TARĀWĪḤ ṢALĀH

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Alḥamdulillāh, once again the blessed month of Ramaḍān dawns upon us in which we will have an opportunity to benefit from many spiritual bounties, some of which are only available to us during this blessed month. One such bounty is the Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh. We are granted the honour to present ourselves in the Court of Allāh ﷻ for twenty rakaʻāt and recite or listen to the entire Qur'ān. This is a means of attracting the Mercy of Allāh ﷻ and acquiring His Forgiveness. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

مَنْ قَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِيْمَانًا وَّاحْتِسَابًا، غُفِرَ لَهٗ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهٖ

One who stands in prayer during the nights of Ramaḍān with Īmān and hope for reward, all his previous sins will be forgiven. (Al-Bukhārī)

Moreover, as the Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh takes place during every night of Ramaḍān, those who perform it with punctuality will most definitely attain the reward of Laylatul-Qadr; the reward of performing twenty rakaʻāt every night for more than eighty-three years. In addition to this, recitation of the Glorious Qur'ān and performance of ṣalāh are both highly effective in strengthening a believer spiritually and enabling him to practise

the whole Dīn.

Despite the Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh being such a great spiritual bounty, many people unfortunately find it a burden and show much neglect in its regard. Therefore, I would like to mention some important points which require our attention in order to make our Tarāwīḥ fruitful and rewarding in the Court of Allāh ﷻ.

1. RECITATION IN TARĀWĪḤ

~Reciting with Tajwīd~

It is of utmost importance that the Glorious Qur'ān is recited with tajwīd and clarity. Tajwīd means to recite every letter correctly from its makhraj (origin) with its ṣifāt (characteristics). This is one of the rights of the Glorious Qur'ān. Allāh ﷻ states,

وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْاٰنَ تَرْتِيْلًا

And recite the Qur'ān with tartīl. (73:4)

Some 'Ulamā have defined tartīl in the following words:

اَلتَّرْتِيْلُ تَجْوِيْدُ الْحُرُوْفِ وَمَعْرِفَةُ الْوُقُوْفِ

Tartīl is to recite the letters with tajwīd and to recognise the pauses.

This is exactly how the Qur'ān was revealed to our Beloved Nabī ﷺ and how he himself recited it. Sayyidah Ummu Salamah ؓ explained the recitation of Nabī ﷺ:

فَإِذَا هِيَ تَنْعَتُ قِرَاءَةً مُفَسَّرَةً حَرْفًا حَرْفًا

Then she described it to be a clear recitation with every letter distinguished. (At-Tirmidhī)

'Allāmah Ibnul-Jazarī highlights the importance of tajwīd in his couplets:

وَالْأَخْذُ بِالتَّجْوِيْدِ حَتْمٌ لَازِمُ مَنْ لَّمْ يُجَوِّدِ الْقُرْاٰنَ اٰثِمُ

لِأَنَّهُ بِهِ الْإِلٰهُ أَنْزَلَا وَهٰكَذَا مِنْهُ إِلَيْنَا وَصَلَا

To implement tajwīd is highly mandatory.

Whoever does not recite the Qur'ān with tajwīd is a sinner.

Because it is with tajwīd that Allāh revealed it.

And like this it has reached us from Him.

Reciting the Glorious Qur'ān carelessly without implementing the necessary rules of tajwīd constitutes a sin, whether it be in ṣalāh or out of ṣalāh. However, the consequences can be greater when in ṣalāh as not only would it decrease the value of the recitation in the Sight of Allāh ﷻ but also the value of the ṣalāh. Major mistakes in recitation could even render the ṣalāh invalid.

Unfortunately, nowadays we look for the Tarāwīḥ in which the recitation is the fastest without giving any consideration to the quality of the recitation. The masjid that holds the fastest Tarāwīḥ has the largest congregation. The reality is that when the Glorious Qur'ān is recited properly in Tarāwīḥ, it only takes an extra five to ten minutes. These a few minutes which we

assume we have 'saved' because of the Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh finishing early, are most often spent gossiping outside the masjid immediately after Tarāwīḥ or after reaching home. Therefore, why not spend these moments in acquiring the Pleasure of Allāh ﷻ by remaining in His House, standing before Him in ṣalāh and listening to His Beautiful Word? Is it really worth reciting the Qur'ān in an incorrect manner and incurring His Displeasure to save a mere five to ten minutes? It is only once a year that we have this opportunity to recite and listen to the Glorious Qur'ān in ṣalāh, hence it would be very unfortunate if we let it go to waste.

~Where to Pause~

The second part of the definition of tartīl is 'recognising the pauses'. This means to know where and how to stop whilst reciting. This is also an important part of recitation as stopping in the wrong place could affect the meaning of the Qur'ān.

At times, the Imām pauses in the middle of a sentence causing frustration to those who are pondering over its meaning during ṣalāh. To avoid this, Ḥuffāẓ whilst reciting should follow the symbols of waqf (stopping) found in the muṣhaf. I would like to add that the Ḥāfiẓ leading Tarāwīḥ should also pay attention to where he stops at the end of every raka'ah. Negligence in this regard again results in stopping in the middle of a sentence or in between a particular topic. The symbols of rukū' found in the muṣhaf are usually appropriate places to stop. It would also be

helpful for Ḥuffāẓ to take guidance from the ‘Ulamā in this regard as they understand the meaning of the Qur’ān.

~Reciting in a Pleasant Tone~

Reciting the Qur’ān in a pleasant tone is praiseworthy and encouraged in Islām. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said,

حَسِّنُوا الْقُرْاٰنَ بِأَصْوَاتِكُمْ فَإِنَّ الصَّوْتَ الْحَسَنَ يَزِيدُ الْقُرْاٰنَ حُسْنًا

Beautify the Qur’ān with your voices for indeed a beautiful voice increases the Qur’ān in beauty. (Shu‘abul-Īmān)

Rasūlullāh ﷺ also said,

لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ لَّمْ يَتَغَنَّ بِالْقُرْاٰنِ

One who does not recite the Qur’ān in a pleasant tone is not from amongst us. (Al-Bukhārī)

When the Qur’ān is recited in a beautiful tone, it keeps the listener focused and has a greater impact on the heart. However, one should understand that a beautiful tone is not the main and sole objective of recitation. Many a time, due to being overcome with the desire to recite the Qur’ān and listen to it in a beautiful voice, no regard is given to clarity and tajwīd. Reciting the Qur’ān correctly is wājib (obligatory) and to recite it in a beautiful tone is mustaḥabb (desirable), and a wājib cannot be sacrificed for a mustaḥabb. In order to ensure that the Qur’ān

is being recited beautifully but also correctly, a local ʻĀlim or Qārī who has studied the science of tajwīd should be given the responsibility of assessing the recitation of the proposed Imām for Tarāwīḥ.

~Completing the Qur'ān~

To recite the whole Qur'ān at least once in Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh is sunnah mu'akkadah (emphasised sunnah) according to majority of the Ḥanafī Fuqahā. Therefore, every masjid should arrange for the whole Qur'ān to be recited in Tarāwīḥ and the muṣallīs should make sure they attend daily. A person who has a journey scheduled during the month of Ramaḍān should try to arrange for a Ḥāfiẓ to complete the Qur'ān for him in Tarāwīḥ before undertaking the journey. This way he will not risk missing this sunnah due to performing Tarāwīḥ in different places where different daily amounts are recited.

Similarly, those localities where there are no Ḥuffāẓ should try to arrange for Ḥuffāẓ from other localities to come and complete the Qur'ān for them. If this is not possible, then a suitable Imām should be appointed from amongst themselves who can recite selected sūrahs of the Qur'ān that he may have memorised. For example, Sūrah Yā Sīn, Sūratul-Mulk, etc. In such situations, the recitation should not be limited to only the last ten sūrahs of the Qur'ān, as is the norm. It should also be borne in mind that to recite whilst looking in the muṣḥaf during ṣalāh will nullify it.

~After Completing the Qur'ān~

After completing the Qur'ān in Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh, if some nights of Ramaḍān still remain, then one should continue performing Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh as it is sunnah mu'akkadah to perform it throughout Ramaḍān. Similarly, after completing the Qur'ān, one does not necessarily have to recite from only the last ten surahs in Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh. Rather, the remaining nights of Ramaḍān should be valued by spending a reasonable amount of time in Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh and by reciting an appropriate amount from the Glorious Qur'ān. The goal in these blessed nights should never be to complete Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh as soon as possible by rushing and reciting short surahs.

2. THE ṢALĀH

~Performing Twenty Raka'āt~

To perform twenty raka'āt of Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh is sunnah mu'akkadah. All four Imāms unanimously agree that the Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh consists of no less than twenty raka'āt and this has remained the inherited tradition within the Ummah from the best of eras. Without delving into academic proofs, I would like to present a little food for thought. If we perform twenty raka'āt and we come to know on the Day of Qiyāmah that we only had to perform eight, then what was the harm in performing an extra twelve raka'āt? On the contrary, if we perform eight raka'āt and Allāh ﷻ questions us as to why we did not perform twenty raka'āt,

how will we answer? Is it not better to be safe than sorry?

~Calmness in the Postures~

All the postures of ṣalāh should be performed calmly and in accordance to the sunnah. Due to hastiness, the rukū‘, sujūd, jalsah and qawmah are sometimes rushed to an extent that the limbs of the body do not become motionless before going into the next posture. This may save us a few minutes but it could prevent our ṣalāh from being accepted in the Court of Allāh ﷻ. Once a Ṣahābī ؓ entered Al-Masjidun-Nabawī and performed ṣalāh whilst Nabī ﷺ was sitting in the masjid. He then came to Nabī ﷺ and greeted him with salām. After replying to the salām, Nabī ﷺ said to him,

اِرْجِعْ فَصَلِّ فَإِنَّكَ لَمْ تُصَلِّ

Go back and perform your ṣalāh as you have not performed ṣalāh.

He went and repeated his ṣalāh and then returned to Nabī ﷺ. Nabī ﷺ instructed him to repeat the ṣalāh for a second time. When this occurred again for a third time, he requested Nabī ﷺ to draw his attention to the mistake he was making. Nabī ﷺ advised him,

إِذَا قُمْتَ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَكَبِّرْ، ثُمَّ اقْرَأْ مَا تَيَسَّرَ مَعَكَ مِنَ الْقُرْاٰنِ، ثُمَّ ارْكَعْ حَتّٰى تَطْمَئِنَّ رَاكِعًا، ثُمَّ ارْفَعْ حَتّٰى تَعْدِلَ قَائِمًا، ثُمَّ اسْجُدْ حَتّٰى تَطْمَئِنَّ سَاجِدًا، ثُمَّ ارْفَعْ حَتّٰى تَطْمَئِنَّ جَالِسًا، ثُمَّ

افْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ فِيْ صَلَاتِكَ كُلِّهَا

When you stand for ṣalāh say the takbīr, then recite whatever is convenient for you from the Qur'ān. Thereafter, perform rukū' until you are motionless in rukū', then lift your head until you stand up (from rukū') straight, then perform sajdah until you are motionless in sajdah, then lift your head (from sajdah) until you are motionless in the sitting position. Do this in your entire ṣalāh. (Al-Bukhārī)

~Stealing from Tarāwīḥ~

Some people who perform Tarāwīḥ in the masjid do not stand up and join the ṣalāh as soon as it starts. They wait until the Imām goes into rukū' and then quickly get up and join the ṣalāh.

Such people are essentially stealing from Tarāwīḥ. For the sake of a restless minute, they cut out an invaluable portion of this blessed 'ibādah and also fail to fulfil the sunnah of listening to the entire Qur'ān in Tarāwīḥ. The portion missed from the ṣalāh could have been the most beloved to Allāh ﷻ and a means of one's salvation. It is also worth considering that death could strike at any time. If death was destined to come at that moment, would one not prefer to be in ṣalāh?

~The Length of the Raka'āt~

The Imām should be considerate of the muṣallīs when it comes to the length of the raka'āt. Sometimes, the initial raka'āt are kept short resulting in the latter raka'āt becoming too long.

In some cases, the initial rakaʿāt are made very lengthy and the latter are kept short. This causes unnecessary hardship to the congregation. It would be more appropriate to maintain consistency in the length of rakaʿāt. In this regard, it should be noted that in accordance to the markings in the muṣḥaf, some quarters of each juz are shorter than others, hence calculating the length of rakaʿāt by the quarter markings will not always allow consistency in length.

~The Tarwīḥah~

It is mustaḥabb to have a short break after every four rakaʼāt. This is called tarwīḥah. There is no specific dhikr to recite during this time, therefore one may engage in any form of dhikr or duʿā. For example, third kalimah, ṣalāt ʿalan-Nabī, istighfār, etc. One should not lose focus during the tarwīḥah and engage in conversation or begin scrolling through one's mobile. It will be very unfortunate if whilst trying to connect to Allāh ﷻ through Tarāwīḥ, the mobile diverts one's attention away from Allāh ﷻ. Such behaviour is also against the etiquettes of the House of Allāh ﷻ.

3. APPROPRIATE IMĀM

Those who lead Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh are Imāms, just as those who lead the farḍ ṣalāh are Imāms. Although the Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh is categorised as lower than the farḍ ṣalāh, the person leading it has to fulfil all the requirements of being an Imām. Often,

youngsters who have recently completed their memorisation of the Qur'ān are given the responsibility of leading Tarāwīḥ in the masājid, yet they are unfamiliar with the masā'il of imāmat and ṣalāh. This is now becoming increasingly common for the farḍ ṣalāh too. An example is the mas'alah of sajdatus-sahw: at times, a mistake is made by the Imām and only he is aware of it. In such a case sajdatus-sahw is necessary, yet due to the Imām not knowing the mas'alah, sajdatus-sahw is not performed. Another example is ṭahārah (purity): an Imām who is not well acquainted with the rules of ṭahārah may lead Tarāwīḥ without fulfilling all the requirements of cleanliness and purity necessary for the validity of ṣalāh.

We should understand that the Imām's muṣallā in the masjid is not a training ground for new Ḥuffāẓ. They should be trained by being encouraged to recite the Qur'ān in nafl ṣalāh, or by leading Tarāwīḥ at home. Along with this, they should be taught the relevant masā'il and be nurtured in such a way that they develop the character required of an Imām.

May Allāh ﷻ grant us the tawfīq to perform the Tarāwīḥ Ṣalāh and recite the Glorious Qur'ān according to His Pleasure, and ultimately make this a means of salvation for us in the Hereafter. Āmīn.

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