MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS IN EARLY ISLAM

Uri Rubin

Reprinted from JSAI 10
Jerusalem 1987
MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS IN EARLY ISLAM

Uri Rubin

To my teacher, Prof. M.J. Kister, on his seventieth birthday.

Preface

Western scholars have already noticed that according to Muslim sources, before the five daily prayers became part of the “pillars” of Islam, the Muslims used to pray only twice a day. Goldziher states that “before the duty of prayer was extended to five times a day, the Muslims are said to have observed only two canonical times of prayer: morning and afternoon...”¹ Other scholars, like Mittwoch, for instance, who studied the evidence of Muslim sources, maintained that the first two prayers which the Muslims reportedly used to pray daily were salat al-fajr (before sunrise), and salat al-'isha' (after sunset).²

In the present study various reports and traditions are examined which may give us a better insight into the evidence of Muslim sources concerning the first times of prayer in Islam, their special significance, and their position in relation to other times of prayer.

I. Şalât al-duḥa

A. The first report to be examined was recorded on the authority of al-Wâqidi (d. 207H/823), by al-Baladhuri (d. 279H/892).³ This report was quoted from al-Baladhuri by Ibn Hajar,⁴ and it was also reproduced by al-Maqrizi,⁵ who in turn was quoted by al-Halabi.⁶ The most coherent version of this report of al-Wâqidi is that of al-Maqrizi. It reads:

³ Baladhuri, Ansah, I, 113, 117.
⁵ Maqrizi, Imtâż, I, 16–17.
⁶ Halabi, I, 267.
The Prophet used to go out to the Ka'ba at the beginning of the day and perform the *duḥa* prayer. It was a prayer with which Quraysh did not find any fault. When he afterwards prayed during the rest of the day, 'Alī and Zayd used to sit and keep guard on him. When it was the time of the 'āṣr, the Prophet and his companions would scatter in the ravines, one by one and in pairs; they used to pray (the prayers of) the *duḥa* and the ‘āṣr. Afterwards the five prayers were enjoined on them. Before the Hijra, each prayer consisted of two rak'as ...

This passage implies that the first times of prayer observed by the Muslims before the introduction of the five daily prayers were the *duḥa* and the ‘āṣr. These times deserve a special examination. The term *duḥa* occurs several times in the Quran, but its basic meaning is indicated in one verse only, 91/1: *wa-l-shamsi wa-duḥahā.* In this Quranic oath, *duḥa* means the brightness of the sun, or simply, daylight. In other cases the term *duḥa* appears indeed in contrast to the term *layl* (113/1; 79/29). But *duḥa* meaning the brightness of the sun could be, and indeed was, restricted to that part of the day when the brightness of the sun first appears. In Quran 79/46, *duḥa* occurs in juxtaposition with ʿashiyya (evening), which means that the former signifies the first part of the day, or as put in the Tafsīr of Muqatil: “the first hour of daylight following sunrise”. In view of this, it is clear that *salāt al-duḥa* which the first Muslims reportedly practiced, was performed in the morning, shortly after sunrise. The term ‘āṣr, which also occurs in a Quranic oath (103/1), is explained as “the last hour of day... when the sun sinks towards setting”. In fact, the term ‘āṣr is almost identical with the term ʿashiyy (evening) which occurs quite often in the Quran. The latter is explained by Muslim commentators as ‘āṣr. It

---

7 Muqatil, II, 242: *wa-hiya awwalu ʿatitu mina l-nahāri, min ḥini taṣḥītu l-shamsu.*

8 For a further description of Muḥammad’s prayer near the Ka’ba following sunrise, see Tabari, Ṭarīkh, II, 56 (the story of ‘Aḥī al-Kindī). Cf. Bayhaqī, Dala’il, I, 416; Ḥalabī, I, 270–271.

9 Ibid., 249: *wa-huwa ʿakhiru ʿatitu mina l-nahāri... ḥīna taṣḥīhu l-shamsu li-l-ghurāb.*

E.g. Suyūṭī, *Durr*, V, 154 (on 30/17–18), 309 (on 38/31), 352 (on 40/55); III, 14 (on 6/52); IV, 219–220 (on 18/28), 260 (on 19/11).
follows that *salat al-asr* was an evening prayer performed shortly before sunset.  

The above passage of al-Waqidi points to a decisive difference between *salat al-duha* and *salat al-asr*. The former did not arouse any objection on the part of the Quraysh, and therefore Muhammad could practice it openly near the Ka'ba. The latter prayer, however, seems to have been very provoking to the Quraysh, so that the Muslims were forced to practice it secretly in the ravines of Mecca. The reason why the Muslims were not hindered from praying the *duha* prayer near the Ka'ba seems, at first sight, to be connected with the fact that the Quraysh themselves were used to practicing various religious rites in the *duha*, some of which were closely associated with the cult of the Ka'ba. The most notable of these rites was the circumambulation (*tawaf*) of the Ka'ba, which included also the touching of the Black Stone. In an early verse attributed to Abu Ṭalib, it is stated that the worshippers used to touch the Black Stone and gather around it in the *duha* as well as in the evenings.  

Other rituals of the Hajj in general also took place in the *duha*. The ceremonies of Yawm al-Nahr which were observed at Mina on the tenth of Dhu l-Hijja were focused on the slaughter of sacrificial animals during the *duha* of that day. This act was signified by the verb *dahha*, which originally meant: to perform sacrificial slaughter in the *duha* of Yawm al-Nahr. On the same day, the worshippers used to throw pebbles at the three Jamars in Mina. This ritual as well was performed during the *duha*. The *ifada* from Muzdalifa to Mina was also performed in the *duha*. It is reported that in the morning of Yawm al-Nahr, the pilgrims used to ascend the mountain of Quzah in Muzdalifa, and when they saw the first rays of the rising sun they commenced the *ifada*.  

The time of the *duha*, i.e., that part of the day immediately following sunrise, functioned as a time of ritual practices not only among the Meccans and the pilgrims, but also among those pious monotheistic

---

98 It is now clear that *salat al-asr* was introduced into Islamic cult much earlier than the Madinan period, contrary to Mittwoch, op. cit., 11 ff.

99 Ibn Hishām, I, 292: *wa-bi-l-hajari l-muswaddi idh yamsahānahū/ idha kianafahu bi-l-duha wa-l-asā'īti.*

10 Tāj, s.v., “*d.b.w.*”: *wa-dahhaytu bi-l-shārī tadhīyan—dhabahstuha fihā, ay fi duhā l-naharī; hadhā huwa l-āshī fihī...*

11 E.g. *Qira*, 523; *Fath al-bāri*, III, 462.

12 E.g. *Azraqi*, 130.
persons who were active in Arabia already in pre-Islamic times. One of them was Abū Qays Sirma b. Abī Anas who, reportedly, abandoned idolatry and led an ascetic life. One of the verses attributed to him runs as follows:\textsuperscript{14}

\begin{quote}
sabbihū llāha sharqa kullī šabāhin/
talaat shamsu卤 wa-kulla hilali.
\end{quote}

Praise Allāh at the breaking of each morning/
whose sun has risen, and at the rising of each moon.

These reports which illustrate the ritual significance of the time of the \textit{duhā} in pre-Islamic times could explain why the Quraysh let Muḥammad pray freely near the Ka'ba in the \textit{duhā}. But, as a matter of fact, the Quraysh were also used to performing various rituals in the \textit{‘asr}, for instance the \textit{iḍāfa} to Muzdalifa which took place when the setting sun was very close to the horizon.\textsuperscript{15} In spite of this, they did not let the Muslims pray freely in the \textit{‘asr}. It seems, therefore, that the reason why the Quraysh put up with \textit{ṣalāt al-duhā} must be connected with something in the very nature of the prayer itself, which made it so distinct from \textit{ṣalāt al-‘asr}.

In fact, \textit{ṣalāt al-duhā} was a typical Arab way of worship. This is indicated in a series of reports implying that in the first decades of Islam, \textit{ṣalāt al-duhā} was in vogue especially among the Arabs, or rather among the Bedouins. One of these reports relates that the first Muslim who prayed the \textit{duhā} prayer was a \textit{sahābī} called Dhu l-Zawa‘id, or Abū l-Zawā‘id, from the tribe of Juhayna.\textsuperscript{16} Another report was recorded by ‘Abd al-Razzaq (d. 211H/827) on the authority of Ibn Jurayj (d. 150H/767). It reads:\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{14} Ibn Hīşām, II, 157.
\textsuperscript{15} E.g. Azraqī, 131.
\textsuperscript{16} Ḳisā‘a, II, 413; Majma‘ al-zawā‘id, II, 234; Suyūṭī, Ḥāwī, I, 73.
\textsuperscript{17} ‘Abd al-Razzaq, III, 79–80.
U. Rubin

(the Bedouin used to say:) *allāh akbar, allāh akbar, allāh akbar*, and then he would perform the *sujūd*.

‘Abd al-Razzāq has also recorded a shorter version of the same account:¹⁸

...qala Ibn Jurayj: wa-qala nasun: awwallahu man ṣallāhā ahlul ʿbawādī, yadkhulāna l-masjidā idhā faraghū min āsāqīhim.

Ibn Jurayj said: Some people said: The first who prayed it (i.e. the *dhuḥā* prayer) were the dwellers of the desert. They used to enter the mosque when they had finished their fairs.

These reports indicate that *ṣalāt al-ḍuḥā* was a thanksgiving ceremony which the Bedouins used to observe whenever they succeeded in selling their wares in the markets. In fact, religious rites had been closely associated with Arab commercial life since pre-Islamic times, especially during the Ḥajj and the ‘Umra. It may even be supposed that *ṣalāt al-ḍuḥā* itself had been practiced by the Bedouins since pre-Islamic times which explains why they, of all Muslims, adhered to it at the beginning of Islam.

The fact that *ṣalāt al-ḍuḥā* was essentially connected with the Arab trade leads to the conclusion that this kind of devotional practice was well known to the Quraysh, the leading tradesmen of Arabia. Thus, the reason why the Quraysh let Muḥammad practice it openly becomes self-evident. The Prophet appears to have merely adopted a pre-Islamic Arab practice which for him was a natural way of expressing his own gratitude and devotion to Allāh.

*Ṣalāt al-ḍuḥā* as performed by the Bedouins consisted mainly in the *takbir* and the *sujūd*. This fact is most significant; the *sujūd* is a characteristic gesture of obedience and gratitude, and in view of the above reports it seems that it was far more common among the Bedouins than is usually admitted in the Muslim sources.¹⁹ *Ṣalāt al-ḍuḥā* preserved its basic significance as a thanksgiving ritual during the first decades of Islam. There is evidence that Muḥammad used to perform it following great victories over his enemies. For instance, when Abū Jahl was killed (in Badr), Muḥammad reportedly prayed the *dhuḥā* prayer.²⁰ Most current are

---


¹⁹ For a survey of these sources see M.J. Kister, “Some reports concerning al-Ṭaʾī”, *JSAI*, I, 1979, p.4.

the traditions of Umm Hāni' about *salāt al-duḥā* which Muḥammad prayed on the conquest of Mecca.\(^{21}\)

The same prayer was performed as a token of gratitude for water and food. Once, when Muḥammad managed to provide a whole army of Muslims with water in a miraculous way, he prayed the *duḥā*. Another report relates that the Prophet had a special bowl (*qaṣ'a*), which was carried by four persons. The companions of the Prophet used to eat from it after having performed the *sujūd* of the *duḥā*.\(^{23}\)

B. Many Muslim traditions reflect the idea that prayers performed during sunrise or sunset are reprehensible because these were the hours when the idolaters used to prostrate themselves to the sun. The traditions condemning prayers during these parts of the day stress that when the sun rises or sets it is clasped between the two horns of the devil.\(^{24}\) The aversion to ritual acts at sunrise or sunset\(^{25}\) seems to date back to the days of the Prophet himself. Shortly before his death, Muḥammad made some changes in the *ifāda*, which were designed to remove all traces of sun-worship from this ritual. It is reported that during his last pilgrimage (*hajjat al-wadāʾ*), Muḥammad ordered that the *ifāda* from ʿArafa to Muzdalīfā be performed after sunset and not during sunset, and that the *ifāda* from Muzdalīfā to Minā be performed before sunrise and not during sunrise.\(^{26}\)

This attitude towards the hours of sunrise and sunset had direct bearings on *salāt al-duḥā*; in fact, in the first decades after Muḥammad's death there were several pious Muslims who wished to suppress the *duḥā* prayer altogether, declaring it to be unlawful. This is demonstrated in the story about Mujāhid and 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr who once entered the mosque of Medina and saw the people praying the *duḥā*. They asked Ibn

\(^{21}\) E.g. Ibn Hishām, IV, 53-54; Waqīdī, II, 830: Ibn Saʿd, II, 144-145; Bukhārī, II, 73: Muslim, II, 157-158; Malik, I, 166; Abū Dāwūd, I, 297; Tirmidhī, II, 258; *Fath al-bāri, III*, 43-44; *Zad*, 332; Suyūṭī, *Ḥawrān*, I, 59.

\(^{22}\) Majmaʾ al-zawa'id, II, 235; Suyūṭī, *Ḥawrān*, I, 61.


\(^{24}\) Ibn Saʿd, IV, 216-217, 218; Abū Dāwūd, I, 294; Muslim, II, 209; Ibn Qutayba, *Tā'wil*, 125. On the meaning of "the two horns of the devil" in connection with the sun, see I. Goldziher, *Abhandlungen zur arabischen Philologie*, I, Leiden 1896, p. 113 ff. And see further traditions forbidding prayers at sunrise or sunset, Wensinck, *Handbook*, 192*.

\(^{25}\) E.g. *El* s.v. "miqāt".

\(^{26}\) E.g. Azraqī, 131.
'Umar, who was sitting there, about it, and he said: “It is an innovation” (bid'atā). The same 'Abdallah b. 'Umar is also reported to have stated: “I have never prayed the ḍuḥā since I embraced Islam”. He also declared that he had never seen the Prophet praying the ḍuḥā, nor had he seen 'Umar and Abu Bakr doing it. The same attitude towards the ḍuḥā prayer was shared by other sahāba as well. When Anas b. Malik was asked about ṣalāt al-ḍuḥā, he stated: “The prayers are (only) five”. Abu Bakr once saw people praying the ḍuḥā, and he as well told them that they were praying something which the Prophet and his companions had never prayed. Likewise, it is related that 'Abdallah b. Mas‘ūd never prayed the ḍuḥā. Instead, he used to pray between the zuhr and the āṣr prayers, apart from night vigils.

Those theologians who objected to ṣalāt al-ḍuḥā had to produce proper explanations for the above-mentioned reports implying that the Prophet had prayed the ḍuḥā. The main line of argumentation which was eventually taken by these theologians was that Muḥammad had never prayed the ḍuḥā regularly and intentionally; there were only some cases in which a prayer performed by Muḥammad happened to coincide with the time of the ḍuḥā. This line is reflected in a tradition relating that the Prophet prayed in the ḍuḥā only once, when he was visiting a certain Muslim who asked the Prophet to pray at his house, and this happened to take place in the ḍuḥā. According to a tradition of 'Ā’ishah, the Prophet used to pray the ḍuḥā prayer only upon returning to Medina from a journey; his return always took place in the ḍuḥā. Al-Zuhri, too, declared that the Prophet had never prayed the ḍuḥā except on the conquest of Mecca, and upon returning from a journey. As for the conquest of Mecca, Muḥammad’s prayer on that occasion was explained by Muslim theologians as ṣalāt al-fāṭḥ, which was performed also in later periods following the conquest (fāṭḥ) of various places.
But the objection of Muslim theologians to salāt al-duḥā did not bring about its disappearance. This prayer, like some other practices condemned by pious theologians as bid'ā, survived within the framework of a whole system of rites which had their origin in pre-Islamic Arab practices—namely, the pilgrimage to Mecca. The cult of the Ka’ba had consisted, since pre-Islamic times, of the tawāf, and the duḥā prayer was practiced as a part of this ritual.

The survival of salāt al-duḥā as a part of the tawāf is plainly attested in a tradition about ‘Ā’ishah who reportedly saw people performing the tawāf around the Ka’ba, then awaiting sunrise in order to pray. She went on stressing that they had prayed in the “hour when prayer is reprehensible” (al-sa’ātul-latī tumkahu fihi l-ṣalatu).38 The custom of praying during sunrise following the tawāf seems to have been deeply rooted in the cult of the Ka’ba, so that Muslim theologians were eventually obliged to provide it with an appropriate legal basis, in the form of a prophetic hadith. The hadith reads:39

Children of ‘Abd Manāf, do not hinder anyone who has circumambulated this house (i.e. the Ka’ba) from praying at any hour one chooses, be it at night or during the day.

Many pious Muslims indeed thought that salāt al-duḥā was legitimate as long as it was performed in Mecca as part of the tawāf. Ibn ‘Abbās is said never to have prayed the duḥā except when he circumambulated the Ka’ba.40 ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Umar as well declared: “I have never prayed the duḥā since I became a Muslim, except when I was circumambulating the House”.41

Further traditions indicate that pious Muslims did not always confine the duḥā prayer to the tawāf. There is evidence that some of them practiced it also without the tawāf, while being careful not to perform it too frequently. Ibn ‘Abbās, for instance, reportedly used to pray it once every ten days,42 and others as well used to perform it occasionally.43

38 Bukhārī, II, 190; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, II, 427.
39 Tirmidhī, IV, 98–99. See also ibid., I, 299; Fath al-bāri, III, 390 ff.; Majmā‘ al-zawa‘id, II, 228–229; Azraqī, 265; Fākhi, fol. 300; Qira, 320 ff.
40 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, III, 79.
41 Fath al-bāri, III, 43 (from Ibn Abi Shayba): ... ma sallaytu l-duḥā mundhu aslamtu illā an aṣqa bi-l-bayti.
42 Zād, 345, 349; Suyūṭī, Ḥawāt, I, 65.
43 Zād, 345, 349.
Similarly, an irregular observance of the *duḥā* prayer was attributed to the Prophet himself.\(^{44}\) Some maintained that the *salāt al-ḥāf* was lawful, provided that it was practiced privately at home.\(^{45}\)

In fact, however, *salāt al-ḥāf* was far too favored to be practiced in a limited fashion only. Traditions soon appeared in which the same persons who had reportedly objected to it were now quoted as though highly recommending it. The introduction of such traditions was the result of the special attachment with which this prayer was treated in large circles. ‘Ā’ishā, for instance, was reported to have stated that she used to perform the *duḥā* prayer in spite of the fact that Muḥammad had refrained from it. She explained that Muḥammad had not performed the *duḥā* prayer only because of his wish to spare the believers the burden of this prayer, in case they followed his example.\(^{46}\) ‘Ā’ishā also stated that she would never give up this prayer, not even in return for the resurrection of her parents.\(^{47}\)

Ibn ‘Umar, to whom the definition of *salāt al-ḥāf* as *būdā* was attributed (see above), was now quoted as having stated that the people had never invented anything he liked more than *salāt al-ḥāf*,\(^{48}\) or, that it was a good *būdā*.\(^{49}\) ‘Ali b. Abī Talib was asked about this prayer which the people had invented. He said: “Pray as much as you can because Allāh does not punish for praying”.\(^{50}\) Further traditions actually present the Prophet himself as prescribing the *duḥā* prayer to some of his companions. Abū Hurayra is reported to have stated that the Prophet had told him to perform the *witr* before bedtime, to fast three days each month, and to pray the *duḥā* prayer.\(^{51}\) The same prescription is said to have been given to Abū l-Dardā’.\(^{52}\)

In a further group of traditions *salāt al-ḥāf* is presented as practiced regularly by the Prophet himself. According to one tradition, the Prophet...

---

\(^{44}\) Tirmidhi, II, 258; Zad, 340, 345; Suyūṭi, Ḥāwī, I, 60.

\(^{45}\) Zad, 346.

\(^{46}\) ‘Abd al-Razzāq, III, 78; Bukhārī, II, 73; Muslim, II, 156–157; Abū Dāwūd, I, 297; Zad, 331, 344; Malik, I, 166–168.

\(^{47}\) ‘Abd al-Razzāq, III, 78; Malik, I, 168.

\(^{48}\) ‘Abd al-Razzāq, III, 78–79; ...wa-mā ahdatha l-nasu shay‘an aḥabba ilayya minhā. See also Suyūṭi, Ḥāwī, I, 73.

\(^{49}\) Fath al-bārī, III, 43; ...wa-nīmat al-būdā. See also Zad, 344.

\(^{50}\) ‘Abd al-Razzāq, III, 78.

\(^{51}\) ‘Abd al-Razzāq, III, 74; Bukhārī, II, 73; Muslim, II, 158; Tirmidhi, III, 291–292; Zad, 336; Mundhiri, Targhib, II, 55.

\(^{52}\) Muslim, II, 159; Zad, 336; Mundhiri, Targhib, II, 56.
used to pray the *duha* prayer defining it as “a prayer of desire and fright” (*salat raghba wa-rahba*).\(^{53}\) ‘A’isha is said to have stated that the Prophet used to perform the *duha* prayer, sometimes with four *rak’as* and sometimes with more.\(^{54}\) According to another statement attributed to both ‘A’isha and Umm Salma, the Prophet used to pray the *duha* prayer with twelve *rak’as*.\(^{55}\) Mujahid reports that the Prophet used to perform the *duha* prayer sometimes with two *rak’as*, sometimes with four, six or eight *rak’as*.\(^{56}\) According to Jabir b. ‘Abdallāh, the Prophet used to perform six *rak’as* during *salāt al-ḍuḥa*.*\(^{57}\)

Such traditions about the Prophet were designed to rule out the above-mentioned traditions claiming that Muḥammad had never performed the *duha* prayer. The only way left for those who still objected to this prayer was to try and present it as one of Muḥammad’s exclusive *khaṣa’is*. In the following tradition Muḥammad is reported to have stated: “I was ordered to observe the two *rak’as* of the *duha*, but you (i.e. the Muslims) were not ordered to observe it...”.\(^{58}\) But the partisans of *salāt al-ḍuḥa* were not short of traditions of their own. In the following version the Prophet says: “Three things are incumbent upon me as *farā’id* (obligatory duties), and upon you as *tawwūf* (voluntary act): the witr, the two *rak’as* before the *fajr* prayer, and the two *rak’as* of the *duha* prayer”.\(^{59}\) In this manner, *salāt al-ḍuḥa* was given a firm legal basis as a most recommended *tawwūf*. The Ẓāhirīs, in fact, considered it the best *tawwūf*.\(^{60}\) Moreover, in a further tradition of the Prophet the *duha* prayer is elevated to the rank of a *sunna* with respect to the believers, being a *fariṭa* with respect to Muḥammad.\(^{61}\)

The exact number of *rak’as* which had to be performed during *salāt al-ḍuḥa* was something about which Muslim scholars could never reach agreement, and the variety of opinions is clearly reflected in traditions of the Prophet recommending different numbers of *rak’as*. Some traditions

---


\(^{54}\) ‘Abd al-Razzāq, III, 74–75. See also Muslim, II, 157; Zād, 334; Suyūṭī, Ḥawrī, I, 60.

\(^{55}\) Zād, 334–335.

\(^{56}\) ‘Abd al-Razzāq, III, 74; Zād, 333–334.

\(^{57}\) Zād, 334. See also Suyūṭī, Ḥawrī, I, 60 (on the authority of Anas b. Mālik).

\(^{58}\) Suyūṭī, *Khaṣa’īs*, III, 254: *umīrūt bi-rakatayi l-ḍuḥa wa-lam tu’māru biha*... See also idem, Ḥawrī, I, 62.


\(^{60}\) Ālā‘ī, XXIII, 175.

recommend two rak'as, which seems to be the original number. According to one of these traditions, two rak'as of salat al-duha substitute for the duty of sadaqa which is incumbent upon each knuckle of the human body. Another tradition states that he who prays two rak'as when the sun is opposite his face (idhā staqbalathu l-shams), his sins will be forgiven. Other traditions recommend four rak'as. The Prophet reportedly stated that Allāh had asserted that four rak'as performed at the beginning of the day substitute for four rak'as at the end of the day. “He who performs the duḥa prayer with four rak'as” — says the Prophet in another tradition — “Allah will build a house for him in paradise”. “He who prays the duḥa with eight rak'as will be written among the repentants” — says another tradition. A further tradition promises a golden palace in paradise to those who perform twelve rak'as during salat al-duha. A harmonizing tradition was also produced promising due reward to those performing 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, or 12 rak'as during the duḥa prayer. The mere existence of this variety of traditions shows that salat al-duha was regarded as highly distinguished. The attitude of the believers towards this prayer is reflected also in the following tradition to the effect that salat al-duha brings forth livelihood (rizq) and drives away poverty.

A special group of traditions was designed to stress the value of a constant practice of salat al-duha, in contrast to the traditions recommending only an occasional performance of this prayer. “He who keeps performing the duḥa prayer, his sins will be forgiven even if they were as plentiful as the foam of the sea”. Or, “He who prays the duḥa constantly, interrupting it only in case of illness, I (i.e. the Prophet) and he will be in

---

62 Muslim, II, 158; Abu Dāwūd, I, 295–296; Mundhiri, Targhib, II, 55.; Zad, 336–337.
63 Mundhiri, Targhib, II, 58; Majma‘ al-zawa‘id, II, 236; Suyūṭī, Hawār, I, 66.
64 Tirmidhī, II, 259; Abu Dāwūd, I, 296; Mundhiri, Targhib, II, 57–58; Zad, 337; Majma‘ al-zawa‘id, II, 235–236.
65 Fath al-barī, III, 45.
66 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, III, 81.
67 Tirmidhī, II, 257; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, III, 75; Zad, 337; Fath al-barī, III, 44; Suyūṭī, Durr, V, 299; idem, Hawār, I, 62; Mundhiri, Targhib, II, 56.
68 Mundhiri, Targhib, II, 58; Nuzhat al-majālis, I, 123; Fath al-barī, III, 44; Suyūṭī, Durr, V, 299; idem., Hawār, I, 69. For the discussion of this problem see further Zad, 341 ff.; Fath al-barī, III, 43–45; Nuzhat al-majālis, I, 123; Suyūṭī, Hawār, I, 71 ff.
69 Nuzhat al-majālis, I, 122. See also Fath al-barī, III, 47: Neglecting this prayer causes blindness.
70 Tirmidhī, II, 260; Mundhiri, Targhib, II, 56; Zad, 337, 352; Suyūṭī, Durr, V, 299; idem, Hawār, I, 70.
Morning and evening prayers in Early Islam

paradise, in a boat of light, in a sea of the light of Allāh”.71 Those who persist in praying the ǧuḥā are promised, in another tradition, to enter paradise through a special door, named “Duḥā”.72 Another tradition says that he who sticks to the ǧuḥā prayer for a whole year, and then abandons it, this prayer shall miss him like a she-camel which misses its young.73 A special reward is promised to those who pray ṣalāt al-ṣubh and then remain in their places till the sun rises in order to pray the ǧuḥā.74

The importance attributed in early Islam to ṣalāt al-duḥā reached such a degree that it was sometimes considered as matching other Islamic duties. It is related, for instance, that once the Muslims accomplished a successful raid, and returned to Medina with a lot of booty. The Prophet, however, declared that he who prayed the ǧuḥā had accomplished a more successful raid and gained more booty.75 In other words, ṣalāt al-duḥā was regarded as superior to the duty of jiḥād. In another tradition, the Prophet is quoted as having stated that he who sets out for ṣalāt al-duḥā shall have the reward of him who performs the ‘Umra.76 In fact, the ǧuḥā prayer was eventually regarded as the essence of the true faith; refraining from observing it was declared to be one of the signs of the munaḥfaq.77

Ṣalāt al-duḥā was provided in due course with a Quranic basis as well. This basis was reportedly discovered by Ibn ‘Abbas in sūra 38/18. This verse appears in a passage about David who is said to have been “penitent” (awwāb). The verse runs as follows (tr. Arberry):

With him we subjected the mountains to give glory at evening and sunrise (...bi-l-iashiyyi wa-l-ishraqi).

The prayer of the penitent David and the mountains in the ishrāq, i.e. sunrise,78 was identified by Ibn ‘Abbās with ṣalāt al-duḥā. He is reported

73 Zād, 351.
74 Abu Dāwūd, I, 296, 297; Mundhīrī, Targhib, II, 57, 1, 234 ff.; Nuzhat al-majalis, I, 123; Zād, 337, 340–341; Suyūṭī, Durr, V, 299; idem., Ḥāwī, I, 63; Ibn Hibbān, I, 176; Majma’ al-zawā’id, II, 235.
75 Mundhīrī, Targhib, II, 56; Majma’ al-zawā’id, II, 235; Suyūṭī, Ḥāwī, I, 65, 70.
76 Mundhīrī, Targhib, II, 58; Zād, 340. See further, Suyūṭī, Ḥāwī, I, 63, 67.
77 Suyūṭī, Durr, VI, 405: al-munaḥfaq la yusallī l-duḥā wa-la yaqra’u “qul: yā ayyūhā l-kafīrīn”. See also idem., Ḥāwī, I, 65.
78 See Muqatīl, Taṣfīr al-khams mi’ā ayya mina l-Qurān, MS Br. Lib., Or. 6333, fol. 9*: ...bi-l-iashiyyi wa-l-ishraq: ya’ni wa-hīna tushriqu l-ḥamsu fi awwālī l-nahār.
to have said: “The virtue of salāt al-ḍuḥā never occurred to me till I came across this verse (i.e. 38/18).” In further versions it is related that upon hearing from Umm Ḥānī’ that Muḥammad had prayed the ḍuḥā at her house (see above), Ibn ʿAbbaṣ stated that it was salāt al-ishraq. Muḥammad himself is sometimes said to have identified the ḍuḥā with salāt al-ishraq. The identification of salāt al-ḍuḥā with David’s prayer who is labelled in the Quran as awwāb gave rise to a tradition of the Prophet in which the ḍuḥā prayer is called salāt al-awwābin.

The ḍuḥā was connected by Ibn ʿAbbaṣ with a further Quranic verse, namely 24/36, which speaks about prayers held in the mosques “in the mornings and in the evenings”. The relation between salāt al-ḍuḥā and the Quran was reaffirmed through the tradition to the effect that the Prophet had ordered the believers to recite in this prayer sūra 91 (wa-l-shamsi wa-duḥāhā), and sūra 93 (wa-l-ḍuḥā). David was not the only Quranic prophet with whom salāt al-ḍuḥā was connected. Abraham who, according to Quran 53/37 “paid his debt in full” (waṛfā), is said to have paid it daily by means of the four rak‘ās of salāt al-ḍuḥā. Moses was told by Allāh that if he wanted the high mountains to pray for him, he should not stop praying the ḍuḥā.

Such was the way in which salāt al-ḍuḥā survived as a legitimate Muslim way of worship. The only thing left for Muslim theologians was to see to it that this prayer was performed not too close to sunrise. This tendency is clearly reflected in the following story: The saḥabi ʿAbū Bashīr al-Anṣāri once saw another man (Saʿīd b. Nāfī’) praying the ḍuḥā as soon as the sun had risen. ʿAbū Bashīr reproached the latter for this, and said that the Prophet had stated: “Do not pray till the sun is high, because it rises between the two horns of the devil”. The same injunction appears...

79 Loc. cit.: qala Ibn ʿAbbaṣ: ma faṣantu bi-fadli salātī l-ḍuḥā hattā ataytuʿalā ḥādhthi l-ayya...
And see also ʿAbd al-Razzāq, III, 79; Suyūṭī, Durr, V, 298; idem, Ḥawī, I, 59; Qurtubi, XV, 160.
80 Suyūṭī, Durr, V, 298–299; Ḥalabi, III, 93; Majmaʿ al-zawaʿid, II, 238.
81 Qurtubi, XV, 159–160; Rāzi, XXVI, 186.
82 Mustadrak, I, 314; Suyūṭī, Durr, V, 299; idem, Ḥawī, I, 59, 71; Qurtubi, XV, 160; Mundhirī, Ṭarghib, II, 59.
83 Suyūṭī, Durr, V, 52; idem, Ḥawī, I, 59; Rāzi, XXIV, 4.
84 Fath al-bārī, III, 46 (from al-Ḥakīm); Nuzhat al-majālis, I, 122; Suyūṭī, Ḥawī, I, 66.
85 Fath al-bārī, III, 45; Suyūṭī, Ḥawī, I, 68.
86 Nuzhat al-majālis, I, 122.
87 Majmaʿ al-zawaʿid, II, 226: la tuṣallī hattā tartaffa l-shamsu fa innaha tāṭheu fi qarnayi l-shayṭān.
in a further version of the tradition stating that Ibn 'Umar used to pray the ḍuḥā following the ṭawāf (see above). This version ends with the following statement: “I do only what my companions used to do, and I hinder no one from praying at any hour one chooses, at night or in the day, but do not seek the (hour of) sunrise or sunset”.88 In a further version of the same tradition it is related that Ibn 'Umar used to refrain from praying at the beginning of the day till the sun was high.89 Likewise, it is reported that Ibn ʿAbbās stated that ṣalāt al-ṣūhā must be performed when the shadows disappear (i.e. at noon).90 Al-Zuhri as well reportedly related that the companions of the Prophet used to pray the ḍuḥā at the hot hours of the day (bi-l-hawājr).91 The Prophet himself is reported to have once seen the people of Quba’ praying the ḍuḥā shortly after sunrise, upon which he stated: “The prayers of the repentants must be performed when the knuckles are excessively hot”.92 Muslim scholars stressed accordingly that ṣalāt al-ṣūhā should not be performed as long as the rising sun is still yellow, just as the ḍaṣr prayer should not be delayed till the setting sun becomes yellow.93

On the other hand, however, there were also certain Muslims who still preferred an earlier hour for the performance of ṣalāt al-ṣūhā, i.e. closer to the original one. ʿUmar is reported to have stated: “Servants of Allāh, perform the  ḍuḥā prayer in the  ḍuḥā, i.e. pray it in its proper time, and do not delay it till the time of the  ḍuḥā has become advanced”.94 In view of this, one may conclude that, theoretically at least, this pre-Islamic way of worship survived almost intact till later Islamic periods.

II. Ṣalāt al-ṣaṣr and Ṣalāt al-faṣr

A. The report quoted at the beginning of this study (above, p. 41) concerning the two times of prayer which the first Muslims used to observe, relates that the second time of prayer, apart from the  ḍuḥā, was

88 Bukhārī, II, 76-77.
89 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, II, 430.
90 Talhah, Tafsīr, II, 80: ṣalāt al-ṣūhā idhā inqatarat al-ṣilāl. See also Suyūṭī, Ḥārīrī, I, 65.
91 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, III, 77.
92 Suyūṭī, Durr, V, 299: ṣalāt al-ṣūhā bi-miṣrīn idhā raṣāDAT al-ṣūhā. See also idem, Ḥārīrī, I, 64; Zād, 338; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, III, 69.
93 Qurtubi, XV, 160. See also EI’s s.v. “ṣalāt” (A.J. Wensinck).
94 ʿAjāʾib, s.v. “d.ḥ.w.”: wa-miḥna qawl ʿUmar: adhuribada l-lahā bi-ṣalātī l-ṣūhā — ay sallīha li- waqtiha wa-lā tuʾakhirūha la ilā irtiṣāri l-ṣūhā. See also Suyūṭī, Ḥārīrī, I, 67.
the ‘asr, i.e. that part of the day immediately preceding sunset. According to that report, Muḥammad was unable to pray the ‘asr openly, due to the objection of the Quraysh. This means that in contrast to ṣalāt al-duḥā, ṣalāt al-‘asr did not have any roots in Arab pre-Islamic customs. Various pre-Islamic rituals did take place at the end of the day, for instance the ḥawāf which was performed at the duḥā as well as in the evening (above, p. 42), and especially the ifāḍa from ‘Arafa to Muzdalifa which was performed close to the setting of the sun (above, p. 43). But the mere fact that the Quraysh objected to the performance of ṣalāt al-‘asr by Muḥammad indicates that there were some elements in it which did not accord with the customs of the Quraysh.

It seems that the Quraysh objected to ṣalāt al-‘asr because this prayer reflected Jewish practices. The relation of ṣalāt al-‘asr to the Jewish minḥah is quite obvious, and already Goldziher pointed out the Jewish origin of the sacredness of the ‘asr time in Islam. The above report implies, therefore, that apart from authentic Arab ways of worship (ṣalāt al-duḥā), Muḥammad adopted, at a very early stage, some Jewish ritual practices as well. The latter were those to which the Quraysh were firmly opposed.

Jewish influence is especially conspicuous in those Muslim traditions stressing the sacredness of the hour of the ‘asr on Friday. The ‘asr on Friday is regarded in Islam as a most blessed hour, in which all prayers are responded to, and all oaths have special solemnity. Some traditions state that this hour coincides with the time of ṣalāt al-‘asr. Other traditions say that this hour commences after ṣalāt al-‘asr, or, that it lasts from ṣalāt al-‘asr till the sun disappears, or, that it occurs in the last hour of daylight (akhir sārat al-nahār); some traditions say that this hour starts when the sun becomes yellow and lasts till the sun disappears. The Jewish origin of this belief is self-evident in view of the fact that in Judaism the same hour marks the beginning of the holy Sabbath.

96 ‘Abd-al-Razzaq, III, 262.
97 Ibid., III, 265; Fath-al-bārī, II, 349; Suyūṭī, Durr, VI, 217.
98 ‘Abd al-Razzaq, III, 262.
99 Ibid., III, 262. See also 265–266; Fath al-bārī, II, 349.
100 ‘Abd al-Razzaq, III, 264; Fath al-bārī, II, 349.
Morning and evening prayers in Early Islam

Salat al-‘asr seems to have retained always a special position in Islam. This is reflected in traditions dealing with the introduction of salat al-khawf. Mujahid reports that once the Muslims prayed the zuhr prayer during a military expedition, while being watched by the polytheists. The latter were about to attack the praying Muslims, but no sooner had they charged than one of them said: “They (i.e. the Muslims) are about to perform another prayer before the setting of the sun (namely, the ‘asr), which is dearer to them than their own selves”\(^{102}\). Salat al-‘asr was thus preferred by the polytheists as the most appropriate time for attacking the Muslims, on the assumption that the latter would not interrupt it even if their lives were endangered. In order to protect the Muslims and to secure the undisturbed performance of salat al-‘asr, Gabriel reportedly revealed to Muhammad the verses about salat al-khawf (Quran, 4/101 ff.).

The special veneration with which salat al-‘asr was treated by the Muslims brought about the introduction of traditions of the Prophet stressing the vital importance of its performance by the believers. The Prophet reportedly stated that salat al-‘asr had been enjoined upon the previous peoples but they had refused to practice it because it was too burdensome for them. But in fact, it was superior to the rest of the prayers by twenty-six degrees.\(^{103}\) In another version of the same tradition, the Prophet promises a double reward to those who pray the ‘asr.\(^{104}\) “He who neglects the ‘asr prayer”, says another tradition, “his (entire) work has failed”.\(^{105}\) Another tradition states that missing the appropriate time of salat al-‘asr is like losing one’s family and fortune.\(^{106}\)

The importance of this prayer is clearly reflected in some legendary traditions relating that ‘Ali b. Abī Tālib was once entrusted by Muhammad with a certain task, due to which he was unable to pray the ‘asr before the setting of the sun. The Prophet, it is related, invoked Allah to

---

\(^{102}\) ‘Abd al-Razzaq, II, 502-503. For other versions see ibid., 505, 506; Waqidi, II, 582; Tabari, Tafsīr, V, 164; Suyūṭī, Durr, II, 111, 113, 114; Tahāwī, Sharḥ, I, 318. And cf. also Goldziher, “Nachmittagszeit”, 25.

\(^{103}\) ‘Abd al-Razzaq, I, 580. See also Goldziher, “Nachmittagszeit”, 26.


\(^{106}\) ‘Abd al-Razzaq, I, 576: alladhi tafrūḥu salatu l-‘asr fa-ka-anamā wutira ahlahu wa-malahu. See also Bukhārī, I, 145; Muslim, II, 111; Tahāwī, Mushki‘, II, 12, IV, 232-233; Fath al-bari, II, 24; Tabari, Tafsīr, II, 351; Goldziher, “Nachmittagszeit”, 25.
draw back the sun, till it shone again above the western horizon; there-
upon ʿAli prayed the ʿasr, and the sun set again.\(^{107}\)

B. The fact that ʿṣalāt al-ʿasr was one of the two daily prayers which preceded the five constitutional ones, is mentioned in a whole series of exegetic traditions referring to some Quranic verses which are interpreted as though dealing with that early stage when the Muslims prayed only twice a day. The interesting point is that the morning prayer, which is mentioned in these traditions alongside ʿṣalāt al-ʿasr, is not ʿṣalāt al-ḍuḥa, but rather another prayer — ʿṣalāt al-fajr which is performed before sunrise. This fact means that already before the introduction of the five daily prayers, ʿṣalāt al-fajr replaced ʿṣalāt al-ḍuḥa as an official morning prayer, performed together with ʿṣalāt al-ʿasr.

Among the Quranic verses which Muslim commentators connected with the prayers of the fajr and the ʿasr, the most noteworthy is 20/130 (cf. also 50/39–40):

\[
\text{wa-sabbih bi-ḥamdi rabbika qabla ṭuḥri l-shamsi wa-qablaghurubiḥa...} \\
\text{And praise your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting...}
\]

According to al-Suddi, this verse refers to the first two daily prayers, which preceded the five constitutional ones,\(^{108}\) and these prayers are said to be ʿṣalāt al-fajr and ʿṣalāt al-ʿasr.\(^ {109}\) Another Quranic verse which is also connected by Muslim exegetes with ʿṣalāt al-fajr and ʿṣalāt al-ʿasr\(^ {110}\) is 11/114:

\[
\text{wa-aqimi l-ṣalata ṭarafayi l-naharı wa-zulaʃan mina l-layli.} \\
\text{And perform the prayer at the two ends of the day and during some stages of the night.}
\]

The same prayers are said to be mentioned in Quran 40/55,\(^ {111}\) 6/52,\(^ {112}\) and 17/78–79.\(^ {113}\)

The fact that ʿṣalāt al-fajr substituted for ʿṣalāt al-ḍuḥa as an official

---


\(^{108}\) Suyūṭī, *Durr*, IV, 312 (from Ibn Abī Ḥātim): ʿāna hadha qabla an ṭufrada l-ṣalātu.

\(^{109}\) Suyūṭī, *Durr*, IV, 312, VI, 110.

\(^{110}\) Ṭabarī, *Taṣfīr*, XII, 77; Suyūṭī, *Durr*, III, 351.


Morning and evening prayers in Early Islam

morning prayer already before the number of prayers was extended to five is most significant. The obvious similarity between salat al-fajr and the Jewish shaharitn indicates, once again, how early Muhammad began to look for Jewish models of prayer which substituted for Arab pre-Islamic manners of worship (salat al-duhāh). The same process is discernible in the fact that at a certain stage before the hijra, Muhammad stopped praying towards the Ka'ba which served as his first qibla, and started praying towards Jerusalem instead. After the hijra, however, the Ka'ba was taken up again as a qibla.

The sacredness of the hours of the fajr and the 'asr was mainly the result of the fact that they marked the middle stage between day and night. The Prophet is reported to have related that at the fajr and the 'asr the angels of the day and of the night meet with each other, on their way up to heaven and down to earth. Those going up inform Allāh about the prayers of the worshippers. This tradition indicates that the fajr and the 'asr were regarded as most appropriate hours for prayer.

The fact that the prayers of the fajr and the 'asr were performed during the middle stage between night and day brought about the identification of these prayers with the Quranic phrase al-salāt al-wusta (2/238). This phrase in itself means a prayer performed between night and day, and it seems to have been connected at first with salāt al-ṣubh (al-fajr) which was performed between the darkness of the night and the brightness of the day. The application of the same Quranic phrase to salāt al-ṣaṣr is ascribed to the Prophet himself. ‘Ali related that the Muslims used to think that al-salāt al-wusta was salāt al-ṣubh, till they had heard the Prophet cursing the polytheists during the Battle of the Ditch for having detained the Muslims from praying the 'asr. The words of the Prophet were: “ṣaghulūna ‘ani l-salati l-wusta ṣalati l-ṣaṣri...” It was even maintained that the words “salat al-ṣaṣr” were originally written in the Quran itself, serving as a badal for the phrase al-salat al-wusta. This qirā‘a is related on the authority of ʿĀ‘īsha, Ḥafṣa and Umm Salama.119

114 Some connect it with the miraculous isra‘ to Jerusalem and the introduction of the five daily prayers which is said to have taken place during that event. See Ḥalašt, I, 264.
116 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, I, 579; ...wasatāt fa-kānat bayna l-layli wa-l-nahar. See also Ṣuyūṭī, Durr, I, 301 (from ‘Abd al-Razzāq).
117 Ṣuyūṭī, Durr, I, 301 (from Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr). See also Razi, VI, 148 ff.; Ṭabarṣī, II, 262.
118 Ṭabarṣī, Tafsīr, II, 345. See also Ṣuyūṭī, Durr, I, 303; Ṭahāwī, Sharḥ, I, 173.
119 Ṭabarṣī, Tafsīr, II, 343–344. In other versions, a “waw” is inserted between “al-salat al-
\(\text{ṣalāt al-fajr}\) and \(\text{ṣalāt al-\'asr}\) have always retained their superiority over the rest of the official Islamic prayers. Thus it is related that a person told the Prophet that his preoccupations hindered him from sticking to the five daily prayers. So the Prophet instructed him to keep to the \('\text{āsrānī} only. The man asked: “What are the \('\text{āsrānī}?” The Prophet said: “A prayer before sunrise and a prayer before sunset”. The virtue of these prayers is stressed also in the following statement of the Prophet: “He who prays before the rising of the sun and before its setting will not enter hell”. The prayers of the \(\text{fajr}\) and the \('\text{asr}\) were also called \(\text{al-bardānī}\), i.e. the cool ones. The Prophet reportedly stated: “He who prays the bardānī will enter paradise”.

C. The data surveyed thus far concerning \(\text{ṣalāt al-fajr}\) and \(\text{ṣalāt al-\'asr}\) indicate that these prayers were actually performed close to sunrise and sunset. But these prayers were never condemned as \(\text{bid'\'a}\), not even after the aversion to prayers during sunrise and sunset became dominant in Islam. The reason for this seems to have been connected with the fact that, in contrast to \(\text{ṣalāt al-du\'ha}\), the prayers of the \(\text{fajr}\) and \('\text{asr}\) had a clear parallel in other monotheistic circles, i.e. the Jews, and this apparently provided these prayers with a kind of legitimacy. Nevertheless, there is evidence in Muslim sources that some scholars preferred that the prayers of the \(\text{fajr}\) and \('\text{asr}\) be performed not too close to sunrise and sunset. As for \(\text{ṣalāt al-\'asr}\), those who waited till the sun became yellow in order to perform this prayer were sometimes labelled as \(\text{munāfīqūn}\). As for \(\text{ṣalāt al-fajr}\), several traditions were circulated stressing that this prayer must not be extended beyond sunrise. The general tendency was to detach it as far as possible from sunrise, so that prayers performed even during the first brightness preceding sunrise were deplored. The best time pre-

\begin{itemize}
  \item Suyūtī, \textit{Durr} I, 294; Ṭahāwī, \textit{Mushkil}, I, 440.
  \item Ibn Khuzayma, I, 164; Suyūtī, \textit{Durr}, IV, 312; Muslim, II, 114; Ṭabārī, \textit{Taṣfīr}, II, 351; \textit{Majma\' al-zawa\'īd}, I, 318.
  \item Bukhārī, I, 150. See also \textit{Fath al-bārī}, II, 43–44; Muslim, II, 114.
  \item Ibn Khuzayma, I, 172; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, I, 549–550; Ṭahāwī, \textit{Sharḥ}, I, 192; Tirmidhī, I, 271; Mālik, I, 221; Abū Dawūd, I, 98; Muslim, II, 110.
  \item E.g. ‘Abd al-Razzāq, I, 581, 582.
  \item \textit{Ibid.}, I, 572.
\end{itemize}
Morning and evening prayers in Early Islam

scribed for ṣalāt al-fajr was the ghalas, i.e., the last moments of darkness. Sometimes it was even stressed that when this prayer was concluded, one was still unable to recognize one’s own son or friend. Delaying the fajr prayer till after the disappearance of the stars was sometimes condemned as a Christian practice.

On the other hand, however, there were quite a few Muslims who, in spite of the aversion to prayers during sunrise and sunset, used to delay the fajr and the ‘asr prayers till very close to sunrise and sunset, thus maintaining their original time. Those who used to delay the ‘asr prayer during Muḥammad’s lifetime were mainly the inhabitants of Qubā’, near Medina, namely the Banū ġAmr b. ġAwf. It is reported that they used to pray the ‘asr much later than did the people of Medina. The scholar Ṣawus reportedly used to delay the ‘asr prayer till the sun became very yellow. Ibn Mas‘ūd also used to delay the ‘asr prayer, and so did Ibn Sirin and Abū Qilāba. Abū Hurayra reportedly postponed the ‘asr until the rays of the sun were seen only upon the summit of the highest mountain in Medina. The name of ṣalāt al-‘asr was explained as though derived from the term ḥāṣar in the sense of ta‘khir, i.e., delay. Abū Qilāba reportedly stated that ṣalāt al-‘asr was thus named in order to be delayed.

Traditions soon appeared in which those who prayed the ‘asr as early as possible were actually condemned for deviating from the sunna of the Prophet. Umm Salama is reported to have stated: “The apostle of Allāh used to pray the zuhr earlier than you do, and you pray the ‘asr earlier than he did.” In a similar tradition, the too early performance of the ‘asr prayer is presented as a deviation from the sunna of the preceding peoples:

---

126 Ibid., I, 540, 569; Bukhārī, I, 147, 148; Muslim, II, 119; Tirmidhī, I, 260–261.
128 Majma‘ al-zawa‘id, I, 316.
129 Bukhārī, I 144; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, I, 549; Muslim, II, 109–110; Ṣaḥwī, Sharḥ, I, 190; Majma‘ al-zawa‘id, I, 307–308.
130 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, I, 550: ...kāna yu‘akhkhiru l-‘asra hāttā taṣṣārā l-shamsu jiddan.
131 Ibid., I, 551; Majma‘ al-zawa‘id, I, 307.
132 ‘Abd al-Razzāq, I, 551.
133 Ṣaḥwī, Sharḥ, I, 193.
134 Ṣaḥwī, Mushkīl, I, 439.
135 Loc. cit.: ‘ān Abī Qilāba: innāmā summiyātī l-‘asra li-‘aṣārī minhum. See also idem, Sharḥ, I, 194.
"Those who were before you used to pray the zuhr earlier than you do, and to pray the 'asr later than you do".\(^{137}\) In fact, the Prophet himself was quoted as explicitly favouring the delayed performance (\(\text{ta'kh\i r}\)) of \(\text{salat al-}'asr\).\(^{138}\)

The great scholar Abū Ḥanīfa objected to the early performance of \(\text{salat al-}'asr\). He maintained that the appropriate time for this prayer commences only when the shadows are twice as long as the objects that cast them.\(^{139}\) The followers of Abū Ḥanīfa maintained that the 'asr prayer should be delayed till the ascension of the angels at the end of the day.\(^{140}\)

Likewise, \(\text{salat al-fajr}\) was not always detached from sunrise. Pious Muslims like 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, although recommending that \(\text{salat al-fajr}\) be started when the stars are still visible, gave instructions to prolong it through the recitation of two long suras.\(^{141}\) In fact, many Muslims used to carry on the fajr prayer till the day became very bright, or even to start it only when the day was already bright. Such, for instance, was the practice of Tāwūs (\(\text{kāna yuṣfiru bi-}\text{salat al-ghadāt}\)).\(^{142}\) ʿAlī and Saʿīd b. Jubayr reportedly used to instruct the muʿadhdhin to wait with the announcement of this prayer till the day was bright (\(\text{asfīr}\ l\text{asfīr}\)).\(^{143}\) This injunction (\(\text{asfīrū bi-}\text{salat al-}\text{subh}\)) was even circulated as a Prophetic hadīth.\(^{144}\) Ibn Masʿūd actually delayed this prayer till just before sunrise. It is related that some people once prayed this prayer with him, and as soon as they were finished, the sun rose. They asked Ibn Masʿūd about it, and he swore to them that this was the appropriate time for this prayer. To prove it he recited sura 17/78: \("\text{aqimi l-}\text{salata li-du\l{u}k}\ l\text{-shamsi ila ghasaq}\ l\text{-layl}\"\). He said: This is the dulūk of the sun (i.e., the eastern horizon), and this is the ghasaq of the night (i.e., the western horizon).\(^{145}\)

D. The question of the lawfulness of prayers close to sunrise and sunset was especially acute with respect to the voluntary rak'as following the

\(^{137}\) 'Abd al-Razzāq, I, 540: \(\text{kāna man qaḍlakum ashadda tarjītan li-l-zuhri wa-ashadda ta'khīrān li-l-}'asrī minkum. See also Ṭāhāwi, Sharh, I, 193.


\(^{139}\) Fath al-bārī, II, 21.

\(^{140}\) Ibid., II, 29.

\(^{141}\) 'Abd al-Razzāq, I, 536, 570–571.

\(^{142}\) Ibid., I, 569.

\(^{143}\) Loc. cit.

\(^{144}\) Ibid., I, 568, 573; Majmaʿ al-zawa'id, I, 315–316; Tirmidhi, I, 262; Fath al-bārī, II, 45; Ṭāhāwi, Sharh, I, 178–179 (with further variants).

\(^{145}\) 'Abd al-Razzāq, I, 568.
Morning and evening prayers in Early Islam

prayers of the *fajr* and the *'asr*. Those who objected to prayers close to sunrise and sunset utterly forbade such voluntary supplications following *salāt al-fajr* and *salāt al-'asr*. Their attitude is reflected in the following traditions about the Prophet. ‘Ali reportedly stated that the Prophet used to pray two *rak'as* following each compulsory prayer, except for the *fajr* and the *'asr*. Salama b. al-Akwa', too, stated that he had never seen the Prophet pray following the *subh* and *'asr* prayers. The Prophet himself was reported to have interdicted in several traditions prayers following the *subh* till sunrise, and following the *'asr* till sunset. Prayers following *salāt al-'asr* were especially prohibited, and several traditions of the Prophet to that effect were circulated.

As is to be expected, however, there is evidence that voluntary prayers following *salāt al-fajr* and *salāt al-'asr* were not altogether abandoned. The adherence to such voluntary *rak'as* was customary mainly in Mecca; here they were performed at the end of the *tawfīf* which took place following the prayers of the *fajr* and the *'asr*.

A tradition of the Prophet says that there are two kinds of *tawfīf* which provide the believers with total forgiveness: a *tawfīf* following *salāt al-fajr* which is finished at sunrise, and a *tawfīf* following the *'asr* prayer which is finished at sunset. These are sacred hours attended by the angels. Each of these two daily *tawfīfs* was concluded by two *rak'as*, and there are several traditions of the Prophet stressing the lawfulness of such *rak'as*. In one of them the following statement is attributed to the Prophet: “There is no prayer following the *'asr* till sunset, neither following the *fajr* till sunrise, except at Mecca”. In fact, there is a whole chapter in al-Fākihī containing traditions about prominent *sahāba*, such as Ibn ‘Umar, Ibn ‘Abbās, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn and others, who prayed the voluntary *rak'as* at Mecca following the *tawfīf* of the *subh* and the *'asr*.

Muslim scholars sometimes made a point of stressing that the concession relating to prayers following the *fajr* and the *'asr* was exclusive to

---

147 *Majma' al-zawa'id*, II, 226.
148 *Ibid.*, II, 225. And see further, Bukhārī, I, 152; Fākihī, 301*.
149 E.g. Bukhārī, I, 153; *Majma' al-zawa'id*, II, 226, 227. And see further data, Fākihī, 301*–301*.
150 Fākihī, 299*. See also Azraqī, 266; *Qira*, 330.
151 *Majma’ al-zawa'id*, II, 228. See further, Fākihī, 300*, *Qira* 321.
152 Fākihī, 300*–301*. 
Mecca, but, on the other hand, the *tawâf* did not always remain the only legitimate setting for practicing these extra prayers. It is reported that the Zâhirîs considered all traditions prohibiting additional *rak’as* following the *fajr* and the ‘*asr* prayers as abrogated (*mansûkha*). There are, in fact, several examples proving that the adherence to this kind of *rak’as* overcame the resistance of pious Muslims. It is related, for instance, that ‘Umar used to flog people who dared pray after the ‘*asr* prayer, but Tamîm al-Dârî ignored it and stated that he had seen the Prophet himself praying following *salât al-*’asr. The same statement was made by Zayd b. Khâlid al-Juhandî. Abû Mûsâ al-Ash‘arî as well related that he had seen the Prophet perform two *rak’as* following *salât al-*’asr. ‘A’îsha, too, stated that the Prophet had never given up the two *rak’as* following the ‘*asr* prayer.

These traditions indicate that despite the efforts exerted by Muslim scholars to suppress prayers during sunrise and sunset, due to their alleged pagan nature — prayers at these hours were never abandoned in early Islam. The sacredness attached to these hours was greater than the fear of paganism.

### Abbreviations


---

E.g., Fâkîhî, 301’... *fa-înahu rukhhkhaṣa ṣî dhâlîka hâ-hunâ mā lam yurâkhkhaṣ ṣî shay‘în mina l-amsâr*. And see also the statement of Abû l-Dârî concerning the same matter: *inna hâdâh l-balad laysa ka-sâ‘i‘î l-balad* (Fâkîhî, 300’).

See the detailed discussion, *Fâth al-bârî*, II, 48.


See loc. cit.

Morning and evening prayers in Early Islam

Fakihi — al-Fakihi, Tarikh Makka, MS Leiden, Or. 463.


Maqrīzī — al-Maqrīzī, al-Imtā‘ wa-l-asmā‘, Cairo 1941.


Muhāṭil I–II — Muḥāṭil b. Sulaymān, Tafsīr al-Qurān, MS Saray, Ahmet III, 74/I–II.

Mūṣṭafā — Mūṣṭafā, al-Ḏaḥīḥ, Cairo, 1334H/1915.


Ṭabarī, Tarikh — al-Ṭabarī, Tarikh al-umam wa-l-mulūk, Cairo 1939.


Ṭāḥwī, Mushkil — al-Ṭāḥwī, Mushkil al-ṭathar, Hyderabad 1333H/1914.


