313764 - If he prays the regular sunnah prayer with the intention of greeting the mosque, will he attain the reward of two supererogatory prayers?

the question

If someone enters the mosque and prayd two rak`ahs intending them to be the Sunnah prayer to greet the mosque and the regular Sunnah prayer and the Sunnah of Tarawih, does that bring a reward equal to that of one who prays the two Sunnah rak'ahs to greet the mosque and the two rak`ahs of the regular Sunnah prayer separately? In other words, is it better to offer each prayer on its own, or to offer one prayer with several intentions? Or are they equal in reward, by Allah's leave?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

In the answer to question no. 223721, we explained that the regular Sunnah prayer takes the place of the prayer to greet the mosque, so it is prescribed for the worshipper to combine the two intentions.

With this intention, he will attain the reward of two types of Sunnah prayers, because so long as this intention is prescribed, the worshipper will have the reward for what he intends, as the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Deeds are but by intentions and each man will have but that which he intended." Narrated by al-Bukhari (1) and Muslim (1907).

Shaykh `Abd ar-Rahman as-Sa`di (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

By the blessing and generosity of Allah, a single act may count as several actions. So if a person

enters the mosque at the time of a regular Sunnah prayer and prays two rak'ahs, intending them to be both the regular Sunnah prayer and the prayer to greet the mosque, he will attain the virtue of both.

End quote from *al-Qawa`id wal-Usul al-Jami`ah*, p. 168.

The proof that with a single deed the Muslim may attain the reward of two deeds includes:

the hadith of `Amr ibn al-Harith from Zaynab – the wife of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud (may Allah be pleased with him) – when she wanted to give some wealth of hers in charity, so she asked the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): Will it be counted as charity if I spend on my husband and some orphans who are under my care? He said: "Yes, and she will have two rewards: the reward of helping relatives and the reward of giving charity." Narrated by al-Bukhari (1466) and Muslim (1000).

And it was narrated from Salman ibn `Amir that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Charity given to a needy person is one charity, and charity given to a relative is two things, charity and upholding ties of kinship." Narrated by an-Nasa'i (2582) and by at-Tirmidhi (658), who said: Regarding this, hadiths were narrated from Zaynab the wife of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud, Jabir, and Abu Hurayrah. The hadith of Salman ibn `Amir is a sound hadith. End quote.

But if the one who enters the mosque prays two rak`ahs with the intention of greeting the mosque, and two more rak`ahs with the intention of offering the regular Sunnah prayer, and there is enough time to do that, then this brings a greater reward, because it is more than one deed and the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) encouraged us to pray a great deal.

It was narrated that Ma`dan ibn Abi Talhah al-Ya`mari said: I met Thawban, the freed slave of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and said: Tell me of a deed that I may do, by which Allah may admit me to Paradise – or he said: Tell me of the most beloved of deeds to Allah. He remained silent. I asked him (again) and he remained silent. I asked him a third time and he said: I asked the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) about that and he said: "You should prostrate to Allah a great deal, for you will not perform one

prostration to Allah but Allah will raise you one degree in status thereby and erase one sin for you." Narrated by Muslim (488).

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

In Fajr prayer, after the second adhan, is it permissible for someone to offer the prayer to greet the mosque, or should he pray the Sunnah prayer only?

He replied:

If he enters the mosque after the adhan for Fajr and he wants to pray, if there is enough time he may offer the prayer to greet the mosque first, then the regular Sunnah prayer.

But if there is not much time, then he should offer the regular Sunnah prayer, and this will include the prayer to greet the mosque. This is the correct scholarly view, based on the fact that the time when prayer is disallowed is only after the (obligatory) Fajr prayer…

If he only offers the regular Sunnah prayer even though there is plenty of time, there is nothing wrong with that.

End quote from *Liqa' al-Bab al-Maftuh*, 186/12).

Secondly:

If someone prays two rak`ahs of Tarawih with the intention of it also being the regular Sunnah prayer of 'Isha', he will not attain the reward of two supererogatory prayers thereby, because each of those two prayers is intended for its own sake, so they cannot be combined in one prayer.

With regard to the prayer to greet the mosque, the point of it is that you should pray straightaway when you first enter the mosque, before sitting down. Therefore it may be done on its own, with its own intention, or it can be joined in intention with another prayer before sitting down.

Please see also the answer to question no. 162318.

And Allah knows best.