the prayer of his congregants remains valid as they were merely following their *Imām*.

The *Hanafī Madhhab* considers the verse in this chapter a place of prostration and as such, if a *Hanafī Imām* leads a *Shāfi`ī* congregation and he performs a *Sajdah* in this chapter, they should follow him without hesitation. It is required of them to follow their *Imām* and this is a matter pertaining to a *Sunnah* act and not one of obligation.

And, the Almighty knows best.

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