

Does One Attain Half the Reward for Praying Nafl While Sitting? (Detailed Fatwa)

Darulifta Ahlesunnat (Dawateislami)

Question

What do the noble scholars and jurists of Islamic law say about the following: We have heard that if one offers nafl salah while sitting, though his salah is valid the reward is reduced to half. Is this true? Where is this ruling proven from? Is it the same case for women that their reward will be halved or is there a difference? Did The Prophet ﷺ not offer nafl while sitting?

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

It is valid to offer nafl salah both while standing and sitting. But when there is no valid excuse, nafl salah should be offered while standing as offering nafl while standing is better. If one offers nafl while sitting without a valid shar'i excuse or necessity, the reward is reduced to half compared to offering it while standing. This ruling is proven from various Hadiths and text of the jurists. There is no doubt about its accuracy. Furthermore, just like this ruling is for men, it is also for women; they should also not offer nafl while sitting without a valid reason, otherwise the reward will diminish. As for The Prophet ﷺ offering salah while sitting, this is also proven from various Hadiths, but this was from his specialties, which is why his reward wouldn't diminish. For us, we are encouraged not to offer nafl salah while sitting unless there is a valid excuse so that the reward is not diminished.

Offering nafl salah while sitting without a valid reason is permissible, but this causes the reward to decrease. It is stated in Sahih Al-Bukhari regarding this:

عن عمران بن حصين قال: سألت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن صلاة الرجل قاعدا، فقال: إن صلى قائما فهو أفضل ومن صلى قاعدا، فله نصف أجر القائم

Translation: It is narrated from 'Imran Bin Hussain that he said: I asked The Messenger of Allah ﷺ about the salah a man offered while sitting. He said: If he offered salah while standing, it is better

and he who offered salah while sitting gets half of the reward of he who prayed standing. (Sahih Al-Bukhari, Chapter: Salah of the one sitting, Vol. 2, p. 47, Publ. Dar Tawq Al-Najah)

The words of Sunan Ibn Majah are:

عن عمران بن حصين: أنه سأل النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم عن صلاة الرجل قاعدا فقال: صلاته قائما أفضل من صلاته قاعدا، وصلاته قاعدا على النصف من صلاته قائما

Translation: It is narrated by 'Imran Bin Hussain that he asked The Prophet ﷺ about the salah a man offered while sitting. He (ﷺ) said: His salah offered while standing is better than his salah offered while sitting, and the salah offered while sitting is half compared to his salah offered while standing. (Al-Sunan Li-Ibn Majah, Chapter for the salah of the one sitting, Vol. 2, p. 207, Publ. Dar Al-Risalah Al-'Alamiyah)

It is stated in Mirqat Al-Mafateeh:

(ومن صلى) أي: النافلة (قاعدا) أي: بغير عذر كما قاله سفيان الثوري وغيره (فله نصف أجر القائم) قال ابن الملك: هذا الحديث محمول على المتنفل قاعدا مع القدرة على القيام: لأن المتنفل قاعدا مع العجز عن القيام يكون ثوابه كثوابه قائما. اهـ. ومحلّه أن نيته لو لا العذر لفعل لما في الأحاديث الصحيحة: إن العذر يلحق صاحبه التارك لأجله بالفاعل في الثواب

Translation: Whoever offered nafl salah while sitting without a valid excuse, as mentioned by Sufyan Al-Sawri and others, he will attain half of the reward compared to the one who offered salah while standing. Allamah Ibn Malak said: This Hadith is applicable to the one who offers nafl salah while sitting despite having the capability of praying while standing because the reward of the one who offered nalf salah while sitting due to being unable to stand is the same as the reward of the salah offered while standing. (End of Imam Ibn Malak's words) This is in the case that he has the intention that if he didn't have this incapability, he would definitely offer salah while standing because it is stated in the Hadith that the excuse joins (in reward) the one who refrained from a good deed due to a valid excuse with the one who did that deed. (Mirqat Al-Mafateeh, Topic of intending an action, Vol. 3, p. 936, Publ. Dar Al-Fikr)

It is stated in Nur Al-Idah:

يجوز النفل قاعدا مع القدرة على القيام لكن له نصف أجر القائم إلا من عذر

(Nur Al-Idah, Book of Salah, Chapter of offering salah while sitting, p. 81, Publ. Al-Maktabah Al-'Asriyah)

Undoubtedly, it is proven that The Messenger ﷺ offered nafl salah while sitting, as it is stated in a Hadith in Munsad Ahmad that Umm Salamah رضي الله تعالى عنها states:

ان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم كان يركع ركعتين بعد الوتر وهو جالس

Translation: After witr, the Prophet ﷺ would offer two rak'ah while sitting. (Musnad Ahmad, Vol. 44, p. 177, Hadith No. 26553, Publ. Mu'asisah Al-Risalah)

But this is from his (ﷺ) specialties that his reward wouldn't diminish in this way. Thus, it is stated in a Hadith in Sahih Muslim that it is narrated from Abdullah Bin A'mr رضي الله تعالى عنهما:

حدثت ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: صلاة الرجل قاعدا نصف الصلاة، قال: فاتيته، فوجدته يصلي جالسا، فوضعت يدي على راسه، فقال: مالك؟ يا عبد الله بن عمرو! قلت: حدثت يا رسول الله! انك قلت: "صلاة الرجل قاعدا على نصف الصلاة" وانت تصلي قاعدا، قال: اجل ولكنني لست كأحد منكم

Translation: I have been informed that The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: The salah of a man offered while sitting is half (i.e. he will attain half of the reward). He said: Then I came into the court of The Messenger ﷺ and saw him offering salah while sitting so I placed my hand on his blessed head. So, he said: Oh Abdullah Bin A'mr! What happened? I replied: Oh Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), I was informed that you said 'the salah of the man while sitting is half,' but you are offering while sitting yourself. He (ﷺ) said: Yes, but I am not like anyone of you. (Sahih Al-Muslim, Vol. 1, p. 253, Hadith No. 735, Publ. Dar Ihya Al-Turas, Beirut)

It is stated in Mirqat Al-Mafateeh:

(ولكنني لست كأحد منكم) يعني هذا من خصوصياتي أن لا ينقص ثواب صلواتي على أي وجه تكون من جلواتي، وذلك فضل الله يؤتيه من يشاء، قال تعالى: ﴿وَكَانَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكَ عَظِيمًا﴾

Translation: 'But I am not like anyone of you' means that it is from my specialties that the reward of my salah doesn't diminish, regardless of the way I offered it. This is the grace of Allah, He grants it to whomsoever He wills. And Allah is the Possessor of Supreme Grace. (Mirqat Al-Mafateeh, Topic of intending an action, Vol. 3, p. 939, Publ. Dar Al-Fikr)

When offering salah while sitting without any valid reason, the reward is halved. Regarding women being included in this, it is stated in Mir'at Al-Manajeeh:

اس ساری حدیث میں نماز سے مراد نماز نفل ہے، مرد کا ذکر اتفاقاً ہے، ورنہ عورت کا بھی حکم یہی ہے۔ یعنی ثواب کی کانٹ چھانٹ تمہارے لیے ہے ہم کو بیٹھ کر نفل پڑھنے میں وہ ثواب ملتا ہے، جو تمہیں کھڑے ہو کر پڑھنے میں نہیں ملتا یا یہ معنی ہیں کہ ہمیں جتنا ثواب کھڑے ہو کر پڑھنے میں ملتا ہے، اتنا ہی بیٹھ کر۔

Translation: In the entire Hadith, salah refers to nafl salah. Men were incidently mentioned here, but this is the ruling for women as well. This means that deduction of rewards is for you. When offering salah while sitting, we receive the reward which you don't receive even from the salah you offer while standing. Or it can mean that the reward we attain from the salah offered while sitting is equal to that which we receive from the salah offered while standing. (Mir'at Al-Manajeeh, Vol. 2, p. 268, Publ. Na'eemi Kutub Khana)

It is stated in Bahar-e-Shari'at:

کھڑے ہو کر پڑھنے کی قدرت ہو جب بھی بیٹھ کر نفل پڑھ سکتے ہیں، مگر کھڑے ہو کر پڑھنا افضل ہے کہ حدیث میں فرمایا: ”بیٹھ کر پڑھنے والے کی نماز کھڑے ہو کر پڑھنے والے کی نصف ہے۔“ اور عذر کی وجہ سے بیٹھ کر پڑھے، تو ثواب میں کمی نہ ہوگی۔ یہ جو آج کل عام رواج پڑ گیا ہے کہ نفل بیٹھ کر پڑھا کرتے ہیں، بظاہر یہ معلوم ہوتا ہے کہ شاید بیٹھ کر پڑھنے کو افضل سمجھتے ہیں، ایسا ہے تو ان کا خیال غلط ہے۔ وتر کے بعد جو دو رکعت نفل پڑھتے ہیں ان کا بھی یہی حکم ہے کہ کھڑے ہو کر پڑھنا افضل ہے اور اس میں اُس حدیث سے دلیل لانا کہ حضور اقدس صلی اللہ تعالیٰ علیہ وسلم نے وتر کے بعد بیٹھ کر نفل پڑھے۔ صحیح نہیں کہ یہ حضور (صلی اللہ تعالیٰ علیہ وسلم) کے مخصوصات میں سے ہے۔ امام ابراہیم حلبی و صاحب درمختار و صاحب رد المحتار نے فرمایا: کہ یہ حکم حضور (صلی اللہ تعالیٰ علیہ وسلم) کے خصائص سے ہے۔

Translation: Even if one has the capability to offer nafl while standing, he can offer nafl while sitting, but it is better to offer it while standing as it is stated in a Hadith: the salah of the one who prayed while sitting is half compared to the salah of the one prayed while standing. If he offers it while sitting due to a valid excuse, the reward will not diminish. From the prevailing practice of offering nafl sitting, it seems that people consider it better to offer it while

sitting; if this is the case, this assumption of theirs is incorrect. The ruling for the two rak'ah nalf offered after the witr is the same that offering them while standing is better. To take proof from the Hadith which states that The Prophet ﷺ offered nafl after witr while sitting is incorrect because this is from the specialties of The Prophet ﷺ. Imam Ibrahim Halbi and the authors of Al-Durr Al-Mukhtar and Radd Al-Muhtar have stated that this is from the specialties of The Prophet ﷺ. (Bahar-e-Shari'at, Vol. 1, Sect. 4, p. 671, Publ. Maktaba-Tul-Madinah, Karachi)

وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَرَسُولُهُ اَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم

(Allah Almighty knows best and His Messenger صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم knows best.)

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