

## **QASR (SHORTENED) PRAYER**

The *Shari'ah* has prescribed the traveller to shorten his prayer while on journey, and to offer only two *rak'ahs* of *Fard* in place of four. The Qur'an says: "**When you go on a journey, there is no harm if you shorten Salat.**"(4:101) The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) has said: "**This is a favour of Allah to you, so you should accept His favour gratefully.**" (*Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi*)

After a person has left his habitation with the intention of proceeding on journey, he should shorten his prayer; otherwise he would be committing a sin. (*Durr al-Mukhtar*) It should be borne in mind that shortening is allowed only in those prayers where one has normally to offer four *rak'ahs* of *Fard* namely *Zuhr*, *Asr* and *Isha* prayers. In the *Fajr* and *Maghrib* prayers, no shortening is allowed, and one has to offer two and three *rak'ahs* of *Fard* respectively. The *Sunnat rak'ahs* of the *Fajr* prayer should not be abandoned. But as for the *Sunnat rak'ahs* of the other prayers, one has complete option. One should offer only *Fard rak'ahs*, when one is actually travelling, but when one has halted at a place during the journey one may offer the *Sunnat rak'ahs* as well (*Durr al-Mukhtar*). The *Witr* prayer, however, being *Wajib* must be offered in full. No shortening is allowed in the *Sunnat* or *Nafil rak'ahs* during the journey. If a person chooses to offer them, he has to offer them in full.

If a person sets out with the intention of visiting a place that is about 48 miles (approximately 77.25 kilometers) away from his hometown, he will be considered to be on a journey. This distance can be covered in three days by a person who walks a normal gait and who travels from morning until the sun begins to decline. It does not matter whether a person covers this distance on foot in three days or reaches his destination by a faster mode of conveyance in a few hours; he should shorten his prayer during the journey.

After one has set out on journey, one should continue offering the prayer in full as long as one is inside the habitation. But as soon as one has crossed the outer-most limits of the habitation, one should begin shortening the prayer. However, if during the journey, he makes up his mind to make a short stoppage at a place for 15 days or more, he will be regarded as being at home and will have to offer the full prayers no matter whether he has to cut short his stay later due to some reason. On the other hand, if he has the intention of staying for less than 15 days at a place, he will shorten his prayers as if on a journey, and will continue doing so even if he has to prolong his stay for months and has to postpone his departure, due to unforeseen circumstances (provided that he intends to stay for less than 15 days each time).

If a person has a plan of staying various numbers of days at different places, i.e. five days here and ten days there, but less than 15 days in each case, he will have to shorten his prayers throughout the journey.

The residents of a place can offer their prayer behind an *Imam* who is travelling. Such an *Imam*, however, has to announce after salutation at the completion of two *Rak'ahs* that he is a traveller so the resident followers may complete their prayer independently. Similarly a traveller can offer his prayer behind a resident *Imam*, though in this case he has to observe the full prayer in obedience to the *Imam* and is not allowed to shorten it.

The prayers missed during a journey will have to be shortened when offered later at home, and the prayers missed while at home will have to be offered in full when offered during a journey.

## **QAZA (MISSED) PRAYER**

It is a great sin to miss a prayer without a genuine reason or real necessity and the Hadiths contain great warnings about it. If a prayer is missed, one should try to offer it as soon as possible (the sooner the better) and avoid delaying it unnecessarily. This is a debt which one must pay off at the first available opportunity. For one does not know when suddenly one will have to pass away into Allah's presence and present before Him one's life account.

It is imperative to offer a missed *Fard* prayer, and *Witr* prayer. It is also essential to offer a prayer that one had vowed to offer. A *Nafil* prayer after it has been begun becomes obligatory and must be completed. If due to some reason, it becomes void or is abandoned, it has to be offered later as a missed prayer.

The missed *Sunnat* prayer needs not be offered later. The *Sunnat rak'ahs* of *Fajr*, however in view of their great importance and stress laid on them by the Holy Prophet (S.A.W), have to be offered later, on the same day after the sun has risen and before it begins to decline, along with the missed *Fard* prayer. If this is not done before the sun begins to decline, only the *Fard rak'ahs* will be offered later.

If a group of people together missed a prayer, for instance, due to a collective journey where they could not offer it duly in time; or an accident taking place on a locality; or their being overpowered by sleep; they should offer the missed prayer in congregation, with audible or inaudible recitation as the case may be. If an individual misses a prayer, he should offer it secretly at home, for it is sinful to miss a prayer on account of carelessness or negligence and then to offer it publicly. One may, however, offer a missed prayer in the mosque as well, but should do so quietly.

There is no fixed time for offering a missed prayer. One may offer it any time, but the sooner the better, avoiding, however, the forbidden times. If a person has missed more than one prayer, he should offer them at the first available opportunity, if possible altogether one after the other. For it is not necessary to offer a missed *Zuhr* prayer at the *Zuhr* time and a missed *Asr* prayer at the *Asr* time only.

The prayers missed during a journey have to be shortened, as prescribed, if offered during the stay at a place, and the prayers missed during a stay have to be offered in full, if offered during a journey. For instance, the *Zuhr*, *Asr* and *Isha* Prayers, if missed during a stay, have to be offered in full (four *rak'ahs* each), if offered during a journey.

The Friday prayer, if missed, cannot be offered later. One may however, offer four *rak'ahs* of the *Zuhr* prayer later instead of the Friday prayer which one has missed. If a person missed an Eid congregation to offer the Eid prayer, he cannot offer it later alone within the time limit, for the *Eid* prayer is conditional upon congregation.

## **SAJDAH SAHW (PROSTRATION OF FORGETFULNESS)**

Prostration (Sajdah) means putting one's forehead down on the floor or ground showing great respect; Sahw (forgetfulness) means being lost in thought, being careless, skipping something by mistake. **Prostration of forgetfulness means two Sajdahs that become necessary at the end of the prayer due to delaying one of the obligatory/essential (Fard) parts of the prayer by mistake or skipping or delaying a Wajib.**

In case of delaying an essential part, delaying or skipping a Wajib, during the final sitting, after reading '**Tahiyat**', the person turns his head to right saying **Salam**, then he says "**Allahu Akbar**" and goes down to prostration. He performs two prostrations and sits. Then he recites **Tahiyat, Durood** and **Dua**; at last he turns his head right and left saying **Salam**.

**Sajdah Sahw is Wajib.** According to the Hadith reported by Hazrat Abdullah bin Mas'ud (R.A): "**If anyone of you is doubtful about his prayer, he should follow what he thinks to be correct and complete his prayer accordingly and finish it and do two prostrations of forgetfulness.**" (Bukhari, Salat, 31; Muslim)

The prostration of forgetfulness eliminates the sins originating from skipping Wajib acts like reciting the Tashahhud but it does not compensate a missing part like not performing Ruku' (bending the body).

The prostration of forgetfulness is Wajib for the imam and the person praying alone. If a person who follows the imam during the prayer makes a mistake, it is not Wajib for him to perform the prostration of forgetfulness. If the imam makes a mistake, it becomes Wajib for the congregation to follow him. If the person following the imam has joined the prayer later or has missed some part of the prayer, it is also Wajib for him to join the prostration of forgetfulness. However, he follows the imam in the prostrations not in the salutation.

If a person skips a Fard in a prayer deliberately or by mistake, he has to perform that prayer again. The prostration of forgetfulness is not enough to compensate that big fault. If a Fard is delayed or a Wajib is skipped or delayed by mistake, then it becomes necessary to perform the prostration of forgetfulness. Thus, the deficiency is compensated. If a Sunnah is skipped or delayed deliberately or by mistake, the prostration of forgetfulness is not necessary but such an act is a fault; it causes deprivation from reward and virtue.