

مقادير الصلاة وعدد ركعاتها

# The Length and Number of Units of Prayer

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سلسلة إملاء الخاطر | Imlā al-Khāṭir Series



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جميع الحقوق محفوظة

## Imlā al-Khāṭir Series

In this series, which he names *Imlā al-Khāṭir* (literally, “dictation of thoughts”), Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi follows in the tradition of the Ḥanbalī scholar Ibn al-Jawzī’s *Ṣayd al-Khāṭir* and shares with the world his reflections on a variety of topics ranging from theology to law, history to heart softeners, philosophy, education and more. Composed in a casual, conversational style consisting of questions followed by their brief answers (each portion predicated by *qālū/qultu*, “they said”/“I responded”), he utilizes therein the highest level of Arabic, reflecting his love of the language and his extensive expertise in Arabic grammar and rhetoric. These short but poignant reflections are part of the *balāghah* genre and tradition of Arabic literature. It should be noted that these translations, done by his senior students, serve as a guide and can never fully match the style, tone and eloquence of the original Arabic. Also note that Dr. Akram does not necessarily review each translation and is not responsible for any errors, improper word choices, or the likes, that are an inevitable part of the translation process.

## Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi

Dr. Mohammad Akram Nadwi is a world-renowned scholar of Indian origin who has resided in England for an extensive time. After receiving in-depth training to an advanced level in the traditional Islamic disciplines at the famous Nadwat al-‘Ulamā’ seminary in Lucknow, India, and receiving a PhD in Arabic literature from Lucknow University, he became a research fellow at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, where he conducted research for a number of years on a variety of topics, including Ḥadīth and Sufi orders in India. He has published widely in Urdu, Persian, Arabic and English, including translations (like his work on Shāh Waliullah, *Bustan al-Muhaddithin*), editions of Arabic texts (such as a renowned critical edition of *Usul al-Shāshī* in Ḥanafī jurisprudence), and original monographs on Islamic law, female ḥadīth narrators and such figures as Abū Ḥanīfah and Sayyid Abul Ḥasan ‘Alī Nadwi. His groundbreaking work, yet to be published, is an encyclopedic 40-volume documentation of the legacy of female scholarship in the Islamic tradition. He co-founded the Al-Salam Institute in 2006 where he continues to serve as Principal and Senior Lecturer.

## **Introduction**

*In a previous monograph, Dr. Akram revealed some of his insights into the timings of prayer and how they relate to the Ibrāhīmīc call. In this one, he takes a deeper look at the number of units of prayer in a full day, expounding on their wisdom and touching on some brief issues relating to the obligatory and supererogatory prayers, the Witr prayer and the Tarāwīḥ of Ramadan.*

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

## مقادير الصلاة وعدد ركعاتها

بقلم: محمد أكرم الندوي

أو كسفورد

قالوا: ما الصلوات المفروضة والمسنونة وركعاتها؟ قلت: قد ذكرت لكم في مقال سابق أن صلواتنا موقفة بمعنى قول إبراهيم عليه السلام "لا أحب الآفلين" متجنباً أوقات عبادة المشركين عبادة الشمس والكواكب والنجوم، وبناء على ذلك فالصلوات المفروضة عشرة ركعات بالنهار وعشر بالليل، والعشرة كمال في كتاب الله تعالى إذ قال: "تلك عشرة كاملة"، والمجموعة عشرون ركعة، فأما صلوات النهار فهي ركعتان في الصباح، وأربع ركعات في الظهر، وأربع في العصر، وأما صلوات الليل فهي ثلاث ركعات في المغرب، وأربع في العشاء، وثلاث في الوتر.

وكذلك الصلوات المسنونة عشرون ركعة، ركعتان قبل صلاة الفجر، وأربع ركعات قبل الظهر، وركعتان بعدها، وركعتان بعد المغرب، وركعتان بعد العشاء، وثمان ركعات في التهجّد، ولم يسن النبي صلى عليه وسلم أكثر من

عشرين ركعة في الليل والنهار تأدبا مع فرائض الله تعالى، فإنه أول من لا يتقدم بين يدي ربه، ويا له من أدب رفيع وكمال في التواضع!

وكان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يجتهد في شهر رمضان ما لا يجتهد في غيره، أخرج البخاري وغيره عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما قال: "كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أجود الناس بالخير وكان أجود ما يكون في رمضان حين يلقاه جبريل وكان جبريل عليه السلام يلقاه كل ليلة في رمضان حتى ينسلخ يعرض عليه النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم القرآن فإذا لقيه جبريل عليه السلام كان أجود بالخير من الريح المرسلة"، فزاد النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم عشرين ركعة أخرى خاصة لرمضان يتدارس فيها القرآن الكريم، وتبعه في ذلك أصحابه رضي الله عنهم.

قالوا: جعلت الوتر فرضًا، وهو قول لم تُسبق إليه، قلت: لم أجعله فرضًا، ولكني ألحقته به، وقد عبر عنه أبو حنيفة بالواجب، وبعض أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بالحق، وسائر العلماء بالسنة، لأنهم علموه بالسنة، ولكنهم أكدوا عليه ما لم يؤكدوا على غيره، ورأوا قضاءه على من فاته.

قالوا: ما للنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم اقتصر على الصلوات الخمس دون الوتر في أحاديث كثيرة صحيحة؟ قلت: لأن الوتر تابع للعشاء، فلم يحتاج إلى أن

يفرده بالذكر، وهو آخر صلاة الليل، وقد يشق على كثير من الناس النهوض له والانتباه من النوم، فحَفَّفَه ظاهر التخفيف رحمة بهم.

قالوا: فلماذا قُسمت ركعات الفرض هذا التقسيم؟ قلت: الكمال لله هو توحده وتفرده، ولا يشاركه فيه شيء من خلقه، وأما الخلق فكمال الزوجية، والركعتان زوج، وأضيف إليهما ركعتان أخريان لكمال الزوجية، وإظهارا لتشوق المؤمنين وميلهم القوي إلى الاستكثار من نعمة الصلاة، فكانت صلوات الظهر والعصر والعشاء كل واحدة منها أربع ركعات.

وجعلت الفجر ركعتين استجابة لأمر الله تعالى "وقرآن الفجر إن قرآن الفجر كان مشهودا"، فكان طول القراءة فيه مندوبا أشد الندب، ولو أن العبد قام للفجر وأطال القراءة وقرب طلوع الشمس خيف عليه أن تكون الركعات الثلاث بعد طلوع الشمس، فإذا كانت الفريضة ركعتين فإنه متى خاف طلوع الشمس وهو في قراءته في الأولى ضم إليها ركعة أخرى وانتهى من الصلاة صائنا إياها من أدائها في الوقت المنهي عنه.

وكانت صلاة المغرب شبيهة بالفجر في أن الفجر ملاصقة لطلوع الشمس والمغرب ملاصقة للغروب، وإذا لم يكن في المغرب خوف من غروب الشمس أضيفت إليها ركعة أخرى، ولم تضاف إليها ركعتان حتى لا تشبه الظهر والعصر والعشاء، فأصبحت ثلاث ركعات، ونقص منها طول القراءة

ليحصل التشابه بينها وبين الفجر، فطالت الفجر طالت بالقراءة، والمغرب بعدد الركعات، وصلاة الوتر آخر صلاة الليل فجعلت وترا كما أن المغرب آخر صلاة النهار من وجه، وهي وتر. ثم إن هناك حكمة أخرى، وهي أن الثلاث تنبئ عن النقص، فينتهي النهار بالمغرب وهي وتر، ويستشعر العبد نقصانه في العبادة وأنه لم يعبد ربه كما ينبغي، وكذلك حينما ينتهي في صلاة الليل بالوتر يستشعر هذا النقصان، الأمر الذي يجعل العبد متواضعا وراغبا في الاستكثار من العبادة، ومن ثم قال تعالى: "فَإِذَا أَمِنْتُمْ فَمَنْ تَمَنَّعَ بِالْعُمْرَةِ إِلَى الْحَجِّ فَمَا اسْتَيْسَرَ مِنَ الْهَدْيِ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ ثَلَاثَةِ أَيَّامٍ فِي الْحَجِّ وَسَبْعَةٍ إِذَا رَجَعْتُمْ تِلْكَ عَشْرَةٌ كَامِلَةٌ"، فقسم الصيام وترا، وإن كان المجموع عشرة كاملة.

قالوا: فما تقول في حديث عائشة رضي الله عنها الصحيح: "فرضت الصلاة ركعتين ركعتين في الحضر والسفر فأقرت صلاة السفر وزيد في صلاة الحضر"؟ قلت: الوجه ما بيئته، وإنما ذكرت أم المؤمنين رضي الله عنها ما شاهدت، لأن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم كان يصلي في مكة ركعتين ركعتين صلاة الخائف، والصلاة في الخوف مقصورة من عدة نواح كما لا يخفى، فلما هاجر إلى المدينة أمم، وهو قوله تعالى: "فإذا أمنتهم فاذكروا الله كما علمكم ما لم تكونوا تعلمون".

قالوا: إنما يصح قولك في الصلوات المسنونة إنها عشرون ركعة على حديث أم حبيبة رضي الله عنها، ولكنه لا يصح على حديث ابن عمر رضي الله عنها، قلت: حديث ابن عمر يقتضي النقص، ولا بأس بذلك، فالنبي صلى الله عليه وسلم لا يتقدم بين يدي الله، ولكنه قد يتأخر، وعندني سبب آخر في ذلك، وهو أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم كان يصلي السنة في بيته فضبطتها أزواجه، ولم يضبطها الرجال ضبطهن.

قالوا: جعلت التراويح عشرين ركعة، فما تقول في حديث عائشة رضي الله عنها: "ما كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يزيد في رمضان، ولا في غيره على إحدى عشرة ركعة، يصلي أربعاً، فلا تسأل عن حسنهن وطولهن، ثم يصلي أربعاً، فلا تسأل عن حسنهن وطولهن، ثم يصلي ثلاثاً"؟ قلت: حديث عائشة رضي الله عنها يؤكد ما قلت، فالثلاث هي الوتر، والثمان صلاة التهجد، فهذه الثمان مع الصلوات المذكورة في حديث أم حبيبة تجعلها عشرين ركعة، ولم يكن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يزيد عليها في رمضان وغير رمضان.

والتراويح سنة أخرى مختصة برمضان، وهي غير الرواتب التي كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يواظب عليها في رمضان وغيره، ولم يتناول حديث عائشة رضي الله عنها التراويح، ولو أنها أرادت الصلوات كلها لما كان لقول النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم "من قام رمضان إيماناً واحتساباً" معنى مع قوله



"من صام رمضان"، فكما أن هذا الصيام يختص برمضان، كذلك يختص هذا القيام برمضان، ولو لم تكن هناك صلوات خاصة في رمضان لما قال "من قام رمضان"، وكان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يزيد في الخير في رمضان، وهذا ما فهمه أصحابه رضي الله عنهم وجزوا عليه متبعين إياه ومقتفين أثره، غير مبتدعين ولا محدثين أمراً ليس من هذا الدين.

قالوا: وهل يجوز أن ينقص أحد من عشرين ركعة؟ قلت: لا كلام في الجواز، فإنها صلاة مندوبة، وكان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يحذر أن يشق على أمته، فلا تشقوا على الناس، ودعوهم يصلوا ما تيسر لهم.

قالوا: فما تقول في أهل المدينة وقد زادوا على العشرين؟ قلت: لم يجعلوا هذه الزيادة سنة، وإنما زادوها حرصاً على مسابقتهم أهل مكة إذ كانوا يطوفون بين كل ترويحتين. فما داموا لم يسئوها فلا بأس، فإنه يجوز للمسلم أن يتنفل بما شاء ما لم يجعله فريضة أو سنة.

# The Length and Number of Units of Prayer

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They asked: What are the obligatory and sunnah prayers,<sup>1</sup> and what is the number of their units (rak'ahs)?

I replied:

I have mentioned in a previous article that our prayers are scheduled according to the statement of Ibrāhīm: "I love not the things that go down,"<sup>2</sup> avoiding the timings of the worship of the polytheists, those who worshiped the sun, planets and stars. Building upon this, the obligatory units of prayer are ten in the day and ten in the night. Ten is a number that denotes completion and perfection, as God says: "These are ten complete days."<sup>3</sup> So they are twenty in total number. As for the prayers of the day, they are the two units of the Dawn prayer, the four units of *Ẓuhr*, and the four of *'Āṣr*. The prayers of the night are the three of *Maghrib*, the four of *'Ishā'* and the three of the *Witr* prayer.

Similarly, the supererogatory prayers are also twenty units: two before *Fajr*, four before *Ẓuhr* and two following it, two after *Maghrib*, two after *'Ishā'*, and the eight units of *tahajjud*<sup>4</sup> prayer. It is not established from the Prophet's practice that he ever exceeded more than twenty units of supererogatory prayer in the day and night. This was done out of respect and deference for the obligatory prayers, for he is the first to avoid going

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<sup>1</sup> In this article the English word *prayer* refers to *ṣalāh*, the ritual prayers of Islām and not to *du'ā'* (supplication).

<sup>2</sup> Qur'ān 6:76.

<sup>3</sup> Qur'ān 2:196.

<sup>4</sup> *Tahajjud* is the name of the optional night prayer referred to in the Qur'ān in *Sūrah al-Muzzammil*.

further than God.<sup>5</sup> What lofty respect and what utter humility from him, peace and blessings be upon Him!

The Prophet would exert himself in the month of Ramadan more than any other month. Bukhārī and others relate that Ibn ‘Abbās said: “The Prophet was the most generous of people in charity, but he was generous to the utmost in the month of Ramadan, when Jibrīl would visit him. Jibrīl would meet him every night during the month of Ramadan until it ended, and God’s Messenger would recite to him the Qur’ān; and when Jibrīl met him, God’s Messenger was more generous than the blowing wind.”<sup>6</sup> So the Prophet would add twenty additional units of prayer specifically for Ramadan in order to review the Noble Qur’ān, and his Companions followed him in that practice.

They asked: You have placed the Witr prayer among the obligatory ones, which is a view no one expressed before you.

I replied:

I have not considered it obligatory but included it among the obligatory prayers. Abū Ḥanīfah has designated it mandatory (wājib), while some Companions described it as the truth (ḥaqq), and the rest of the scholars described it as sunnah, because they know it through the sunnah. But they emphasized it more than they emphasized any other prayer and have allowed it to be made up in case it was missed (qaḍā’).

They asked: Why did the Prophet mention only the five prayers without mentioning Witr in numerous sound ḥadīth reports?

I replied:

Simply because of the fact that the Witr follows the ‘ishā’ prayer, and he felt no need to mention it separately. Since it is the final prayer of the night, and

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<sup>5</sup> In other words, the Prophet was one never to put himself before God and His command, a concept taken from Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt 49:1. In this context, it means that he would keep the obligatory prayers preeminent and foremost, and not go above them in his optional prayers. Note that this sentence represents a revised translation, which was mistakenly translated in a previous edition.

<sup>6</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Ṣawm, Bāb Ajwad Mā Kāna al-Nabiyyu Yakūnu fī Ramaḍān.

it is difficult for many to perform it while fighting sleep, he lightened it out of mercy for them.

They asked: Why are the units of obligatory prayer divided up in this manner?

I replied:

Perfection belongs to God alone, and absolutely nothing from creation shares with Him in that. As for creation, their completion is in pairs. Therefore, two units of prayer are a pair, and each pair has another pair to add to this completion. All of this is to motivate the believers and incline them strongly to increase themselves in this great blessing of prayer. So the units of *Ẓuhr*, *‘Āṣr* and *‘Ishā’* prayer are four in number.<sup>7</sup>

The units of the *Fajr* prayer are two, following the command of God: “And hold fast to the recitation of the *Qur’ān* at dawn, for the recitation of the *Qur’ān* at dawn is witnessed.”<sup>8</sup> So lengthy recitation in this prayer is greatly encouraged. If a servant is standing for the *Fajr* prayer (had *Fajr* followed the default of four units) and lengthens his recitation until the rise of the sun is at hand, causing him to fear that the third unit would be after sunrise (recitation is part of the first two units), then while he is in the first unit, he simply adds another unit and ends the prayer to avoid its occurrence in the forbidden time of prayer.<sup>9</sup>

*Maghrib* prayer resembles the *Fajr* prayer in that *Fajr* is tied to the rising of the sun while *Maghrib* is tied to the setting of the sun. Since there is no fear from the setting of the sun in *Maghrib* (the prayer beginning after the sun has already set), a third *rak’ah* has been added to it. Another pair of *rak’ahs* has not been added in order to avoid resemblance to *Ẓuhr*, *‘Āṣr* and *‘Ishā’*. So it has become three units. Additionally, its recitation is made short to avoid resemblance with *Fajr*. So the *Fajr* is lengthened with its long recitation

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<sup>7</sup> In this conception, the default for prayer would be four units.

<sup>8</sup> *Qur’ān* 17:78.

<sup>9</sup> Since lengthy recitation is mandated in the *Fajr* prayer and recitation is part of the first two units, and there is an approaching danger of sunrise—a prohibited time of prayer—it would be difficult to make the additional third and fourth units on time before sunrise after the lengthy first two. Hence the second two have been dropped.

while Maghrib is lengthened by its three units. The Witr prayer, which is the last prayer of the night, has also been made odd, just as Maghrib, which is the last prayer of the day from one angle, is odd in its units.

Then there is an additional wisdom here. The number three implies a deficiency. The day ends with Maghrib which is three units, because the servant feels his deficiency in worship as he is not able to worship his Lord as He deserves. Similarly, when he ends the night prayer with the Witr, he feels this deficiency, a matter which humbles the servant and makes him long to worship even more. And then God says:

However, when you are secure (and you reach Makkah before the Hajj season begins), whoever takes advantage of this opportunity to perform `Umrah shall offer the sacrifice that he can afford. But if he cannot afford a sacrifice, he shall fast three days during the Hajj season and seven days after reaching home, that is, ten days in all.<sup>10</sup>

Here fasting has also been divided in an odd manner, while the total number is ten.

They asked: So what do you say concerning the ḥadīth of `Ā'ishah that: "The prayer was enjoined two units at a time in travel and residence, and then the prayer while traveling remained like that, while the prayer as a resident was increased."<sup>11</sup>

I replied:

The reason is the same as I have clarified. The mother of the believers `Ā'ishah mentioned what she had witnessed, for the Prophet used to pray in Makkah two units of prayer out of fear, and the prayer of fear (khawf) is shortened from a number of angles that are not hidden. But when he migrated to Madīnah he performed the prayers in their complete form. And that is from the statement of God: "Even if you are in danger, you must offer your Prayers anyhow on foot or on horseback. And when you have peace

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<sup>10</sup> Qur'ān 2:196.

<sup>11</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Ṣalāh.

again, remember God in the manner He has taught you, which you did not know before.”<sup>12</sup>

They asked: Your view regarding the supererogatory prayers that they are twenty in number is supported by the ḥadīth of Umm Ḥabībah,<sup>13</sup> God be pleased with her, but not by the ḥadīth of Ibn ‘Umar,<sup>14</sup> may God be pleased with them both.

I replied:

The ḥadīth of Ibn ‘Umar suggests a decrease (compared to the number of obligatory prayers), and there is no problem with that, as the Prophet never went farther than God but could stop at less.<sup>15</sup> But I have another support for my view, which is the fact that since the Prophet would offer his supererogatory prayers at home, his wives had far more familiarity and precision regarding these than the men had.

They asked: You have made the Tarāwīḥ prayer twenty units, so what do you say about the ḥadīth of ‘Ā’ishah, God be pleased with her, that: “The Messenger of God used not to pray more than eleven units whether in Ramadan or in any other month. He used to offer four units—and don’t ask me about their beauty or length— and then he would offer four units—and don’t ask me about their beauty and length—and then he would offer three.”<sup>16</sup>

I replied:

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<sup>12</sup> Qur’ān 2:239.

<sup>13</sup> Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Kitāb al-Ṣalāh: Umm Ḥabībah relates that the Prophet stated: “Whoever prays twelve rak’ahs in a day and night, a house will be built from him in Paradise: four before Ḍuhr, two after it, two after Maghrib, two after ‘Ishā’, and two before Fajr.” It is also related in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Musāfirīn wa Qaṣrihā, without the detailed units.

<sup>14</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī and Muslim: Ibn ‘Umar relates: I prayed along with the Messenger of God, two before Ḍuhr and two after it, two after Maghrib, two after ‘Ishā’, two after Jumu’ah.

<sup>15</sup> This represents a corrected translation from a previous edition.

<sup>16</sup> Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī, Kitāb al-Manāqib, Bāb Kāna al-Nabiyyu Tanāmu ‘Aynuhu walā Yanāmu Qalbuḥ.

The ḥadīth of ‘Ā’ishah affirms what I have said, for the three refers to the Witr while the eight is the Tahajjud prayer. These eight plus the prayers mentioned in the ḥadīth of Umm Ḥabībah makes for twenty total units, which the Prophet never exceeded in Ramadan or outside of it.

And the Tarāwīḥ prayer is another sunnah specific to Ramadan, which is different from the usual prayers that the Prophet persisted upon, inside and outside of Ramadan. The ḥadīth of ‘Ā’ishah does not deal with Tarāwīḥ prayer. Had she intended all prayers, then there would be no meaning to the statement of the Prophet: “He who stands in prayer throughout Ramadan, out of sincerity of Faith and in the hope of earning reward will have his past sins pardoned”;<sup>17</sup> along with his similar statement: “He who fasts in Ramadan out of sincerity of Faith and in the hope of earning reward will have his past sins pardoned.”<sup>18</sup> Just as this fast is specific to Ramadan, so too this standing in prayer (qiyām) is specific to Ramadan. Had there been no prayer specific to Ramadan, he would not have said, “He who stands in prayer in Ramadan.”

The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, would increase good deeds in Ramadan, and this is what his Companions understood and practiced, following his footsteps, without innovating or inventing anything new in the religion.

They asked: Is it allowed to shorten the units to less than twenty?

I replied:

There can be no talk of permissibility, as these are all recommended prayers to begin with, and the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, hated to cause hardship for his nation. So do not cause hardship on people, and invite them to pray what is easy for them.

They asked: What do you say about the people of Madīnah who exceeded twenty?

I replied:

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<sup>17</sup> Bukhārī and Muslim.

<sup>18</sup> Bukhārī and Muslim.

They did not consider this addition to be sunnah, but only did so in competition with the people of Makkah, who performed ṭawāf (circumambulation of the Ka'bah) after every Tarāwīḥ pair. So what they persisted upon without considering it sunnah is not problematic, for it is allowed for a Muslim to perform as much extra worship as he or she desires, without considering it obligatory or sunnah.



		الصلوات المفروضة Obligatory Prayers	الصلوات المستنونة Recommended Prayers	رمضان Ramadan
Prayers of the Day	صلاة الفجر Fajr	2	2	
	صلاة الظهر Zuhr	4	4	
	صلاة العصر 'Āṣr	4	2	
Prayers of the Night	صلاة المغرب Maghrib	3	2	
	صلاة العشاء 'Ishā'	4	2	
	صلاة التهجد Tahajjud		8	
	صلاة الوتر Witr	3		
	صلاة التراويح Tarāwīḥ			20
Total:		20	20	Additional 20

Number of Units of Prayer