

Supererogatory Prayers - Their Significance

At-tatawwu' or nawaafil or supererogatory prayers, have been legislated to make up for any deficiencies left in the performance of fard salaah (obligatory prayers). In salaah, there are virtues that are not found in any other form of worship.

فعن أبي هريرة أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال : .

Abu Hurairah reports that the Prophet sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam said:

(إن أول ما يحاسب الناس به يوم القيامة من أعمالهم الصلاة ،

"The first thing that the people will be called to account for on the Day of Resurrection will be the prayers.

يقول ربنا لملائكته ، وهو أعلم :

Our Lord will say to the angels although He knows better:

أنظروا في صلاة عبدي أتمها أم نقصها ؟

'Look into the salah of my servant to see if he observed it perfectly or has been negligent in it.

فإن كانت تامة كتبت له تامة ،

So if he observed it perfectly it will be recorded to his credit,

وإن كان انتقص منها شيئاً قال :

but if he had been negligent in it in any way, Allaah would say:

أنظروا هل لعبدي من تطوع ؟

See if My servant has any supererogatory prayers.

فإن كان له تطوع قال :

Then if he has any supererogatory prayers, Allaah would say:

أتموا لعبدي فريضته من تطوعه ،

Make up the deficiency in My servant's obligatory prayer with his supererogatory prayers.'

ثم تؤخذ الاعمال على ذلك) رواه أبو داود

Thereafter all his actions will be examined in like manner" (Abu Dawud).

وقال مالك في الموطأ ،

In al-Muwatta', Malik says:

بلغني أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال :

"It has reached me that the Prophet said:

(استقيموا ولن تحصوا ،

'(Try to) keep to the straight path although you won't be able to do so completely;

واعلموا أن خير أعمالكم الصلاة ،
and know that the best of your deeds is the salah,
ولن يحافظ على الوضوء إلا مؤمن)
and only a (true) believer preserves his wudoo'.

وروى مسلم عن ربيعة ابن مالك الاسلامي قال ،

" Muslim records from Rabi'ah ibn Malik al-Aslami said,

قال الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم :

that the Prophet sallallahu alehi wasallam said:

(سل)

"Ask (anything)."

فقلت : أسألك مرافقتك في الجنة ،

Rabi'ah said: "I ask of you to be your companion in paradise."

فقال : (أو غير ذلك ؟)

The Prophet said: "Or anything else?"

قلت : هو ذاك

Rabi'ah said: "That is it."

(قال : فأعني على نفسك بكثرة السجود)

The Prophet said to him: "Then help me by making many prostrations (i.e., supererogatory prayers)."

Offering Supererogatory Prayers in One's House

روى أحمد ومسلم عن جابر أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال :

Ahmad and Muslim relate from Jabir that the Messenger of Allaah said:

(إذا صلى أحدكم الصلاة في مسجده فليجعل لبيته نصيبا من صلاته

"If one of you offers his prayers in the Mosque then he should make a portion of his prayers in his house,

فإن الله عز وجل جاعل في بيته من صلاته خيرا

as Allaah has made his prayers in his house a means of good (for him)."

وعن عبد الرحمن بن عمر قال ، قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم :
'Abdullah ibn 'Umar reports that the Prophet sallallahu alehi wasallam said:

(اجعلوا من صلاتكم في بيوتكم)

"Make some of your prayers in your houses

ولا تتخذوها قبورا

and do not turn your houses into graves."

. رواه البخاري و مسلم و أحمد و أبو داود

This statement is related by Bukhari, Muslim, Ahmad and Abu Dawud.

روى أبو داود بإسناد صحيح عن زيد بن ثابت

Abu Dawud records from Zaid ibn Thabit on sound authority

أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال :

that the Messenger of Allaah said:

(صلاة المرء في بيته أفضل من صلاته في مسجدي هذا ،

A person's prayer in his house is better than his prayer in my mosque,

إلا المكتوبة)

except for the fard salah."

These hadith prove that it is preferred to say one's nawafil prayers in one's house since prayers in one's house are better than those that he performs in the mosque. An-Nawawi says: "The Prophet sallallahu alayhi wa sallam encouraged one to offer nawaafil in one's house because then the prayers are more private and will have less of a chance of being done for show and will be free from defects that vitiate good deeds. Furthermore, this will be a blessing for the house as mercy and angels will descend on it while Satan flees from it."

Supererogatory prayers, their Elongation

It is preferred to prolong the reciting by making many rak'at. The group, except for Abu Dawud, reports that al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah said: "The Prophet sallallahu alayhi wasallam would stand and pray until his feet or shanks swelled. When he was asked about it, he said: **'Should I not be a thankful slave?**

" Abu Dawud records from 'Abdullah ibn Hubshi al-Khath'ami that the Prophet sallallahu alayhi wa sallam was asked: "What is the best deed?" He said: **"Prolonging the qiyam;** (standing) [in the prayer]." Then it was asked: "What is the best charity?" He replied: **"The sacrifice made by one who has little to give."** Then it was asked: "What is the best migration?" He responded: **"The migration from what Allaah has forbidden."** Then it was asked: "What is the best jihad?" He replied: **"Whoever strives against the polytheists with his wealth and soul."** They asked: "What is the most honourable death?" He answered: **"He whose blood is spilled and whose horse is wounded."**

It is allowed to make supererogatory prayers while in julus (sitting)

It is acceptable for one to make nawafil while sitting even though he has the ability to stand. It is also acceptable for one to make part of such prayers sitting and part of them standing even if all of that is in one rak'ah, (i.e., one sits for part of the first rak'ah and then stands for the rest of it, or vice versa). All of that is acceptable without any dislike for it. One may sit in any manner one likes although it is preferable to sit cross-legged.