20 Raka’at Taraweeh
In the light of Hadith ***

Under the guidance of:

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Successor of Hadhrat Muhaddith-E-Deccan Hadhrat Syed Abdullah Shah Naqshbandi Qadri (May Allah SWT shower His Mercy on him)

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The excellence of Ramadhan and the command of Taraweeh

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Allah SWT has selected Ramadhan for the revelation of His Word, the Holy Quran. He (SWT) has also shown His preference for this month over other months by mentioning its name in the Holy Quran.

شهر رمضان الذي أُنزل فيه القرآن هدى للناس وبيانات من الهداى والفرقة

The month of Ramadan in which was revealed the Qur'an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance, and the Criterion (of right and wrong). Surah Al Baqarah (2:185)

With the coming of the month of Ramadhan, Allah SWT floods the world with His Mercy. The doors of the sky are opened. The doors of Jannah are opened. Everywhere, there is an expression of His Mercy. One of the blessed attributes of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) is His generosity and benevolence. In the month of Ramadhan, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) became even more generous. There is a Hadith in Sahih Bukhari:

عن ابن عباس قال كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أجواد الناس وكان أجواد ما يكون في رمضان حين يلقاه جبريل

Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Abdullah bin Abbas (May Allah be well pleased with him) that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was the most generous of all and His generosity would be at its highest point in the month of Ramadhan, when Jibra'il (peace be upon him) would come to His presence. (Sahih Bukhari. Vol 1, Pg No: 3)

Imam Bahawi has recorded a Hadith in his Shu'ab Ul Iman:

عن ابن عباس، قال كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا دخل
شهر رمضان أطلق كل أسير، وأعطي كل سائل

Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Abdullah bin Abbas (May Allah be well pleased with him), he said: When the month of Ramadhan came, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) released every prisoner and would give to everyone who asked. (Baihaqui, Shu’ab Ul Iman, Hadith No: 3475)

Allah SWT has given absolute authority to the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) to decide the rules and the reward for following them. Since He (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) is all the more generous in Ramadhan, as per His habit, He (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) decreed special rules for Ramadhan and gave glad tidings of special reward in this month.

The reward of an optional (Nafi) is equal to that of an obligation (Fardh), the reward of a Fardh is increased seventy-fold; the reward for providing means to a fasting person to break the fast is a drink from the Houz e Kouthar, the promise to increase a Momin’s sustenance (Rizq), the one in itkaaf is rewarded for every virtuous act etc.

The special reward for these virtuous acts of Ramadhan has been mentioned in the Hadith only. No verse of the Holy Quran mentions this. This is only the generosity of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) and the result of His benevolence. A special virtuous act in Ramadhan is Taraweeh.

**The excellence of Taraweeh**

There is a Hadith in Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, Jame Timidhi:

ٍعنَّ أبي هريرة أنْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ مَنْ قَامَ رَمَضَانَ إِكَانَ أَحْجِسَابًا عَفُورًا لَّهُ ما تَقْبَمُ مِنْ ذَلِكَٰ

Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat AbuHurairah (May Allah be well pleased with him) that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said: Whoever stands in prayer (Salaat) in the nights of Ramadhan in state of Iman and sincerity (Ikhlaas), all his past sins are forgiven.

(Sahih Bukhari, Vol 1, Hadith No: 1902; Sahih Muslim, Kitab Us Salaatil Musafireen; Jame’ Timidhi, Hadith No: 619; Sunan Abu Dawood, Hadith No: 1165; Sunan Nasai, Hadith No: 2174, Sunan Ibn Majah, Hadith No: 1316, Zujajatul Masabeeh, Vol 1, Pg No: 362)

**The command for Salaat Ul Taraweeh**

The Salaat Ul Taraweeh is a “Sunnat e Moukkada” i.e. a compulsory Sunnah for all men and women. To offer this Salaat in a Masjid with a congregation (Jama’at) is a Fardh-e-Kifayah for men. If all the people of a locality leave the congregation, all of
them will be held accountable for leaving a Sunnah. For women, it is preferable to offer this Salat in their own houses without a congregation. As given in Durre Mukhtar, Vol 1, Pg No: 520:

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) offered 20 raka‘at of Taraweeh

There is a Hadith in Sunan Baihaqi, Imam Tabarani’s Mo‘jam Kabeer, Mo’jam Ausat, Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaiba, Musnad Abd bin Humaid, Majma Uz Zawaaid and Zujajatul Masabeeh:

Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Abdullah bin Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him) that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) offered 20 raka‘at of Taraweeh and Witr.


Evidence of 20 raka‘at of Taraweeh in the era of Hadhrat Umar Al Farooq

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Yazid bin Rooman R.A. that he said in the era of Hadhrat Umar Bin Khattab (May Allah be well pleased with him) people used to offer 23 raka‘at (20 raka‘at of Taraweeh and 3 Witr).
Allama Badruddin Aini (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes in the interpretation of this Hadih:

قال ابن عبد البر هذا محمول على أن الثلاث للموتر-

Translation: Allama Ibn e Abdul Barr (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) said: "23 raka‘at mean 20 raka‘at of Taraweeh and 3 of Witr."

(Umdatul Qari Sharh Sahih Bukhari, Kitab Ut Taraveeh, Vol 8, Pg No: 245)

Hadrat Umar’s (May Allah be well pleased with him) command for offering 20 raka‘at of Taraweeh

There is a Hadith in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaiba:

عن يحيى بن سعد أن عمر بن الخطاب أمر رجلا يصلي هجم عشرون ركعة.

Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Yahya bin Sae‘ed that Hadrat Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him) commanded a person to offer 20 raka‘at of Taraweeh.

(Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaiba, Vol 2, Pg No: 285, Chapter No: 227, Hadith No: 3; Tuhfatul Ahwazi, Bab Ma Ja‘a Fi Shahri Ramadhan)

The teacher of Imam Bukhari’s teacher Imam Abdur Razzaq writes in his Musannaf:

عن السائب بن يزيد قال: كما نصروف من القيام على عهد عمر وقد دنا فروع الفجر، وكان القيام على عهد عمر ثلاثة وعشرين ركعة.

Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Hadrat Saib bin Yazid (May Allah be well pleased with him) says: In the era of Umar, we used to return from the night’s prayers when the time for Fajr would be near and in the era of Hadrat Umar
(May Allah be well pleased with him), the Salaat of the night would be 23 raka’at (i.e. 20 raka’at of Taraweeh and 3 of Witr).

Apart from 20 raka’at of Taraweeh, this Hadith establishes that long raka’at and intense recitation of the Holy Quran was the habit of the Sahabah.

There is a Hadith in Kanzul Ummal in The Book of Salaat:

عن أبي بن كعب أن عمر بن الخطاب أمره أن يصلي بالليل في رمضان فقال: إن الناس يصومون النهار ولا يحسبون أن يقرأوا فلو قرأت عليهم بالليل، فقال: يا أمير المؤمنين هذا شيء لم يكن، فقال: قد علمت ولكنه حسن فعله بجمعة ركعتين. (ابن منيع).

Translation: Hadhrat Ubai bin Ka'ab (May Allah be well pleased with him) narrates that Hadhrat Umar commanded him to lead the Salaat Ul Taraweeh in Ramadhan saying, people fast in the day, because of which they cannot recite the Holy Quran properly, you please recite the Holy Quran in Taraweeh.

He requested: "O Commander of the faithful, this is such an action which has not been performed in congregation till now. He (i.e. Hadhrat Umar) said: Yes, I know that, but this is better." Thus, Hadhrat Ubai bin Ka'ab (May Allah be well pleased with him) led the Salaat. (Kanzul Ummal, Hadith No: 23471)

There is a Hadith in Imam Baihaqui’s Sunan e Sughra and Ma’arifus Sunan:

عن السائب بن يزيد قال: كنا نقوم في زمن عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه بعشرين ركعة والوتر-

Translation: "Hadhrat Saib bin Yazid (May Allah be well pleased with him) says: In the era of Hadhrat Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him), we used to offer 20 raka’at of Taraweeh and 3 raka’at of Witr.

(Sunan Sughra Lil Baihaqui, Hadith No: 833; Ma’arifatus Sunan Wal Aathaar Lil Baihaqui, Hadith No: 14431 Zujajatul Massabhe, Vol 1, Pg No: 366, Miaqatul Mafatech Shahr Mishkaat Ul Masabhe, Kitab Us Salaat; Tuhfatul Ahwazi, Bab Mo’jam Ausat Ja’a Fi Qiyami Shahr Ramadhan, Fath Ul Qadeer, Kitab Us Salaat, Fasl Fi Qiyam Shahr Ramadhan)
Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Saib bin Yazid (May Allah be well pleased with him) that in the era of Hadhrat Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him) people used to offer 20 raka`at of Taraveeh. People used to recite 100 verses and in the era of Hadhrat Usman (May Allah be well pleased with him), they would support themselves with a staff because of the long raka`at.

(Sunan Kubra Lil Baihaqui, Hadith No: 4801; Umdatul Qari, Sharh Sahih Bukhari, Kitab Ula Adhaan, Miroqatul Mafateeh Sharh Mishkatul Masabeeh, Kitab Us Salaat, Bab Qiyami Shahrul Ramadhan)

Imam Nawawi (May Allah be well pleased with him) has mentioned this Hadith as rigorously-authenticated (Sahih) in his book "Khulasatul Ahkam"

Translation: Imam Baihaqui has narrated this Hadith using a well-authenticated (Sahih) chain of narration.

(Khulasatul Ahkaam, Kitab Us Salaat, Hadith No: 1961)

Mulla Ali Qari (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) has also mentioned this judgment of Imam Nawawi in "Miroqatul Mifateeh", Kitab Us Salaat, Bab Qiyami shahrul Ramadhan."

(Miroqatul Mafateeh, Kitab Us Salaat, Bab Qiyami shahrul Ramadhan)

20 raka`at of Taraveeh, the command of Hadhrat Ali

There is a Hadith in Imam Baihaqui's Sunan Kubra and in Umdatul Qari, Sharh Sahih Bukhari (A commentary on Sahih Bukhari):

"عن أبي عبد الرحمن السلمي عن علي رضي الله عنه قال: دعا الفقراء في رمضان، فأمر منهم رجل يقول: صلى بالناس عشر ركعتين ركعتين.

Hadhrat Abu Abdur Rahman As Sulami narrates on the authority of Hadhrat Ali (May Allah be well pleased with him), that in the month of Ramadhan, he (i.e. Hadhrat Ali)
summoned the Huffaz (those who memorized the Holy Quran) and commanded one Hafidh of them to lead others for 20 raka’at of Taraweeh.

(Sunan Kubra Lil Baihaqi, Hadith No: 4804, Zujajatul Masabeeh, Vol 1, Pg No: 366, Umdatul Qari Sharh Sahih Bukhari, Kitab Ul Tahajjud, Tuhfatul Ahwazi, Bab Maa Jaa fi qiyami shahri Ramadhan)

Command to offer Taraweeh with 5 breaks

There is Hadith in Imam Baihaqi’s Sunan Kubra, in Musannaf Abdur Razzaq, in Kanzul Ummal etc.

عن أبي الحسناء : أنْ عَلَىٰ بُنِّ أَبِي طَالِب بِرَضْبِيِّ اللَّهِ عَنْهُ أَمَرَ رَجُلًا أَنْ يُصَلَّى بِالنَّاسِ خَمْسَ صَمَّامٍ عَشَرَانَ بُكْرَةً.

Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Abul Husna (May Allah be well pleased with him) that Hadhrat Ali (May Allah be well pleased with him) commanded a Hafidh to lead the people in 20 raka’at of Taraweeh with 5 breaks.

(Sunan Kubra Lil Baihaqi, Hadith No: 4805; Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaiba, Vol 2, Pg No: 285, bab 227, Hadith No: 2; Kanzul Ummaal, Kitab Us Salaat, Hadith No: 23474, Umdatul Qari Sharh Sahih Bukhari, Kitab Ul Taraweeh, Tuhfatul Ahwazi, bab Ma jaa fi Qiyami shahri Ramadhan)

In Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaiba there is a similar Hadith on the authority of Hadhrat Abu Husna 's (May Allah be well pleased with him) son.

Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Ibn E Abul Husna that Hadhrat Ali (May Allah be well pleased with him) commanded a person to lead the people in 20 raka’at of Taraweeh.

(Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaiba, Vol 2, Pg No: 163, Hadith No: 7681)

It has been established by these highly authoritative and reliable books of Hadith that the First Four Caliphs not only offered 20 raka’at of Taraweeh themselves but also commanded others to do so. In Islamic law, the status of the caliphs is such that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) has commanded the Ummah to adopt their Sunnah.

عليكم بسنن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه وصية الرسول صلى الله عليه وسلم بالتأييد
Translation: Bind yourself to My Sunnah and to the Sunnah of My Caliphs and hold fast to it.

(Sunan Ibn Majah, Vol 1, Pg No: 5, Hadith No: 42)

Also, other Sahabah and the Tabie’en (the successors and the students) also offered 20 raka’at of Taraweeh. The Hadith about this follow:

Other Sahabah also offered 20 raka’at of Taraweeh

20 raka’at Taraweeh in Medina Al Munawwarah:

There is a Hadith in Musaunaf Ibn e Abi Shaiba

عن عبد العزيز بن رفاعة قال كان أي بن كعب يصلي بالناس في

 رمضان بالمدينة عشرين ركعة وبوتر بثلاث.

Translation: Hadhrat Abdul Aziz bin Ra‘ee says: Hadhrat Ubai bin Ka‘ab (May Allah be well pleased with him) used to lead the people in 20 raka’at of Taraweeh in the month of Ramadhan and used to lead the people in 3 raka’at of Witr.

(Musaunaf Ibn Abi Shaiba, Vol 2, Pg No: 285, bab 227, Hadith No: 5, Tuhfatul Ahwazi, bab Ma jaa fi Qiyami shahri Ramadhani)

The practice of Hadhrat Abdullah bin Mas‘ud (May Allah be well pleased with him)

In Umdahul Qari, Allama Badruddin Aini has narrated a Hadith on the authority of Imam A‘amash, in which it is clearly reported that Hadhrat Abdullah bin Mas‘ud used to lead people in 20 raka‘at of Taraweeh.

عن الأعمة عن زيد بن وہب قال كان عبد الله بن مسعود يصلي لنا

في شهر رمضان فتنصرف وعليه ليل قال الأعمة كان يصلي عشرين

ركعة وبوتر بثلاث.

Translation: Hadhrat A‘amash narrates on the authority of Hadhrat Zaid bin Wahb (May Allah be well pleased with him) that he said, In the month of Ramadhan, Hadhrat Abdullah bin Mas‘ud (May Allah be well pleased with him) used to lead us and Imam A‘amash narrates that he used to lead people in 20 raka‘at of Taraweeh and 3 raka‘at of Witr.
The Sahabah’s consensus on 20 raka’at of Taraweeh

Imam Kasani Hanafi (May Allah be well pleased with him) writes about 20 raka’at of Taraweeh:

والصحاب قال الاعاقة لما روى أن عمر رضي الله عنه جمع أصحاب رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم في شهر رمضان على أبي بن كعب قصلن بهم في كل ليلة عشرة ركعة، ولم يذكر أحد عليه فيكون إجماعاً منهم على ذلك.

Translation: The authentic opinion is of the majority of scholars, because Hadhrat Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him) gathered the Sahabah under the leadership (Imamat) of Hadhrat Ubai bin Kaab (May Allah be well pleased with him), and he lead them in 20 raka’at every night. None of the Sahabah denied this (or objected to this) and this way, the consensus of the Sahabah on this issue was achieved.

(Bada'i Us Sanai, Vol 1, Kitab Us Salaat, Pg No: 644)

Allama Badruddin Aini (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) who authored Umdatul Qari, a commentary and explanation on Sahih Bukhari writes:

واحبذ أصحابنا والشافعية والحنابلة بما رواه البيهقي بإسناد صحيح عن السائب بن يزيد الصحابي قال كانوا يقومون على عهد عمر رضي الله تعالى عنه بعشرين ركعة وعلى عهد عثمان وعلي رضي الله تعالى عنهما مثله

Translation: The Hanafi, Shafi’i and the Hanbali Imams have accepted (for 20 raka’at of Taraweeh) that Hadith as evidence which was recorded and narrated by Imam Baihaqui with his own rigorously authenticated (Sahih) chain of narration, which he narrates on the authority of Hadhrat Saib bin Yazid (May Allah be well pleased with him).

The Sahabi narrates that the Sahabah and the Tabie’en offered 20 raka’at of Taraweeh in the time of Hadhrat Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him), Hadhrat Uthman (May Allah be well pleased with him), Hadhrat Ali (May Allah be well pleased with him).
وفي المغني عن علي أنه أمر رجلا أن يصلي جمعة في رمضان بعشرين ركعة قال وهذا كالإجماع

Translation: And in Mughni there is a Hadith of Hadhrat Ali (May Allah be well pleased with him) that he (Hadhrat Ali) commanded a person to lead the people in 20 raka’at of Taraweeh in Ramadhan. In the explanation of this Hadith, Imam Aini (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes: This practice of the Sahabah is like their agreement.

Translation: Nevertheless, the Sahabah have agreed that Taraweeh is of 20 raka’at.

Translation: Taraweeh is a Sunnah and there are 20 raka’at of it, which are offered in units of 2 raka’at. Witir will be offered after that. Apart from Ramadhan, Witir cannot be offered as a congregational prayer.
The practice of Hadhrat Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him) is the evidence of 20 raka’at of Taraweeh as Imam Muslim has clarified this in his Sahih that Hadhrat Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him) gathered the Sahabah in the Masjid e Nabvi (The Prophet’s Masjid) to offer 20 raka’at of Taraweeh and the Sahabah also agreed with him on this and even after the Caliphs, nobody objected to this.

(Al Fiqh Al Islami Wal Adilla, Al Juz Ath Thaami, Al Fasli Thamin, An Nawafil Indal Hanafiyya)

Hadhrat Imam Sarkhi Hanafi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes in Mabsut:

وفي اتفاق الصحابة رضوان الله عليهم على تقدير التواريخ بعشرين ركعة دليل على أن الواجبات في اليوم والليلة عشرون ركعة وذلك لا يكون إذا كان اليوتر واجبا-

Translation: The consensus of the Sahabah on 20 raka’at of Taraweeh is the evidence that all the Fardh and Wajib Salaat in the day and night add up to 20 and this number will be completed when Witr is considered as Wajib.

(Mabsut Sarkhi Hanafi, Kitab Us Salaat, Al Fasil Awwal Fi Adadir raka’at)

Allama Ibn e Taimiva writes in his Majmu Al Fatawa:

قد نبت أن أبي بن كعب كان يقوم بالثّاس عشرين ركعة في قيام رمضان ويوتر بثلاث. قرأ كثير من العلماء أن ذلك هو السنة ؛ لله أقامة بين المهاجرين والأنصار ولم يتركه متكرر.

Translation: This has been well established that Hadhrat Ubai bin Ka‘ab (May Allah be well pleased with him) used to lead the people in 20 raka’at of Taraweeh in the month of Ramadhan and used to lead them separately in 3 raka’at of Witr. Thus, many of the Ulama say that this is a Sunnah because Hadhrat Ubai bin Kaab did this in the presence of many of the Muhajirin (those who migrated from Macca to Madina) and Ansar (The natives of Madina) Sahabah and none of them opposed or denied this.

(Majmu Al Fatawa, Vol 23, Pg No: 112)

Allama Dusuqi writes:

والدسوقي وغيره : كان عليه عمل الصحابة والتابعين-
Translation: The Sahabah and the Tabie’n have offered 20 rak’a’at of Taraweeh."

(Al Mansuatul Fiqhiya Al Kuwaitiya, Published by the Government of Kuwait, Vol 27, Pg No: 141/142)

The Tabi’en too offered 20 rak’a’at of Taraweeh

عن عبد الله بن قيس عن شهير بن شكل أنه كان يصلي في رمضان
عشرين ركعة والوتر.

Translation: Hadhrat Abdullah bin Qais narrates on the authority of Hadhrat Shaitar Bin Shakal that he used to offer 20 rak’a’at of Taraweeh in the month of Ramadhan.

(Sunan Kubra Lil Baihaqi, Hadith No: 4803, Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaiba, Vol 2, Pg No: 285, Bab 227, Hadith No: 1; Mirqatul Mafateeh Sharh Mishkatul Masabeeh, Kitab Us Salaat, Bab Qiyam Shahri Ramadhan)

Allama Ibn e Hajr bin Asqalani rh writes in Tahzeeb Ut Tahzeeb, about Hadhrat Shaitar bin Shakal (May Allah be well pleased with him):

وكانثقة

Translation: He is reliable and Imam Nasai (Author of Sunan Nasai, which is included in Sihah Sittah-The six most authentic books of Hadith) has also declared him as reliable.

(At Tahzeeb Ut Tahzeeb, Vol 4, Pg No: 273/274)

Hadhrat Suwaid BinGhaflah (May Allah be well pleased with him) offered 20 rak’a’at of Taraweeh

Imam Baihaqi writes in Sunan E Kubra that Hadhrat Suwaid bin Ghaflah (May Allah be well pleased with him) used to lead the people in 20 rak’a’at of Taraweeh:

أخبرنا أبو الخصيب فقال: كان يؤولنا سويت بن عفولة في رمضان.
فصلاة خمس توزيعات عشرين ركعة.

Translation: Hadhrat Abul Khusaib (May Allah be well pleased with him) says: Hadhrat Suwaid (May Allah be well pleased with him) used to lead us in prayer and used to lead us in 20 rak’a’at of Taraweeh with 5 breaks.

(Sunan Kubra Lil Baihaqi, Kitab Us Salaat, Hadith No: 4803)
Harith (May Allah be well pleased with him) used to lead the people in 20 raka’at of Taraweeh

عن الحارث أنه كان يؤم الناس في رمضان بالليل بعشرين ركعة وبوتيرة

بعدلات ويقنت قبل الركوع.

Translation: Hadhrat Harith (May Allah be well pleased with him) used to lead the people in 20 raka’at of Taraweeh and 3 raka’at of Witr and used to recite Dua e Qunoot before going into the ruku.

(Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaiba, Vol 2, Pg No: 285, Bab 227, Hadith No: 6)

Hadrat Abul Bukhturi (May Allah be well pleased with him) used to lead the people in 20 rakkats of Taraweeh.

عن أبي البحتري أنه كان يصلي خمس تروياتات في رمضان وبوتيرة

بعدلات.

Translation: Hadhrat Abul Bukhturi (May Allah be well pleased with him) says that in Ramadhan, he used to lead the people in 20 raka’at of Taraweeh with 5 breaks and 3 raka’at of Witr.

(Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaiba, Vol 2, Pg No: 285, Bab 227, Hadith No: 7)

20 raka’at of Taraweeh – Evidence by Hadhrat Ata (May Allah be well pleased with him)

عن عطاء قال أدركت الناس وهم يصلون ثلاثا وعشرين ركعة بالوتر.

It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Ata (May Allah be well pleased with him) says that, I saw the people offering 20 raka’at of Taraweeh and 3 raka’at of Witr.

(Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaiba, Vol 2, Pg No: 285, Bab 227, Hadith No: 9, Fathul Bari Sharh Sahih Bukhari, Bab Salat Ut Taraweeh)

20 raka’at of Taraweeh – Statement by Ibn e Abi Mulaika (May Allah shower His Mercy on him)

عن نافع عن عمر قال كان ابن أبي مليكة يصلي بنا في رمضان عشرين
20 raka‘at of Taraweeh - Practice of Hadhrat Ali bin Rabee‘ah (May Allah shower His Mercy on him)

It is given in Musannaf Ibn Abi Shaiba:

وإن سعيد بن عبد أن علي بن ربيعة كان يصلي يوم في رمضان خمس ترويحات ويوتر بثلاث.

Translation: Hadhrat Sa‘eed bin Ubaid (May Allah be well pleased with him) narrates that, in the month of Ramadhan, Hadhrat Ali Bin Rabee‘ah (May Allah be well pleased with him) used to lead the Muslims in 20 raka‘at of Taraweeh with 5 breaks.

The teacher of Imam Bukhari’s (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) teachers, the Hadith-Expert Hadhrat Abdul Razzaq (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes in his Musannaf with his own chain of authority:

عبد الرزاق عن النوري عن إسماعيل بن عبد الملك قال : كان سعيد بن جبير يؤمنا في شهر رمضان، فكان يقرأ بالقراءتين جميعاً، يقرأ ليلة بقراءة ابن مسعود، فكان يصلي خمس ترويحات.

Translation: Imam Abdul Razaq (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) has narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Sufyan Sauri (May Allah be well pleased with him) and he has narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Ismail bin Abdul Malik that Hadhrat Saeed bin Jubair (May Allah be well pleased with him) used to lead us in Salaat in the month of Ramadhan and used to recite the Quran in 2 different ways, one night according to the method of Hadhrat Abdullah bin Mas‘ud (May Allah be well pleased with him) and would lead us in 20 raka‘at of Taraweeh with 5 breaks.
20 raka’at of Taraveeh - From the time of Hadhrat Muhammad Rasulullah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) to the time of the Muhaddith-e-Deccan Hadhrat Syed Abdullah:

The above mentioned Hadith, sayings of the Sahabah, sayings of the Imams and the clarifications of the Jurisprudents (Faqaha-Islamic Law experts) and the Hadith-Experts (Muhaddithin) and other elders of the Ummah make it crystal clear that Taraveeh is of 20 raka’at only. The names of the above mentioned Faqaha and the Muhaddithin mentioned in the book are being mentioned here in chronological order, so, that it becomes all them more clear that in every age and era Taraveeh has been offered as 20 raka’at only and it was never discontinued.

Hadhrat Imam e Azam (May Allah be well pleased with him) 150 Hijri
Imam Abdur Razzaq San'ani (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 211 Hijri
Imam Ibn e Abi Shayba (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 235 Hijri
Imam Ahmed Bin Hambali (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 241 Hijri
Imam Nasai (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 303 Hijri
Imam Tabarani (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 360 Hijri
Imam Baiahaqi Shafa’ee (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 458 Hijri
The interpreter of Abul Waleed Maliki (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 472 Hijri
Imam Sarkhisi Hanafi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 483 Hijri
Imam Qazi Ayaz Maliki (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 544 Hijri
Hadhrat Ghouse Azam (May Allah be well pleased with him) 561 Hijri
Imam Kasani (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 587 Hijri
Allama Ibn e Rushd Maliki (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 595 Hijri
Allama Ibn e Qudama Hambali (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 620 Hijri
Imam Sharfuddin Nawawi Shafa’ee (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 676 Hijri
Abul Baraka’at Abdullah bin Ahmed Nasafi Hanafi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 710 Hijri
Allama Ibn e Taimiya 728 Hijri
Author of Tabyeen Ul Haqaaiq, Imam Zaila'i (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 743 Hijri
Author of Majma Uz Zawaaid, Imam Haithami (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 807 Hijri

Author of Fathul Bari, Imam Ibn e Hajr Asqalani (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 852 Hijri

Author of Umdatul Qari Sharh Sahih Bukhari, Allama Badruddin Aini Hanafi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 855 Hijri

Author of Fath Ul Qadeer, Allama Ibn e Hamam Hanafi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 861 Hijri

Author of Subul ul Huda War Rashad, Allama Muhammad bin Yousuf Sahli (May Allah shower His Mercy on him), 942 Hijri

Allama Ibn e Nujaim Hanafi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 970 Hijri

Allama Ibn e Hajr Makki Haithami Shaf'aee (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 973 Hijri

Author of Kanz Ul Ummal, Allama Ali Muttaqi Hanafi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 974 Hijri

Author of Mirqatul Mafateeh Sharh Mishkatul Masabeeh, Hadhrat Mulla Ali Qari (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 1014 Hijri

Allama Abdur Rahman Muhammad (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 1078 Hijri

Hadhrat Shah Waliullah Muhaddis Dehlvi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 1176 Hijri

Allama Ibn e Abidin Shaami Hanafi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) 1252 Hijri

The Pride of the Muhaddithin, the essence of the A‘arifeen, Hadhrat Abul Hasanaat Syed Abdullah Shah Naqshbandi Mujaddidi Qadri (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) (Deceased-1384 Hijri) has recorded Hadith and Traditions on the authority of Baihaqui, Ibn Abi Shaiba, Baghawi and Abd Bin Humaid in his great book of Hadith, Zuhjatul Masabeeh.

The practice of the Tabie' en, the majority of the Ulema and the Fuqaha of the Hanafi School:

The Sahabah have a consensus on the issue of 20 raka’at of Taraweeh. The majority of the Tabie' en, the scholars, the Shawafa'ee and the people of Kufa also act on this as clarified in Umdatul Qari Vol 8, Pg No: 246:
As far as the practice of the Tabi'een goes, the names of those among them who considered 20 raka'at of Taraweeh as correct are being mentioned here:

Hadhrat Shateer bin Shakal
Hadhrat Ibn Abi Mulaika
Hadhrat Harith Hamdani
Hadhrat Ata Bin Abi Ribah
Hadhrat Abul Bakhtari, the brother of Hadhrat Hasan Basri
Hadhrat Sae’eeed bin Abul Hasan
Hadhrat Abdul Rahman bin Abu Bakr
Hadhrat Umran Abdi

May Allah shower His Mercy on all of them.

All the people of Kufa follow this path only and Hadhrat Imam Shafie (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) and majority of Fuqaha did this only and this is more correct.

Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafie, Imam Ahmed bin Hambal and according to 1 report Imam Malik (May Allah be well pleased with all of them) agree that Taraweeh is of 20 raka’at only.

Imam Kasani (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes in Badai us Sanai:
Translation: Taraweeh is of 20 raka’at only. This is the ruling of the majority of the Ulema and this is correct because when Hadhrat Umar bin Khattab (May Allah be well pleased with him) gathered the Sahabah under Hadhrat Ubai bin Kaab (May Allah be well pleased with him), he lead them in 20 raka’at of Taraweeh every night and none of the Sahabah objected to it. This way the Sahabah achieved a consensus on this.

Allama Ibn e Nujaim (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes in Bahr Ur Raiq and Allama Ibn e Abidin Shami writes in Raddul Muhtaar:

Taraweeh is of 20 raka’at. The majority of the scholars agree on this and in east and west (i.e. everywhere), the Muslims practice this. (Al Bahr Ur Raiq, Vol 2, Pg No: 117)

(Radd Ul Muhtaar, Vol 1, Pg No: 521, Bidayatul Mujtahid, Vol 1, Pg No: 210, Al Fiqh Al Madhabil Al Arba, Vol 2, Pg No: 342)

The opinion of Hadhrat Ghouse Azam (May Allah be well pleased with him)

The pole of the world, the leader of men, Hadhrat Syed Shaykh Abdul Qadir Jilani Hasani Husaini, Ghouse Azam Dastagir (May Allah be well pleased with him) writes in Al Ghunya Li Talibi tariqil haqqi:

Translation: Salaat Ut Taraweeh is of 20 raka’at

(Al Ghunya Li Talibi tariqil haqqi, Vol 2, Pg No: 16)

20 Raka’at of Taraweeh, the ruling of the Imams of the Ummah

Allama Shibli writes in the Hashiya, explanatory notes of Tabyeen Ul Haqaaq Vol 1 pg no. 443:

Translation: In our opinion, Taraweeh is of 20 raka’at and this is the ruling of Imam Shafa’ee and of Imam Ahmed bin Hambal (May Allah be well pleased with him).
Allama Qazi Ayaz has narrated on the authority of the majority of scholars that Taraweeh is of 20 raka’at.

Allama Ibne Abidin Shaami Naqshbandi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) has written in Raddul Muhtar:

قوله: وَعيَّنَ عِشْرَونَ رَكَعَةً - هو قول الجماعة وعلّي عمّال الناس
شراً وغرباً.

Translation: Taraweeh is of 20 raka’at. This is the ruling of the majority of scholars.
(Radd Ul Muhtar, Vol 1, Pg No: 521)

It is written in Mausua’a Fiqhiya:

فذهب جمهور الفقهاء من الحنفية، والشافعية، والحنابلة، وبعض الماليكية إلى أن التراويح عشرون ركعة.

Translation: The majority of the scholars of the Hanafi, Shafii, Hambali and some Maliki scholars is that Taraweeh is of 20 raka’at.

Allama Ali Sunahwari writes:

وقال علي السنيوري: هو اللذي عليه عمل الناس واستمر إلى زماننا
في سائر الأنصار.

Translation: The people practice this and all the cities have been following this only.
(Al Mausu’atul Fiqhiya Al Kuwaitiya, Vol 27, Pg No: 141/142)

The opinion of the Fuqaha of the Hanafi School:

Hadrat Imam Sarkhsi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes in Mabsut:

فإنها عشرون ركعة سويا الأوقات عندنا.

Translation: In our opinion, Taraweeh is of 20 raka’at without Witr.
(Mabsut, Sarkhsi, Kitab Us Salaat, Al Fasil Awwali Fi Adadi raka’at)
Imam Kasani (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes:

وَأَمَا قَدْ رَأَيْتُ وَهَيْئَةً مِّن عَشَرَةَ رَكَعَتٍ فِي عَشَرَةِ تَسْلِيمَاتٍ، فِي خَمْسِ تَوْرَيْحَاتٍ

Translation: Taraweeh is 20 raka’at, offered with 10 salaams and 5 breaks. After every 2 salaams, a break is to be taken. This is the ruling of the majority.

(Badai Us Sanai, Vol 1, Pg No. 644)

Imam Abdullah bin Ahmed Nasafi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him), the author of Tafseer Midrak writes:

وسن في رمضان عشرون ركعة -

Translation: In the month of Ramadhan, 20 raka’at of Taraweeh is Sunnah.

(Kanz Ud Daqaaiq, Kitab Us Salaat, Pg No: 34)

Imam Zaila’i Hanafi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes:

(قولت وهي عشرون ركعة) أي عَنَّا وَبِهِ قَالَ الْقَلْبِيُّ وَأَحْمَدُ وَتَقْلِيلَةً

Translation: In our opinion, Taraweeh is of 20 raka’at and Imam Shaf’ee and Imam Ahmed bin Hambal have also said this. Allama Qazi Ayaz (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) has narrated the same on the authority of the majority of the scholars.

(Tabyeen Ul Haqaiq, Kitab Us Salaat, Bab Witr wan Nawafil)

Allama Ibn e Nujaim Misri (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes in Bahr Ur Raaiq:

وقولت عشرون ركعة لبيان لكمها وهو قول الجمهور لما في الموطأ عن يزيد بن رومان قال كان الناس يقومون في زمن عمر بن الخطاب بثلاث وعشرين ركعة وعلى حкал الناس شرقا وغربا -

Translation: Imam Zaila’i Hanafi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes:

Translation: In our opinion, Taraweeh is of 20 raka’at and Imam Shaf’ee and Imam Ahmed bin Hambal have also said this. Allama Qazi Ayaz (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) has narrated the same on the authority of the majority of the scholars.

(Tabyeen Ul Haqaiq, Kitab Us Salaat, Bab Witr wan Nawafil)

Allama Ibn e Nujaim Misri (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes in Bahr Ur Raaiq:
Translation: The majority of the Fuqaha say that Taraweeh is of 20 raka‘at, as the Hadith of Hadhrat Yazid bin Ruman (May Allah be well pleased with him) is present in Mawatta Al Malik that in the era of Hadhrat Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him) people used to offer 23 raka‘at (20 raka‘at Taraweeh and 3 raka‘at of Witr). The Muslims of the east and west have been doing the same.

(Al Bahr Ur Raiq, Vol 2, Pg No: 117)

It is given in Fatawa A’alamgiri:

وَهَيْيَ خَمْسُ تُروِيْحَاتٍ كُلُّ تُروِيْحٍ أَرَبَعُ رُكَعَاتٍ بِتَسْلِيمَتٖ،

كَذَا فِي السَّرَاجِيَةِ وَلَوْ زَادَ عَلَى خَمْسِ تُروِيْحَاتٍ بِالْجَمِيعَةِ يُكَرِّرُ عَنَّا

هُكَذَا فِي الْخَلَاصَةِ.

Translation: Taraweeh is offered with 5 breaks. Each break is of 4 raka‘at, which is offered with 2 salams. If it is offered with more than 5 breaks, it is Makruh (Undesirable) in our opinion.

(Fatawa A’alamgiri, Kitab Us Salaat, Pg No: 115)

Allama Abdur Rahman Muhammad, popularly known as Shaykh Zada Hanafi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes:

(عَشَرُونَ رَكْعَةً، سَوَى الْوَتَرِ)

Translation: Apart from Witr, Taraweeh is of 20 raka‘at.

(Majma Ul Anhur Fi Shahil Multaqal Abhir, Kitab Us Salaat, Fasli Fit Taraweeh)

Clarification by Hadhrat Shah Waliullah Muhaddiss Dehlvi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him):

Hadhrat Shah Waliullah Muhaddiss Dehlvi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes about Taraweeh in his monumental work Hujjatullahil Baligha:

وَعَدَّهُ عَشَرُونَ رَكَعَةً

Translation: Taraweeh is of 20 raka‘at.

(Hujjatullahil Baligha, Vol 2, Pg No: 18)
Muhaddith-e-Deccan Hadhrat Abul Hasanaat Syed Abdullah Shah Sahab Naqshbandi Qadri Hanafi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes:

ان مجموع عشرين ركعة في التراويح سنة مؤكدة لأنهما واظب عليهما الخلفاء، وقد سبق أن سنة الخلفاء أيضًا لازم الاتباع وتاركها آثم—

Translation: A total of 20 raka’at of Taraweeh is a Sunnah Maukkada (Compulsory Sunnah) because this one of those acts which have been regularly performed by the Caliphs and it has been mentioned that the Sunnah of the Caliphs is also to be followed and the one who leaves them is a sinner.

(Zujajatul Masabeeh, Haashiya, Vol 1, Pg No: 366)

It is written in Al Fiqh Al Islami Wal Adilla:

وقد سئل أبو حنيفة عما فعله عمر رضي الله عنه فقال: التراويح سنة مؤكدة، ولم يتمخرجه عمر من تلقائه نفسه، ولم يكن فيه مبتدعًا، ولم يأمر به إلا عن أصل لديه، وعهد من رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم.

Translation: Imam Abu Hanifa (May Allah be well pleased with him) was asked about this ruling of Hadhrat Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him). He said, Taraweeh is a Sunnah Maukkada and neither did Hadhrat Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him) start this on his own nor did he invent any new method. The command which he gave is based on some evidence which he had and on the established Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam).

20 raka’at of Taraweeh in the Hambali school of Fiqh

Allama Ibn e Qudama Hambali (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes in his book Al Kafi:

فالسنة أن يصلحهم عشرين ركعة في الجماعة لذلك، وبوتاه الإمام بمثل ثلاث ركعات—

Translation: It is a Sunnah that Taraweeh should be offered as congregational prayer of 20 raka’at and the Imam should lead the people in Witr also.

(Al Kafi, Kitab Us Salaat)
20 raka’at of Tarweeh in the Shafe’ee school of Fiqh

Allama Ibn e Hajr Haithami Makki Shafe’ee (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes in Al Minhaj Ul Qaween:

لكن أجمع عليه الصحابة رضوان الله عليهم أجمعين.

Translation: Nevertheless, the Sahabah (May Allah be well pleased with him) have concurred and agreed on 20 raka’at of Tarweeh.

(AL Minhaj Ul Qaween, Pg No: 138)

Allama Abul Walid Sulayman bin Khalaf Andusi Malik (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes in his book Al Muntaqa Sharh Mawatta:

Translation: Based on the Hadith of Hadhrat Yazid bin Ruman (May Allah be well pleased with him): Imam Shafe’ee (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) has ruled that Tarweeh is of 20 raka’at apart from Witr.

Tarweeh in Maliki School of Fiqh:

Allama Ibn e Rushd Maliki (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes in Bidayatul Mujtahid:

فاختار مالك في احدي قوله وابو حنيفة والشافعي واحمد وداود القيام بعشرين ركعة سوى الوتر.

Translation: According to a report Imam Malik, Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Shafe’ee and Imam Ahmed bin Hambal (May Allah be well pleased with him) have agreed that Tarweeh is of 20 raka’at apart from Witr.

(Bidayatul Mujtahid, Vol I, Pg No: 210)

20 Raka’at in Tarweeh

There are 20 raka’at in Tarweeh. It is established by the Sunnah (Masnoon) to offer it as 10 cycles of 2 raka’at and to give a gap after every 4 raka’at. As given in Durre Mukhtar, Vol 1, Pg No: 521:

وهي عشرون ركعة (بعشر تسليمات)

Wisdom behind 20 raka’at of Tarweeh

Imam Zaila’i Hanafi (May Allah shower His Mercy on Him) writes:
Translation: Only Allah knows the wisdom as to why 20 raka’at have been ordered for Taraweeh. It might be that the raka’at should equal the number of Fardh Salaat, as all the Fardh Salaat including Witr add up to 20. (Tabyeen Ul Haqia, Kitab Us Salaat)

It is also given in Bahr Ur Raiq that the wisdom behind deciding the number of raka’at in Taraweeh as 20 is that the Sunnah complete the Fardh (Obligatory). That is why the number of raka’at in Taraweeh has been decided as 20 keeping in mind that the number of raka’at in the Fardh Salaat, as Allama Ibn e Nujaim Misri (May Allah shower His Mercy upon him) writes on the authority of Imam Jalaluddin Suyuti:

Translation: The wisdom behind ordaining the number of Taraweeh raka’at as 20 that the Sunnah complete the Fardh. All the Fardh Salaat including Witr add up to 20. For this reason, Taraweeh is also of the same number, so that the Salaat which are to be completed and the Salaat which complete become equal.

Clarification by Allama Ibn e Abidin Shaami

Allama Ibn e Abidin Shaami Hanafi Naqshbandi writes:

Translation: It is not a secret that the Sunnah along with the Fardh do complete them, but in this month they should be most complete.

Explaining of the Hadith of 36 raka’at:

وَقَالَ الْشَافِعِيَّةُ: وَلَا أهْلُ الْمَدِينَةِ فَعَلُّهَا سِتًاَ وَنَسْتَانِينَ لِأَنَّ الْعَشَرَيْنَ
The Shaf‘ee Fuqaha say that the people of Medina offered 36 raka‘at of Taraweeh. This is because 20 raka‘at of Taraweeh has 5 breaks. The people of Mecca perform 1 tawaaf after each break. So, the people of Medina started offering another 4 raka‘at in each break to become equal to the people of Mecca in virtuous acts. This is not allowed for anybody apart from the people of Medina. This is the most correct ruling as Allama Ramli says. Because the Holy Prophet’s (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) migrated to Medina and His sanctuary also is in Medina, the people of Medina are distinguished from others.

(Al Mausuatul Fiqhiya Al Kuweitiya, Vol 27, Pg No: 143)

It has been established by the rigorously-authenticated (Sahih) Hadith that Hadhrat Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him), Hadhrat Usman (May Allah be well pleased with him), Hadhrat Ali (May Allah be well pleased with him) used to offer 20 raka‘at of Taraweeh and in the eras of their caliphate, it was also the custom of the Muslim Ummah. More than that, the Sahabah had arrived at a consensus about this as understood by the explanations given by the Imams, Fuqaha, etc. In general, in the Muslim world including in Mecca and Medina, this is what is followed.

If it is said that the Holy Prophet’s (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) offering of 20 raka‘at is not established and offering 20 raka‘at of Taraweeh is against Sunnah and we should offer 8 raka‘at. Then to answer to this some points are being mentioned:

The Holy Prophet’s (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) offering of 20 raka‘at has been recorded in Imam Baihaqi’s Shi‘ab Ul Iman, Imam Tabarani’s Mojam Kabeer, Mojam Ausat, in Musanaf Ibn e Abi Shaiba, Musnad e Abd bin Humaid, Majma Uz Zawaaid and in Zujajatul Masabeen on the authority of Hadhrat Abdullah bin Abbas.

Hadrat Abdullah bin Abbas says:

عن ابن عباس قال : كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يصلى في شهر رمضان بعشرين ركعة واثنتي عشرة.

Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Abbas that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) offered 20 raka‘at of Taraweeh and Witr in the month of Ramadhan.
A rule followed by the Experts of Hadith

Among the Imams of criticism of Hadith and of narration and comprehension of Hadith, none has declared this Hadith as false or lies. But they have clarified about the Dhaeeef Hadith (Hadith which are not rigorously authenticated) that when there are other Hadith in support of that Hadith, then that Hadith does not remain Dhaeeef. It becomes "Hasan Lighairihi" which is to be followed. Hadhrat Shah Abdul Haq Muhaddis Dehlvi (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) has clarified in his foreword of Usul al Hadith:

والضعف ان تعداد طرقة وانغمض ضعفه يسمى حسنًا لغبره—

Translation: If a Dhaeeef Hadith has many chains of narration which make it stronger, then it is called "Hasan Lighairihi"

Taking support from one rule of the Muhaddithin, namely That Dhaeeef Hadith is not to be acted upon," and ignoring this Marfu Hadith is to disobey those rules and guidelines. There is an element of weakness in the related Hadith of Hadhrat Abdullah bin Abbas, but there are many authentic Hadith in support of it. The practice of the Sahabah is well established and the act of the Tabee'en is also well established. All these support and strengthen this Hadith.

Hadith of 8 raka’at

There is a narration from Hadhrat Aisha Siddiqua (May Allah be well pleased with her) which mentions 8 raka’at.

عن أبي سلمة بن عبد الراحمان أنَّ أَخْبَرَ أَنَّهُ سَأَلَ عَابِدَةً رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا أَنْ تُصَلِّي اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي رَمَضَانٍ فَقَالَتْ مَا كَانَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّي الله عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَرَبَّدَ فِي رَمَضَانٍ وَلَا في غَيْرِهِ عَلَى إِحْدَى عَشْرَةِ رَكْعَةٍ يُصَلِّي أَرَبَعًا فَلَا تَسْلِمْ عَنْ حَسَنِهِنَّ
Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Abu Salma bin Abdur Rahman (May Allah be well pleased with him), he says that he asked Hadhrat Aisha Siddiqua (May Allah be well pleased with her) how was the Salaat of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) in Ramadhan? Ummul Momineen Hadhrat Aisha (May Allah be well pleased with her) said: The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) would not offer more than 11 raka’at in Ramadhan and out of it. He would 4 raka’at with such fervor that you should not even talk about it. Then He (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) would 3 raka’at. I (i.e. Hadhrat Aisha) asked Him: O Prophet of Allah (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam)! Do You rest before offering Witr? The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said: O Aisha (May Allah be well pleased with her)! Verily My eyes sleep, my heart does not.

(Sahih Bukhari, Kitabul Tahajjud, Pg No: 154, Hadith No: 1147; Bab Fadil min qiyami Ramadhan, Pg No 269, Hadith No: 2013; Pg No: 504, Hadith No: 3569; Sahih Muslim Kitab Us Salaatil Musafireen, Hadith No: 738)

The Hadith of 8 raka’at is about Tahajjud

Saying on the basis of this Hadith that Taraveeh is only of 8 raka’at is a grave mistake, which is very much against the science of Hadith, the narration of Hadith and the understanding of Hadith.

When looked closely, it becomes obvious that this Hadith is not at all about Taraveeh, but about Tahajjud as Hadhrat Aisha (May Allah be well pleased with her) is talking about 8 raka’at in Ramadhan and out of it. Every sane person realizes that Taraveeh is offered only in Ramadhan and not out of it; otherwise, we should also say that Taraweeh is offered for the whole year. Even those who insist that Taraweeh do not offer it throughout the year! We can act upon this Hadith only when the 8 raka’at mentioned here are accepted in Tahajjud. That these 8 raka’at mean Tahajjud is also supported by this Hadith of Hadhrat Aisha (May Allah be well pleased with her), which comes in Sahih Bukhari:
Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Aisha (May Allah be well pleased with her) that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) would offer 11 raka’at, then when the day dawned, He (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) would offer 2 light raka’at. Then, He would rest on His right side to the point that the Muezzin would come and request Him.

(Sahih Bukhari, Vol 2, Kitab Ud Da’awat, Hadith No: 6310)

Also, the (coming) Hadith of Hadhrat Abdullah Bin Abbas (May Allah be well pleased with them) clearly shows that the Hadith of 8 raka’at is about Tahajjud. The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) would rest and offer 11 raka’at, then Hadhrat Bilal (May Allah be well pleased with him) would come and call out the Adhaan, as given in Sahih Bukhari:

Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Abdullah bin Abbas (May Allah be well pleased with them), he says that I stayed at the house of my aunt Ummul Momineen Hadhrat Maimoona (May Allah be well pleased with her). The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) talked to His wife for some time, then rested and when the last third part of the night came, He (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) sat up and looked towards the sky and recited this verse of the Holy Quran:

Then the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) awoke, would perform Wuzu and use Miswak and offered 11 raka’at. Then when Hadhrat Bilal (May Allah be well pleased with him) called out the Adhaan, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) offered 2 raka’at and came out and offered the Salaat of Fajr.

(Sahih Bukhari, Vol 2, Kitab Ut Tafseer, Pg No: 657, Hadith No: 4569)

**Calling 20 raka’at a Bida’ah is not at all justice**

It is not correct to make a deduction from the 8 raka’at Hadith and call 20 raka’at a Bida’ah. Even if it is accepted that Taraweeh is of 8 raka’at, then the one offering 20
raka’at is offering 12 raka’at and Ramadhan is the month of good deeds and virtuous acts. It is established by the Hadith that in this month extra prayers should be offered. The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) has given glad tidings of the reward for offering Nafl prayers being equal to the reward of offering Fardh Salat in other months. There is a lengthy Hadith in Imam Baihaqi’s Shu’ab Ul Iman. Please see a small part out of it.

من تقرب فيه بخصصة من الخير كان كمن أدى فريضة فيما سواه—

Translation: The person who does a Nafl good act in this month is like a person doing a Fardh act in other months.

(Baihaqi Shu’ab Ul Iman, Hadith No: 3455, Zujajatul Masabeh Vol 1, Pg No: 541/542, Kitab Us Saum)

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) would offer more worship in this month than other months. It is given in a Hadith in Sahih Bukhari:

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت كأن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا دخل العشر سته مدبرة وأحيا لله وألفق أهله

Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Ummul Momineen Hadhrat Aisha Siddiqua (May Allah be well pleased with her) that when the last 10 days of Ramadhan came, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) would worship more than before, would spend the nights in worship and would wake up the members of the household.

(Sahih Bukhari, Kitabul Fadhli Lailatul Qadr, Hadith No: 2044, Sahih Muslim Hadith No: 1174)

The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) has declared Taraweeh as a special Sunnah, as given in Sunan Nasai, Sunan Ibn Majah and Kanzul Ummal:

خذني أبي قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم إن الله تبارك وتعالى فرض صيام رمضان عليكم وسنست لكم قيامة—

Translation: Abul Salma bin Abdur Rahman (May Allah be well pleased with them) narrates from his father Hadhrat Abdur Rahman (May Allah be well pleased with him) that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said: Verily! Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala) has made the fasts of Ramadhan Fardh (obligatory) for you and I have declared the Salaat of Taraweeh in it to be a Sunnah.
In this Hadith, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaih wa sallam) has declared extra Salaat in Ramadhan as His Sunnah and encouraged the Ummah to perform more good deeds than other months.

If Taraweeh is accepted as 8 raka’at, then it should said that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaih wa sallam) encouraged the Ummah to offer more good deeds and perform more worship, but He Himself did not do so. May Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta’ala) protect us from this.

The mentioned Hadith establish that in Ramadhan more and more worship should be offered. Even then calling 20 raka’at as a Bida’ah is no justice.

It is a matter of shame that that act which is completely against the Sunnah is termed Sunnah and what the Hadith really demand is called Bida’ah.

**Consequences of taking Taraweeh as 8 raka’at from Hadhrat Aisha (May Allah be well pleased with her) Hadith:**

If Taraweeh is taken as 8 raka’at, then it should also be accepted that Taraweeh should be offered after getting up from sleep and in the last part of the night. Nobody offers Taraweeh after getting up from sleep.

If Hadhrat Aisha (May Allah be well pleased with her) was saying about 8 raka’at of Taraweeh, then she herself would be offering the same 8 raka’at. She would not have kept quiet on seeing something against the Sunnah. There is no narration from Hadhrat Aisha Siddiqua (May Allah be well pleased with her) that she offered 8 raka’at at Taraweeh. She was present in the times of the Four Caliphs. The Sahabah would all offer 20 raka’at. If this was against the Sunnah, she would have objected to it. That Hadhrat Aisha Siddiqua (May Allah be well pleased with her) held her peace and did not object to this shows that this Hadith is not about Taraweeh.

If this Hadith of Ummul Momineen Hadhrat Aisha Siddiqua (May Allah be well pleased with her) is about Taraweeh, then which Salaat does the following Hadith talk about? Both the Hadith cannot be about the same Salaat, as the previous Hadith of Hadhrat Aisha (May Allah be well pleased with her) is about Ramadhan and out of it and this Hadith talks about 2, 3 days:

> عن عائشة قالتَ كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يصلي من النَّزل في حُجَرِي وجدارُ الحُجَرِي قصيرٌ فرأى الناسُ شخصٌ النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقامَ أتامًا يصليون بصلاتهُ، فاصبحوا فتحدثوا بذلك.
Translation: It has been narrated on the authority of Hadhrat Aisha Siddiqua (May Allah be well pleased with her), she says: The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was offering Salaat in His room at night and the wall of the room was of medium height. The Sahabah saw the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) and offered Salaat behind Him (taking Him as their Imam). Morning came and the Sahabah mentioned this to the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam). The next night the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was offering Salaat. The Sahabah saw Him and started offering Salaat behind Him. The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) did this for 2 or 3 nights to the point that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) remained in His room and did not come. In morning, when the Sahabah mentioned this, the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said: I fear that this Salaat will be declared Fardh for you. In another version of the same Hadith, the following words are given:

فتعجزوا عنها

Translation: Then you will not be able to offer it.

(Sahih Bukhari, Vol 1, Hadith No. 729; Hadith No. 924; Hadith No. 1129; Hadith No: 2012)

This Hadith is mentioned in Sahih Bukhari at more than 3 places. This Hadith has mention of offering of Salaat, but there is no mention of the number of raka’at. The interpreter of Sahih Bukhari, the author of Fath Ul Bari, Imam Ibn Hajr Asqalani (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) has clarified in Al Talkhees that here, the number of raka’at was 20.

(Al Talkhees, Tabi’ul Kitab Us Salaat, Hadith No: 540)

Imam Ibn Hajr Makki Haitami (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) has mentioned one Hadith about the number of the raka’at of Taraweeh.

"عشرون ركعة" في كل ليلة من رمضان بنية قيام رمضان أو سنة تراويح أو صلة التراويح... مما صح أنه صلی الله علی وسلم صلی
النرويج ليالى أربعا فصلوها معه ثم تأحرر وصلاها في بيته باقي الشهر

وقال خشيت أن تفرض عليكم فتعجزوا عنها—

Translation: (It has) "20 raka’at every night of Ramadhan, with the intention of Qiyaame Ramadhan or Taraweeh, because there is a rigorously-authenticated (Sahih) Hadith that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) offered Taraweeh for 4 nights and the Sahabah followed Him (in prayer). Then the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) did not come out His room and offered it in His room for the rest of the month and said: I fear that this Salaat will made Fardh (obligatory) for you, then you will not be able to offer it.

Muhammad bin Muhammad Akmaluddin Babarti (May Allah shower His Mercy on him) writes in detail about 20 raka’at at Taraweeh in ‘Inaya Sharh Hidayah:

زُوِيَ أَنَّهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ خَرَجَ لَيْلَةٌ مِنْ لِياليِ رَمْضَانِ وَصَلَّى عَشْرَينَ رَكْعَةً، فَلَمّا كَانَتِ اللَّيْلَةُ ثانَيَةً اجْتَمَعَ النَّاسُ فَخَرَجَ وَصَلَّى بِهِمْ عَشْرَينَ رَكْعَةً، فَلَمّا كَانَتِ اللَّيْلَةُ ثَالثَةً كَبَرَ النَّاسُ فَلَمْ بَخَرَجَ عَلَيْهِ الصَّلَاةَ وَالسَّلَامَ وَقَالَ: أَرُوَّا اجْتَمَاعَكُمْ لِكَتَبُ خَشَيَتْ أَنْ تَكُتَّبُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَكَانَ النَّاسُ يُصَلُّونَهَا فَرَأَيْدَ أَلَيْدَ قَرَنَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، فَقَالَ عُمَّرُ بْنُ ابْنِ عَلْيٍ أَرْيَ أَنْ أَجْمِعَ النَّاسَ عَلَى إِيَامٍ واحِدَةٍ فِي رَمْضَانِ اْجْتَمَعُهُمْ عَلَى أَيُّهُمْ يَنْ كَبِّرُ فَصَلَّى بِهِمْ خَمسَ نُوْضَحَاتٍ عَشْرِينَ رَكْعَةً.

Translation: It is narrated that the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) came one night and offered 20 raka’at. Then when the next night came, the Sahabah gathered. The Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) came and led the Sahabah in 20 raka’at. Then when the 3rd night came, the Sahabah gathered in large numbers, but the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) did not come. He (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) said: I know of your gathering (for Me), but I fear that this Salaat will be declared Fardh for you. Then the Sahabah, until the time of Hadhrat Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him) offered this Salaat individually and separately. Then Hadhrat Umar (May Allah be well pleased with him) said: I think it is better that I gather the people behind a single Imam. Then, he gathered the people with Hadhrat Ubai bin ka’ab as the Imam, then he led the people in 20 raka’at with 5 breaks.

(Al ‘Inaya, Sharh Hidayah, Kitab Us Salaat, Fasli Fiqi Sha’ri Ramadhan)

The blessed habit of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) was 20 raka’at. The sahabah agreed on the number of raka’at as 20. The Fuqaha who explained the
laws of Islam have clarified the same in the books of Fatawa. The Muhaddithin who held safely thousands of Hadith in their heart did the same. In every century, this was followed. After knowing all this in detail, no just person will deny 20 raka‘at Taraveeh. The Hadith can be followed and acted upon correctly only when Taraveeh is offered as 20 raka‘at.

May Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta‘ala) for the sake of the Holy Prophet (Sallallahu alaihi wa sallam) guide us and all Muslims on to the path of guidance and guide us to perform good deeds in this blessed month. Aameen

آمین بجاح طه ویس وصلي الله تعالى وبارك وسلم عليه واله وصحيه

اجتمعین والحمد الله رب العليمين, سبحان الله وبحمده سبحان الله العظيم –