# O ‘Ā'ishah, indeed, my eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep

Abu Salamah ibn ‘Abdur-Rahmān (may Allah have mercy upon him) reported that he asked ‘Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) how the Prophet's prayer was in Ramadan. She said: "Neither in Ramadan, nor in any other month, did the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) exceed the eleven Rak‘ahs of prayer. He would pray four – and do not ask about their beauty and length; then he would pray another four, and do not ask about their beauty and length either, then he would pray three." ‘Ā'ishah then added: "I asked him: 'O Messenger of Allah, do you sleep before performing the Witr prayer?' he said: 'O ‘Ā'ishah, indeed, my eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep.'"

[Authentic hadith] [Narrated by Bukhari & Muslim]

It is well-known that the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to perform the voluntary night prayer during Ramadan and outside Ramadan. Hence, Abu Salamah (may Allah be pleased with him) asked about the voluntary night prayer to be offered in Ramadan; he wondered whether the prayer of the Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) during the nights of Ramadan was like his prayer outside it, in terms of the number of Rak‘ahs, or it was different. ‘Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) replied that there was no difference between his prayers during Ramadan or otherwise, since throughout the whole year he used to perform eleven Rak‘ahs and no more. Then, she clarified for him the manner in which they were performed, saying: "He would pray four", meaning: he would perform two Rak‘ahs and make Taslīm, then two more Rak‘ahs and make Taslīm, as ‘Ā'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) clarified and explained in detail the summary of this Hadīth in another narration attributed to her in Sahīh Muslim, where she said: "In the time between the ‘Ishā' prayer and the Fajr prayer, the Messenger of Allah (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) used to perform eleven Rak‘ahs of prayer, making Taslīm after every two Rak‘ahs, and concluding them with one Rak‘ah, i.e. the Witr prayer." This is in addition to his statement: "The voluntary night prayer is performed in pairs of Rak‘ahs." [Al-Bukhāri and Muslim] "And do not ask about their beauty and length", meaning: do not ask about their manner (of performance), because they were the epitome of beauty and perfection, in terms of the quality of recitation and the length of standing, bowing, and prostrating. Likewise, the last four Rak‘ahs that were performed two by two; do not ask about their beauty and perfection, in terms of the quality of recitation and the length of standing, bowing, and prostrating. "Then he would pray three", meaning: what is apparently understood is that he would perform them altogether without separation. Then he would make Taslīm in the last Rak‘ah. However, another narration attributed to ‘Ā'ishah clarifies that he would make Taslīm after two Rak‘ahs, followed by a single Rak‘ah which is Witr. This is explicitly stated through her words: "He would make Taslīm after every two Rak‘ahs,

followed by one Rak‘ah." This indicates that he would separate the (last) three Rak‘ahs by the Taslīm, which he made after the first two Rak‘ahs thereof. "O Messenger of Allah, do you sleep before performing the Witr prayer?" meaning: how do you sleep before performing the Witr prayer? "He said: 'O ‘Ā'ishah, indeed my eyes sleep but my heart does not sleep'", meaning: his heart is never inattentive although his eyes are sleeping. Rather, his heart is aware and feels everything, such as consideration of time and precise determination of it. That is why the visions of the prophets are considered part of the revelation.

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