

The Two Voluntary *Rak'ahs* of the *Fajr* Prayer

Two *rak'ahs* before the dawn (*Fajr*) prayer are part of the recommended but voluntary prayers that the Messenger of Allah (May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to maintain. He never abandoned them whether he was residing or travelling. 'Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) reported saying, "The Prophet (May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did not attach more importance to any supererogatory (*Nawafil*) prayer than the two *rak'ahs* of prayer before dawn (*Fajr*) prayer." [Agreed upon: 1163, 724].

Moreover, in their regard, the Messenger of Allah said, "They are dearer to me than the whole world." [Transmitted by Muslim: 725].

It is an established practice (*sunnah*) of the Prophet (May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to recite in the first *rak'ah*:

[Surah Al-Kafiroon] }...{*Qul ya ayyuhal-kafiroon* ﴿قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ.....﴾

And to recite:

[Surah Al-Ikhlās] }...{*Qul huwa Allahu ahad* ﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ.....﴾

in the second *rak'ah*.

Sometimes, he would recite in the first *rak'ah*:

﴿قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا...الآية﴾. [البقرة: ١٣٦].

{*Quloo aamanna billahi wa ma unzila ilaina...*} [Surah Al-Baqarah: 136]

And in the second *rak'ah*:

﴿قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَاءٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ...الآية﴾ [آل عمران: ٦٤].

{*Qul ya ahl al-kitabi ta'aalaw ila kalimat in sawa'in bainana wa bainakum...*} [Surah Aal-Imran: 64].

It is also the *sunnah* to keep them short, according to the practice of the Prophet (may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). One who misses praying them before *fajr* may perform them after the prayer. However, it is preferable to perform them after sunrise when the shadows begin to appear (15 minutes after sunrise approximately) until shortly before the prohibited time for prayer when the sun passes the meridian (*Zawalus-Shams*).

Ad-Dhuha (Forenoon) Prayer

This is the prayer of the penitent (*Al-Awwabeen*). It is an emphatic and confirmed *Sunnah*, whose encouragement has been emphatically reported in several traditions.

Abu Dharr (May Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Messenger of Allah (May the blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said, "When you get up in the morning, charity is due from every one of your joints. There is charity in every ascription of glory to Allah; there is charity in every declaration of His Greatness; there is charity in every utterance of praise of Him; there is charity in every declaration that He is the only true God (worthy of worship); there is charity in enjoining good; there is charity in forbidding evil. Two *rak'ahs* of *Duha* (Forenoon prayer) is equal to all this (in reward)." [Reported by Muslim: 720].

It was narrated that Abu Hurairah (May Allah be pleased with him) said: "My dearest friend advised me (to do) three things: to fast three days each month, to pray two *rak'ahs* of *Duha* prayer, and to sleep after praying *witr*." [Agreed upon: 1178, 721].

The best time to observe this prayer is when the sun has risen (i.e. later in the day) and its heat has become intense. Its time expires upon *Zawalus-Shams* (when the sun has declined and passed the meridian). The minimum number of *rak'ahs* for *Ad-Duha* prayer is two *rak'ahs* and there is no limit for the maximum.