

Answer to Question

The Muslims’ Prayer before the Isra’ and Mi’raj Incident

To: Abu Mahmoud Al-Maqdasi

(Translated)

Question:

Asalamu Alaikum WA Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuhu

It is mentioned in the book “*The Islamic State*” at the end of page 11 (Arabic version): If they wanted to pray they would go to the wooded area and pray in hiding from their people, this was in the secretive stage of the call. So what was this prayer performed by the Sahaba in hiding from the people, and we know that prayer was prescribed on the night of Isra’, and whenever the word ‘*salah*’ (prayer) is mentioned in a text, it denotes to the prayer with specific rituals and movements and does not mean du’a?

Answer:

Wa Alaikum As-Salam Wa Rahmatullah Wa Barakatuhu,

There is a difference of opinion on the type of prayer the Muslims performed before the incident of Isra’ and Mi’raj...what we are inclined towards is that the Prophet (saw) and Muslims before the five prayers were prescribed in Isra’ and Mi’raj, were praying two rak’as before sunrise, and two rak’as before sun set, here are some of the evidences for this:

First: The Asbab An-Nuzool (reasons for the Revelation) of Surat Al-Alaq, which is the first Sura revealed, were the following:

Muslim narrated in his Sahih from Abu Huraira (ra) that he said: Abu Jahl said: Does Muhammad cover his face with dust in your presence? He said: they said: yes, he said: By Al-Lat and Uzza if I see him do that I will stomp on his neck or I will cover his face in dust. He said: So he approached the Prophet (saw) while in prayer, as soon as he moved to step on his neck, he said: he shocked the people by running away covering his face, he said ; they asked him: What is wrong with you ? He replied: there was a huge ditch of fire between me and him and awe and wings, the Propet (saw) said: «لَوْ دَنَا مِنِّي لَأَخْطَفْتَهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ غَضُّوا غَضُّوا» “If he came closer to me, the angles would have snatched him, organ by organ”

He said: So Allah Azza Wa Jal sent down- we don’t know if it is in the Hadith of Abu Huraira, or someone relayed the information to him: كَلَّا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَإِتْغَىٰ، أَنْ رَأَىٰ اسْتَغْنَىٰ إِنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ ﴿١﴾ “No! [But] indeed, man transgresses. Because he sees himself self-sufficient. Indeed, to your Lord is the return. Have you seen the one who forbids. A servant when he prays? Have you seen if he is upon guidance Or enjoins righteousness? Have you seen if he denies and turns away” [Al-Alaq: 6-13]

He means Abu Jahl: أَلَمْ يَعْلَم بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرَىٰ، كَلَّا لَئِنْ لَمْ يَنْتَهِ لَنَسْفَعًا بِالنَّاصِيَةِ، نَاصِيَةٍ كَاذِبَةٍ خَاطِنَةٍ، فَلْيَدْعُ نَادِيَهُ سَنَدْعُ ﴿٢﴾ “Does he not know that Allah sees? No! If he does not desist, We will surely drag him by the forelock. A lying, sinning forelock Then let him call his associates; We will call the angels of Hell. No! Do not obey him” [Al-Alaq: 14-19]

Ahmad extracted a similar Hadith in his Musnad.

The author of Al-Bahr Al Muheet: "Ibn Atiya said: none of the scholars of Tafseer disagreed that the one who is forbidding (prayer) is Abu Jahl, and the slave in prayer is Muhammad the Messenger of Allah (saw)" [Al-Bahr Al Muheet (369/8)]

This Surah is the first Surah revealed that mentioned the prayer of the Prophet (saw) and the aggression of Abu Jahl, this was in the secret stage, therefore there was prayer before Isra' and Mi'raj.

Second: In the book "*Al-Rowd Al-Anif Fi Sharh As-Sira An-Nabawiyah for Ibn Hisham*" by Abu Al-Qasim Abdul Rahman As-Suhaili (deceased: 581 AH), in the chapter of the obligation of Salah, it mentions the following:

"Al-Muzni said that salah before Isra' was before sunset and before sunrise, and the evidence for this is the saying of Allah (swt): ﴿وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعِشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ﴾ **"...and exalt [Allah] with praise of your Lord in the evening and the morning"** [Ghafir: 55] Yahya Ibn Salam said the same."

- Abu Muhammad Al-Ghitabi Al-Hanafi Badr Ad-Deen Al-Aini (deceased 855 AH) said in his book "*Sharh Sunnan Abi Daoud*": "Salah (prayer) before Isra' was one prayer before sunset and one prayer before sunrise, and the evidence is the saying of Allah (swt): ﴿وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعِشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ﴾ **"...and exalt [Allah] with praise of your Lord in the evening and the morning"** [Ghafir: 55]"

- The same was mentioned in the book, "*Al-Bahr Al-Ra'iq Sharh Kanz Ad-Daqaiq Wa Minhat Al-Khaliq Wa Takmilat At-Tour*" by Zain Ad-Deen Ibn Ibrahim known as Ibn Najeem Al-Misri (deceased: 970 AH):

"Salah before Isra' was two: one before sunrise and one before sunset, Allah (swt) said: ﴿وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعِشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ﴾ **"...and exalt [Allah] with praise of your Lord in the evening and the morning"** [Ghafir: 55]"

This proves that the Prophet (saw) and the Muslims prayed one prayer before sunrise and one before sunset.

Third: As for how many rak'as in each of the mentioned prayers, there is difference of opinion among scholars in this issue as we mentioned previously, but some narrations mention that they were two rak'as before sunrise and two rak'as before sunset, one of these narrations is:

1- Al-Mawardi Abu Al-Hassani Ibn Muhammad Al-Baghdady famously known as Al-Mawardi (deceased: 450 AH), mentioned in his tafseer "*An-Nukat Wal Iyoon*": ﴿وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ﴾ **"...and exalt [Allah] with praise of your Lord..."** [Ghafir: 55]

Mujahid said: And pray by the order of your Lord ﴿بِالْعِشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ﴾ **"...In the evening and the morning"** [Ghafir: 55]

There are three explanations: ... and the third: is the prayer in Makka before the five prayers were prescribed, two rak'as in the morning and two rak'as in the evening, Al Hassan mentioned this."

2- Shams Ad-Deen Abu Abdullah At-Tarabulsi Al-Maghribi, known as Al-Hattab Ar-Ru'aini Al-Maliki (deceased: 954 AH) wrote in his book "*Mawahib AL-Jaleel Fi Sharh Mukhtasar Khaleel*" in the chapter: "The Legitimacy and Ruling of Prayer":

"Ibn Hajar said, and there was a disagreement before this, some group said that there was no obligatory prayer before Isra' except the ordered ones like night prayer but were unspecified, Al-Harbi said that prayer was obligatory, two rak'as in the morning and two rak'as in the evening..." **End of quote.**

3- Abu Alwaleed Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Ibn Rushd Al-Qutubi (deceased: 520 AH) wrote in his book "*Al-Muqadimat Al-Mumahida*":

"At the beginning, before the obligation of the five prayers, salah was two rak'as in the morning and two rak'as in the evening. It was narrated from Al-Hassan regarding the saying of Allah (swt): ﴿وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعِشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ﴾ "...and exalt [Allah] with praise of your Lord in the evening and the morning" [Ghafir: 55]

This is His (saw) prayer in Makkah when the salah was two rak'as in the morning and two rak'as in the evening, the obligation of salah remained so for nine years when the Prophet and Muslims were in Makkah." **End of quote.**

These narrations indicate that the rak'as of the morning and evening prayer were two rak'as in the morning and two rak'as in the evening.

Fourth: The above is an explanation to what we wrote in the book "*Islamic State*" pages 12-13 (Arabic version) and this is the text:

"He (saw) was calling people to Islam in Makkah openly following the orders of Allah (swt), Allah (swt) says: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ * قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ﴾ "O you who covers himself [with a garment]. Arise and warn" [Al-Muddathir: 1-2]

He contacted people and presented the Deen to them and He (saw) structured them around him secretly on the basis of this Deen, and when the companions of the Messenger (saw) wanted to pray, they would go to the wooded area and hide (when praying) from their people..."

I hope that this issue is clarified, by the permission of Allah.

Your brother,

Ata Bin Khalil Abu Al-Rashtah

15 Rabii' II 1438 AH

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The link to the answer from the Ameer's Facebook page:

<https://web.facebook.com/AmeerhtAtabinKhalil/photos/a.122855544578192.1073741828.122848424578904/574658446064564/?type=3&theater>

The link to the answer from the Ameer's page on Google Plus:

<https://plus.google.com/u/0/b/100431756357007517653/100431756357007517653/posts/YCLMwqfYw5c>

The link to the answer from the Ameer's page on Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/ataabualrashtah/status/821100583348211717>