



Frequently Asked Questions Regarding *Tarawih* Prayer

(All answers according to the *Hanafi* school)

Q: Is it necessary to perform *tarawih* in Ramadan?

A: The *tarawih* prayer in Ramadan is an emphasized *sunnah* (*sunnah mu'akkadah*) for men and women. This means that while it is not obligatory, leaving it repeatedly without a valid excuse would make a person sinful.

Q: Is *tarawih* and *tahajjud* the same in Ramadan?

A: No, *tarawih* and *tahajjud* are two separate prayers, and both have their own importance and virtues.

Q: How many *rak'at* of *tarawih* should we pray?

A: *Tarawih* prayer is twenty *rak'at*. Performing less than twenty *rak'at* would render the *tarawih* incomplete.

Q: In how many sets should *tarawih* be performed?

A: *Tarawih* should be performed in ten sets of two *rak'at* each. It is also permissible without dislike for women to perform it in five sets of four *rak'at* each. In this case, it is necessary to do some recitation after Surah al-Fatiha in every *rak'at*, and *sunnah* to perform the first sitting (*qa'dah*) like the last sitting, i.e. with *durood* and *dua* after *tashahhud*.

Q: Is it necessary to recite any specific *dua* after every four *rak'at* of *tarawih*?

A: If one has the time, it is recommended to take a short break after every four *rak'at* of *tarawih*. During this time one can stay silent or recite any *dua*, do any *dhikr*, recite some Qur'an or even perform additional *nawafil*. However, no specific *dua* or *dhikr* is recommended at this time.

Q: Is it permissible to perform *tarawih* from home behind an *Imam* who is reciting in a *masjid* if the prayer is being broadcast live, e.g. from the Haram or from a local *masjid*?

A: No, your prayer will not be valid if you do so, as one of the conditions of validity of praying behind an *Imam* is that both the *Imam* and the *muqtadi* (follower) are in the same place.

Q: Can women perform *tarawih* in a woman-led, women-only *jama'at*?

A: It is prohibitively disliked (*makruh tahrimi*) for women to perform any prayer, including *tarawih*, in a woman-led, women-only *jama'at*.

Q: If some men are performing *tarawih* in *jama'at* at home, can women pray behind them?

A: Yes, women can pray *tarawih* behind men in *jama'at* in their homes. The possible scenarios of this and their rulings are given below:

- **Scenario 1:** The *Imam* is leading only women. In this case there must be at least one woman among them who is a *mahram* of the *Imam*.
- **Scenario 2:** There is only one woman in the *jama'at* and the *Imam* is not her *mahram*. In this case there must be at least one other man praying behind the *Imam*; this man does not have to be a *mahram* of the woman.
- **Scenario 3:** There are two or more women and at least one man praying behind the *Imam*; in this case none of them have to be each other's *mahram*.

Q: What will be the position of the women if they are praying in a *jama'at* at home with men?

A: The *Imam* will stand first, then behind him will be the adult men, behind the men will be the non-baligh children (if any), and the women will stand behind the children. If it is not possible for the children to form a separate row between the men and women, the male children should stand with the men and the female children should stand with the women.

Q: Is it better for women to pray *tarawih* at home individually or to pray in the *masjid*?

A: It is preferred for women to pray *tarawih* individually at home rather than going to the *masjid* to pray.

Q: Is it better for women to pray *tarawih* with the men in their homes in *jama'at* or individually?

A: If it is easy for her to pray with the men in *jama'at*, it would be better for her to do so.

Q: What do we recite in *tarawih* if we have not memorized the Qur'an?

A: You can recite whichever surahs you know in *tarawih*; it is not necessary to recite the entire Qur'an.

Q: Is it permissible to recite from an open *mushaf* (copy of the Qur'an) while in *salat*?

A: No, it is not permissible to recite from an open *mushaf* while in *salat*. Doing so would invalidate the prayer.

Q: Is it permissible to play a recording of the Qur'an and listen to it while in *salat* in place of our recitation?

A: No, the prayer would not be valid if performed in this way.

Q: What if we recite behind the *Qari* in the above scenario?

A: The prayer would still be invalid.

Please remember that the purpose of the *tarawih* prayer is the worship of Allah ﷻ, not the pleasure that we derive by listening to a beautiful recitation. Exerting yourself to perform *tarawih* without the pleasure of listening to a beautiful recitation will be more difficult for the *nafs*, and hence more pleasing to Allah ﷻ.

As for the loss of not being able to complete recitation of the Qur'an once in *tarawih*, we can compensate that by reciting some portion of the Qur'an everyday outside of *salat*, hence completing the recitation of at least one Qur'an during Ramadan. This would be more rewarding than listening to recitation in *salat*.

May Allah ﷻ overlook the flaws in our deeds, and accept our efforts with a beautiful acceptance. *Ameen*.