106463 - Is Tarawih Prayed in Sets of Two Rak`ahs?

the question

Some imams in Tarawih put four or more Rak`ahs together with one Taslimah, without sitting between each two Rak`ahs, and they claim that this is Sunnah. Is there any basis for this action in sharee'ah?.

Summary of answer

Tarawih should be prayed in sets of two Rak`ahs, as per the Prophetic instruction: "The night prayers are (prayed) two by two." The Prophet typically prayed eleven Rak`ahs at night, concluding with Witr. Scholars emphasize following this Sunnah to ensure the proper observance of Tarawih during Ramadan.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Shaykh `Abd Al-`Aziz ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This action is not prescribed in Shari`ah, rather it is disliked or prohibited according to most scholars. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The night prayers are two by two." (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim from the Hadith of Ibn `Umar (may Allah be pleased with him)).

It is proven that `Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to pray eleven Rak`ahs at night, and say the Taslim after each two Rak`ahs, and he would pray Witr with one Rak`ah. (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim) And there are many similar Hadiths.

With regard to the famous Hadith of `Aishah, which says: "the Prophet (peace and blessings of

Allah be upon him) used to pray four Rak`ahs at night, and do not ask how beautiful and how long they were, then he would pray four, and do not ask how beautiful and how long they were", the Hadith is narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim – the answer is that he said the Taslim after each two Rak`ahs; it does not mean that he would follow four Rak`ahs with one Taslim, because of the Hadith quoted above.

It is also proven that he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "The night prayers are two by two" as stated above. The Hadiths confirm one another, so the Muslim is obliged to study all of them together and to interpret those that are general in meaning by those that are more specific. And Allah is the Source of strength. (End quote from Fatwa Islamiyyah, 2/156)

Review these answers for further insight: (9036, 37768, 37742, 38922, 48957, 38021, 106461)

And Allah knows best.