

As-Sunan Ar-Rawaatib

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As-Sunan Ar-Rawaatib: These are the sunnah and nawaafil (voluntary prayers) which are done together with the faraa'id prayer (the five times compulsory prayer). These sunnah prayers are among the best of the optional prayers to the extent that some scholars have adopted the position that it is abhorrent and resented that one should leave it off. One loses his balance of judgement if he abandons it permanently he is not accepted as a witness as the Imaams Ahmed and Shaafi'ee have attested and it is proof that his religion has become curtailed and deficient.¹

The Benefits Of These Prayers Are:-

- 1 they make up for shortfalls in compulsory (fard) prayer
- 2 they are one of the means by which one attains the love and adoration of Allaah, The Most High ²
- 3 that in performing these optional prayers one utilises a portion of his limited time for what is probably the best activity he can be involved in and develop a closeness and attachment comparable to none
- 4 a "quick service" a Muslim gets in attaining his reward from He who recompenses one for his actions or the One who makes good His promise to preserve this reward for His servant ³
- 5 that in the establishment of these optional prayers is the request of the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) in his words and in his actions

The Sunnah Of Fajr: 2 Sunnah Before The 2 Fard

They are two raka'ats which are the best and most confirmed of the sunnah prayers. On 'Aa'ishah's authority (radiyallaahu anha) that the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

"Two raka'ats before fajr is better than the world and all that is in it." [Muslim]

The Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) used to observe these two raka'at with great diligence. 'Aa'ishah (radiyallaahu anha) said:

¹ See footnote of Ar Raudh Al Murbi 2:211

² This is proven by the hadeeth Qudsi: On the authority of Abu Hurayrah (radiyallaahu anhu) who said that Rasulullah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said: Allaah (subhaanahu wa ta'aala) said: "Whosoever shows enmity to someone devoted to Me, I shall be at war with him. My servant draws not near to Me with anything more loved by Me than the religious duties I have enjoined upon him, and My servant continues to draw near to Me with optional works so that I shall love him. When I love him, I am his hearing with which he hears, his seeing with which he sees, his hand with which he strikes, and his foot with which he walks. Were he to ask (something) of Me, I would surely give it to him, and were he to ask Me for refuge, I would surely grant him it. I am not resistant about anything as much as I am resistant about (seizing) the soul of My faithful servant. He hates death, and I hate hurting him." [Bukhaaree]

³ The performance of optional prayer is a proof of one's willingness and desire to gain tremendous reward which is promised to those who are decisive in their performance.

“Never was the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) more obligated to an optional deed than the two raka’ats of fajr.” [Agreed Upon]

It is the sunnah to perform them light and not to add to it making it difficult.

The Sunnah Of Dhuhr: 2 or 4 Sunnah Before 4 Fard Then 2 or 4 Sunnah After

On the authority of Umm Habeebah (radiyallaahu anha) that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

“Whoever is steadfast upon four raka’ats before Dhuhr and four raka’ats afterwards, he is made forbidden to the hellfire (i.e. it will not touch him).”⁴

On the authority of Abdullaah Ibn Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) who said:

“I learnt from the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) ten raka’ats: two before Dhuhr, two afterwards” [Bukhaaree 1:359]

On the authority of Umm Habeebah (radiyallaahu anha) that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

“Whoever prays in one day and night twelve raka’ats, a house is built for him in Jannah: four before Dhuhr and two after it.....”⁵

The Sunnah Of Asr: 4 Sunnah Before 4 Fard

On the authority of Abdullaah Ibn Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

“May Allaah have mercy on the one who prays ‘four’ before Asr.”⁶

The Sunnah Of Maghrib: 3 Fard Then 2 Sunnah

On the authority of Abdullaah Ibn Umar (radiyallaahu anhu) who said:

“I learnt from the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) ten raka’ats: two before Dhuhr, two afterwards, two after maghrib” [Bukhaaree 1:359]

The Sunnah Of ‘Ishaa’: 4 Fard Then 2 Sunnah

On the authority of Umm Habeebah (radiyallaahu anha) that the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) said:

“Whoever prays in one day and night twelve raka’ats, a house is built for him in Jannah: four before Dhuhr and two after it, two after ‘ishaa’ and two before the morning prayer.....”⁷

The Virtue Of Performing The Optional Prayer At Home

It is legally correct to perform optional prayer at home and it is also better than performing it at the masjid for the following reasons:-

⁴ Al-Albaanee pronounces it Saheeh in Saheeh Al-Jaami’ As-Sagheer no.6195

⁵ Al-Albaanee pronounces it Saheeh in Saheeh Al-Jaami’ As-Sagheer no.6362

⁶ Albaanee declares it Hasan in Saheeh Al-Jaami’ As-Sagheer no.3493 and declares it Saheeh in Saheeh At-Targheeb Wat-Tarheeb 1:312

⁷ Al-Albaanee pronounces it Saheeh in Saheeh Al-Jaami’ As-Sagheer no.6362

- 1 Performing them at home is one of the ways of perfecting ones humility and sincerity and a way of distancing oneself from show and self admiration and other things of this nature.
- 2 Performing them at home is a cause for mercy to descend on the home and the expulsion of shaytan – effectively kicking him out of your premises ⁸
- 3 The performance of optional prayer at home changes the status of the home from being like a cemetery ⁹
- 4 It is a way of multiplying its reward in much the same way that performing the compulsory prayer at the masjid increases its reward many times over. ¹⁰
- 5 In the establishment of optional prayer at home is the engendering of good leadership in the house, the training of the home circle and developing the habit of prayer among the women and children.

Prayer	Sunnah Before	Fard / Wajib (obligatory)	Sunnah After
Fajr	2 Light	2	
Dhuhr	2 or 4	4	2 or 4
Asr	4	4	
Maghrib		3	2
Ishaa'		4	2

⁸ Jaabir (radiyallaahu anhu) said Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa salaam) said: "When one of you has performed prayer at his masjid let him set aside a portion of that for his house, this is because Allaah grants him good in his house from his prayer." [Muslim]

⁹ Abdullaah Ibn Umar said Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa salaam) said: "Set aside something of your prayer for your houses and do not make them into graves." [Agreed Upon]

¹⁰ Suhayb (radiyallaahu anhu) said Allaah's Messenger (sallallaahu alayhi wa salaam) said: "A man's optional prayer in which it is not seen by men is better than that which is seen (lit. in people's eyes) twenty five times over." [Al-Albaanee declares it Saheeh see Saheeh Al-Jaami' As-Sagheer no.38211]