161102 - Is it better for men and women who come to do ‘umrah to pray Taraweeh in Makkah and Madinah in the hotel or in the Haram?

the question

I know that it is mustahabb to offer Sunnah prayers (such as tahajjud) at home, but if we are visiting Makkah or Madinah and are staying in the hotel, is the ruling different? I mean, is it better to offer Sunnah prayers in the hotel room or in the Haram? With regard to women, for whom it is regarded as being preferable to offer obligatory prayers at home – when my family travels with me to Makkah and Madinah, is it better for them to offer the obligatory prayers in the hotel or in the Haram? Are we regarded as travelling, as we are staying in the hotel?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The scholars differed as to what is preferable in the case of Taraweeh prayer: Is it better to offer it in the mosque in congregation or to offer it at home individually? There are three opinions concerning that:

1.

That offering it in congregation in the mosque is preferable. This is the opinion of the earlier Hanafis, Ahmad ibn Hanbal and the majority of his companions.

We have quoted the evidence presented by those who hold this view, in the answer to question no. 45781, where we stated that we regard it as more likely to be correct.

2.

That praying it individually at home is preferable. This is the view of Maalik and al-Shaafa‘i and

most of their companions. Maalik (may Allah have mercy on him) quoted as evidence the action of the seniors among his shaykhs and the senior Sahaabah.

Al-Shaafa'i (may Allah have mercy on him) quoted as evidence the hadeeth of Zayd ibn Thaabit (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) made a booth out of a reed mat in Ramadan and prayed in it at night, and some men among his Companions followed him in prayer. When he realized that they were doing that, he started praying seated (so that people could not see him and follow him in prayer). Then he came out to them and said: "I know what you did. O people, pray in your houses, for the best of a man's prayer is in his house, apart from the obligatory prayers."

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (698) and Muslim (781).

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Maalik said: Rabee'ah and more than one of our scholars would leave and not pray qiyaam with the people. Maalik said: And I also do that; and the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not pray qiyaam except in his house.

Al-Shaafa'i also quoted as evidence the hadeeth of Zayd ibn Thaabit, which he quoted. And al-Shaafa'i said: The point is further emphasized by the fact that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) told them to pray qiyaam in their homes rather than in his mosque despite all the virtue that there is in that.

End quote from al-Tamheed, 8/116

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr also said:

If offering a naafil prayer at home is better than offering it in the mosque of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in which one prayer is better than a thousand prayers offered anywhere else, what can be clearer than this? Hence Maalik and al-Shaafa'i, and those who followed their path, thought that praying alone at home was better in the case of all naafil prayers. If qiyaam is held in the mosque in Ramadan, even with the smallest number of people, prayer at

home is still better.

End quote from al-Istidhkaar, 2/73

It should be noted that those imams who said that praying Taraweeh alone at home is better than praying it in congregation in the mosque only applied that to the one who has memorised some Qur'aan – or the entire Qur'aan – and has the motivation to pray at home and there is no fear that he will become lazy and miss the prayer, and that the prayer in congregation in the mosque will not be affected by his absence. If these conditions are not met, then there is no doubt, according to their view, that praying Taraweeh in congregation in the mosque is better.

Al-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Our companions, the Iraqis, al-Saydalaani, al-Baghawi and others among the Khorasanis said: The difference of opinion has to do with one who has memorised Qur'aan and for whom there is no fear that he will become lazy if he prays on his own and that the congregation in the mosque will not be affected if he stays away. If one of these conditions is not met, then praying in congregation is preferable and there is no difference of opinion concerning that.

End quote from al-Majmoo', 4/31

We may add another important condition here which was added by some of the scholars and which is relevant to what the questioner asked about. This is that for it to be preferable for a person to pray in his house on his own rather than offering the prayer in the Haramain, he should be one of the people of the Haramain (i.e., a resident of Makkah or Madinah). The one who comes to the Haram in Makkah to do 'umrah – and, similarly, the one who comes to Madinah to pray in the Prophet's Mosque – is not subject to the ruling that praying Taraweeh in his house is preferable.

Muhammad al-Dasooqi al-Maaliki (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The recommendation to do it (pray Taraweeh) in one's house is subject to three conditions: that the mosques should not be left empty, that he has the motivation to do it and he should not be

one of those who are coming from afar to visit the Haramain. If one of these conditions is absent, then doing it in the mosque is preferable.

End quote from Haashiyat al-Dasooqi, 1/315

Looking at the state of people nowadays – including many of the good and righteous youth who are devoted to worship – we find that praying Taraweeh in congregation in the mosque is better for them, because praying in the mosque is very encouraging for them, as it is done at the beginning of the night, and because of the beauty of the imam's voice – for those who seek to pray with an imam like this – and because of the large numbers of people who pray. And also because there are many distractions in the home that lead people to become lazy in offering the prayer. Hence we think that calling on ordinary people nowadays to pray Taraweeh at home is an invitation to abandon this prayer! Where are those who have memorized anything of the Qur'aan among those people? What else will these people be doing if they are not praying in the mosque at the beginning of the night? Where is the motive that will make them get up at the end of the night to pray qiyaam?

If we assume that the correct view concerning this matter according to some people is the second opinion, then let this apply only to the elite, not the common folk; perhaps this is what was meant by those among the salaf who favoured this opinion. Hence 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) gathered the people together in the mosque to pray Taraweeh, and he prayed on his own in his house.

How beautiful are the words of Imam Malik, who summed up what we are trying to say. When Ibn al-Qaasim asked him about whether it is better for a man to pray qiyaam in Ramadan with the people or on his own in his house? He replied: If he is able to do it in his house, then I prefer that, but not all the people are able for that.

End quote from al-Mudawwanah al-Kubra, 1/287

Secondly:

With regard to women praying Taraweeh in their houses, this has already been dealt with in the answer to question no. 3457, where we said that it is better for women to pray qiyaam in their houses, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “Do not prevent your women from going to the mosques, although their houses are better for them.” Narrated by Abu Dawood. The fact that praying at home is preferred does not mean that they should not be permitted to go to the mosques, but that is subject to certain conditions, which are mentioned in the question referred to.

In the same answer we quoted a fatwa of Shaykh Ibn Baaz which states that Taraweeh at home is better for a woman than in the mosque.

In the answer to question no. 12451, we quoted Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) as saying:

The Sunnah indicates that it is better for a woman to pray in her house wherever she is, whether she is in Makkah or elsewhere. End quote.

And Allah knows best.