

# UNIT

# E

## CHAPTER

### FOUR

# Prayer in Times of Difficulty

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

- 1 Learn when a Muslim can shorten or combine two prayers together.
- 2 Appreciate Allah (SWT) and his favors in making worship easier in times of difficulty.
- 3 Learn the Islamic rules of prayer in sickness, during travel, and severe weather.

## VOCABULARY

Salat-ul-Musafir صلاة المسافرين

Salat-ul-Mareed صلاة المريض

Salatul-Qadaa' صلاة القضاء

Jami' جمع

Qasr قصر

Sujood-us-Sahw سجود السهو

## Easing and Reducing Prayers

Allah سبحانه وتعالى is the most merciful and loving. Therefore, he made his religion easy to learn, understand, and practice. Whenever there is a difficulty, there is a way to ease it in Islam.

As we learned in previous sections, the prayers have a number of conditions that are required to make it perfect. However, Muslims may go through difficult situations like sickness, travel, or inclement weather that warrant some ease. Under these circumstances, Islam allows us to shorten and/or combine our prayers as a mercy

to us and a protection from hardship. In fact, Allah وتعالى سبحانه intends for all of his creation to enjoy ease in this life and the life hereafter. Allah says in the Qur'an:

“يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ بِكُمْ الْيُسْرَ وَلَا يُرِيدُ بِكُمْ الْعُسْرَ”

“Allah intends for you ease, and He does not want to make things difficult for you.” (Al-Baqarah: 185)

## Salat-ul-Mareed صلاة المريض : The prayer of the sick

As mentioned earlier, Allah وتعالى سبحانه intends for all of his creation ease in this life and the life hereafter. There are sometimes circumstances that befall an individual that requires that he shortens his prayers. If someone falls ill or fears that the exertion of prayer will make him more ill or slow his recovery, he can then offer prayer by sitting, lying, or in extreme cases, with his eyes.

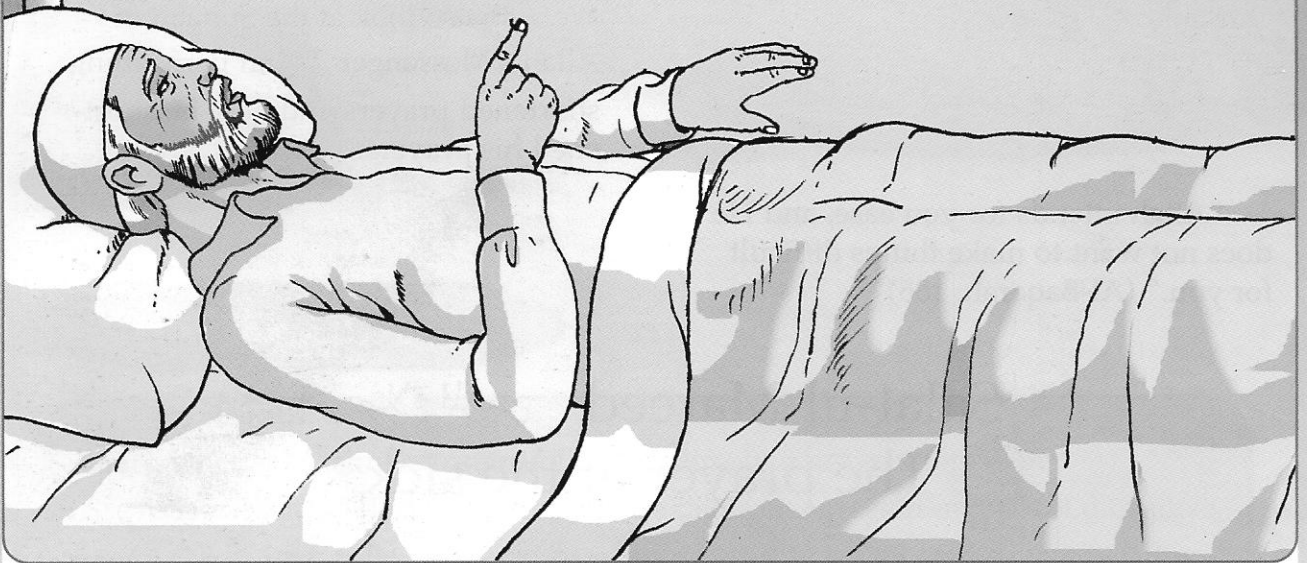
Of course, this is only permissible under those circumstances and is not allowed for those who are of sound body and health. Imran bin Hussain narrates, “I had piles, so I asked the Prophet ﷺ about the prayer and he said, ‘Offer the prayer standing and if you cannot do so, pray while sitting, and if you can't do that, then make salah while lying on your side.’” This is related by Bukhari, Tirmidhi, Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, An-Nasa'i.

Keeping this in mind, we will learn in the following sections what warrants the reduction of prayers, in addition to the integrals of shortening the prayers. We will also look at the Sunaan of Allah's Messenger ﷺ in performing shortened prayers and how he shortened his prayers.

**How should the prayer of the sick be performed?**

The following will explain exactly how the prayer of the sick should be performed:

1. The person performing prayer who can't stand, should sit while making prayer. He/She should make Rukoo' and Sujood by bowing the head making sure that the Sajdah is lower than the Rukoo'.
2. If prayer while sitting is still too overwhelming for the sick person, then he or she should pray while lying down.
3. The back of the person should be firmly fixed on the bed with the legs pointing towards the Qibla.
4. The legs should not be completely stretched, but the person's knees should be raised.
5. The head should rest at a high level with a pillow under it.



6. The prayer must be made using gestures, like bowing the head, with the Sajdah being lower than the Rukoo'.

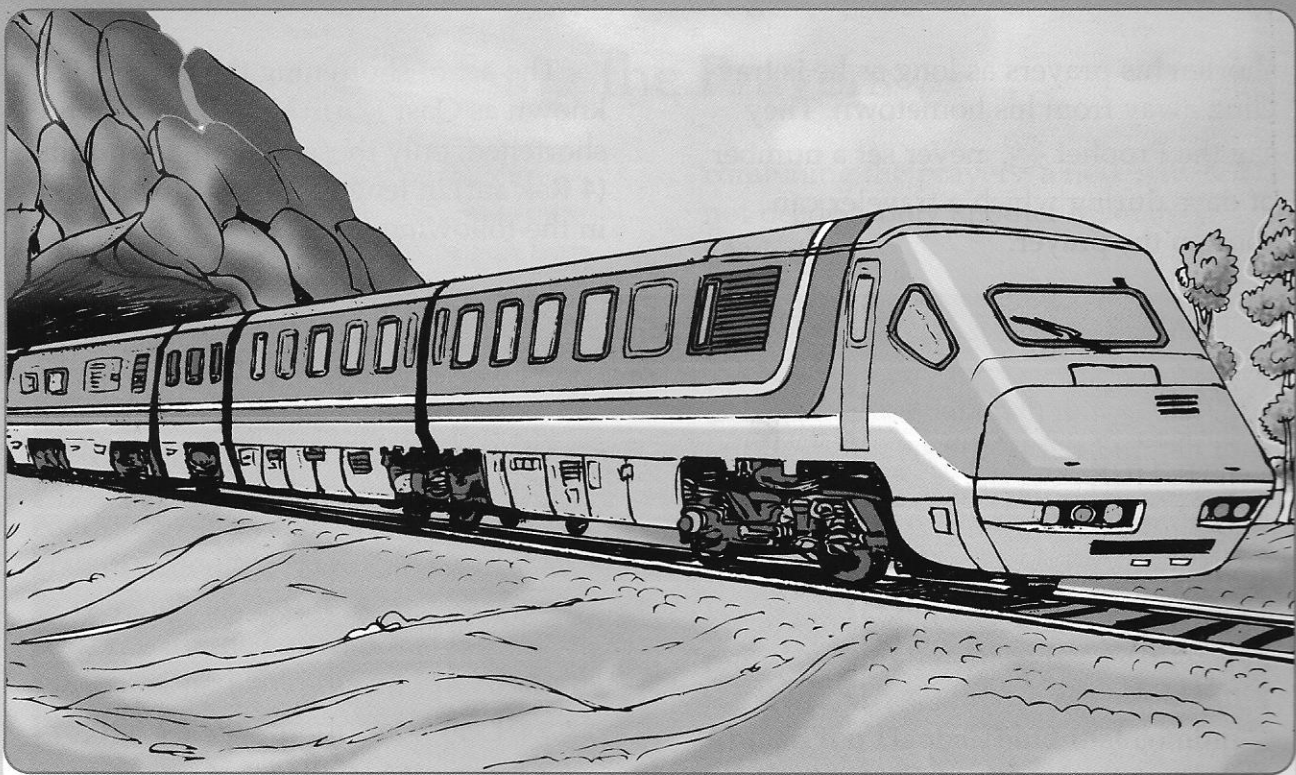
7. If the knees can't be raised, then stretching them is overlooked, but the head of the person must be facing the Qibla,

If prayer cannot be made sitting, then it is permissible to pray on the side of the body, preferably the right side using head gestures for the Rukoo' and Sujood. If someone is so sick that he/she can't even make head gestures, then he or she can blink his or her eyes or just think the Rukoo' and the Sujood in his or her mind.

### Combining Prayers During Illness

Sometimes it is necessary to combine prayers due to severe illness. This does not mean common cold or flu, but a sickness that would worsen or slow the healing process if one was to perform an individual prayer.

According to Hanbali and Shaf'i'ee schools, it is allowed to combine two prayers due to illness, either during the time of the earlier or later Salah, as it is a greater hardship. Only the Thuhr and Asr prayers are combined with each other, and the Maghrib and Isha' prayers are combined with each other. Fajr is to be prayed by itself.



## The Traveler's Prayer : صلاة المسافر :

In today's world travel is very important and sometimes unavoidable. Although we have many modern means of transportation designed to get us where we're going with relative comfort and ease, travel can still be very tiring and problematic. As a mercy, Allah (SWT) has made prayer easy upon us during the tiring times of travel. He says in the Qur'an:

“وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ”

"When you travel throughout the earth there is no blame on you if you were to shorten your prayers."

According to most schools of Fiqh, whenever someone wants to shorten his or her prayers during travel the following stipulations have to be followed:

- The distance traveled has to be at least 48 miles or more (77 kilometers).
- Someone travels the distance of 48 miles (77 kilometers) arriving at his destination, but doesn't intend to remain there for more than 15 days.
- A traveler that intends to stay at his destination for at least 15 days will be considered a traveler for the duration of his or her journey only.

However, according to a number of Imams and scholars, a traveler can

shorten his prayers as long as he is traveling away from his hometown. They say the Prophet ﷺ never set a number of days during which a traveler can shorten the prayer.

The act of shortening the prayers is known as Qasr (قصر). Not all prayers are shortened, only those that are four units (4 Rak'at) in length. This is illustrated in the following table:

PRAYER	REGULAR	DURING TRAVEL
FAJR	2	2
THUHUR	4	2
ASR	4	2
MAGHRIB	3	3
ISHAA'	4	2

If you notice the table above, only the Fard prayers that feature 4 units are shortened. The Fajr and Maghrib prayers are left the same. They are not to be shortened! Similarly, there is no shortening of the Witr, Sunnah, or Nafl prayers.

Should any traveler pray behind those who are residents in the location in which he is traveling, then he is required to follow the Imam in full prayer. For example, if you were traveling to New York from Dallas for the duration of 10 days and wanted to pray in the local mosque, you would be required to pray four full units of prayer behind the Imam that is praying a full Salah. Therefore, if the Imam prays 4 Rak'at of Thuhr, then the traveler praying behind him is obliged to pray 4 full Rak'at as well.

It is  
not encouraged  
to pray Sunnah  
prayers while traveling  
except for the  
Sunnah of Fajr  
prayer.

However, if a resident happens to line up in prayer behind a traveler, then the traveler is obliged to inform the resident that he is a traveler and that he needs to complete the full prayer. For example, a traveler that is journeying from Dallas to New York should inform those who have joined him in Salat-ul-thuhur to complete four Rak'at of prayer since he will pray only two because he is a traveler.

## Combining the Prayers جمع :

Not only is it possible to shorten prayers during travel, it is also permissible to combine the prayers when traveling, and this act of combining prayers is known as jama' جمع. It is important to note that the majority of scholars, including the Hanbalis, Shafi'is, and Malikis, consider combining the prayers valid throughout travel with minimal conditions. However, the scholars of the Hanafi School consider combining the prayers to only be valid during the Hajj season with the sultan or his deputy present. They hold the opinion that the Prophet ﷺ only performed his Thuhr prayer later in its allotted time and the Asr prayer early in its allotted time, giving the appearance that both of them were combined. However, the reality is that he made each prayer within its own special time.

Only the Thuhr and Asr prayers are combined with each other and the Maghrib and Isha'a' are prayers combined with each other. Fajr is to be prayed by itself.

### The Athan and Iqamah during travel:

The Athan and Iqamah are always encouraged for a group of three or more individuals. However, if those people who are traveling in a group desire to pray while traveling, the Athan and Iqamah should be made. The mu'athin would recite the Athan, a member from the group would give the Iqamah, and then they would join in prayer. When

combining the prayers, a new Athan is not needed, only another Iqamah is needed.

### Rain and Severe Weather

Sahabi Abu Salamah ibn 'Abdurrahman said: "It is a Sunnah to combine the Maghrib and 'Isha'a' prayers when it is raining." Al-Bukhari records that the Prophet ﷺ combined the Maghrib and 'Isha'a' prayers on a rainy night in the Masjid.

Therefore, Imams Shafi'i, Malik and Ahmad Ibn Hanbal hold that combining the Maghrib and Isha'a' prayers is allowed for rain, snow, ice, and severe cold. Combining the prayers should happen during the time of the earlier prayer. If the rain continues during the start of the latter prayer, then the Imam can combine the prayer.

This concession is allowed only for one who prays with a congregation in the mosque. However, for one who prays alone or in a group in his house, it is not allowed for him to combine the Salah.

Imam Shafi'ee allowed the combination of Thuhr and Asr Prayers for rain and inclement or severe weather.

### Pressing Needs

It has also been narrated that the Prophet ﷺ combined prayers due to pressing and urgent needs. This was done under extreme circumstances, and

should not be done under regular circumstances. Prayer in congregation should always be observed as should prayer in its allotted time. Let us not forget the words of Allah (SWT) when he says:

“إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ  
كِتَابًا مَّوْقُوتًا”

“Verily, the prayer is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours.” (4:103)

Imam Muslim narrates the following regarding combined prayers due to pressing needs, “The Messenger of Allah (SWT) combined the Thuhr and 'Asr and then the Maghrib and 'Ishaa' in Madinah without there being any danger or rain.” Ibn 'Abbas was asked: “What did he desire by that action?” He

replied: “He did not want any hardship for his ummah.” This is related by Muslim.

These few points illustrate the mercy shown upon us by Allah (SWT). He desires that we do not fall under any hardships and has made worship for us easy. We should be extremely grateful and appreciative of the bounties that he has bestowed upon us. Those that we know of and those that we don't! However, the Prophet ﷺ did this only one time, or just few times to show Muslims that they can combine the prayer when there is a real need. Therefore, we should not make it a habit. In normal situations the Prophet ﷺ used to perform the five prayers each in its assigned time everyday.

## Corrective Rituals in Prayer

Now we need to examine what should be done if we make a mistake in our prayers.

Mistakes happen, and we are only held accountable for the mistakes that we knowingly make. Islam has offered us two major ways to correct our prayers, should we make any mistakes; Qadaa', or making up and Sujood As-Sahw, or the prostration of forgetting. In the following section, we will learn how we practice these two corrective methods.

### Salatul-Qadaa'

(صلاة القضاء)

Qadaa' (قضاء) is a term used for missed prayers that need to be made up. One of the first actions that a Muslim will be responsible for on the Day of Judgment is his/her prayer. This gives us an idea of how important it truly is. Even in times of illness, travel, fear or inclement weather, Salah must be performed. There is no excuse for prayers to be missed. Allah (SWT) has made it easy for us to complete our prayers, even in difficult situations. In

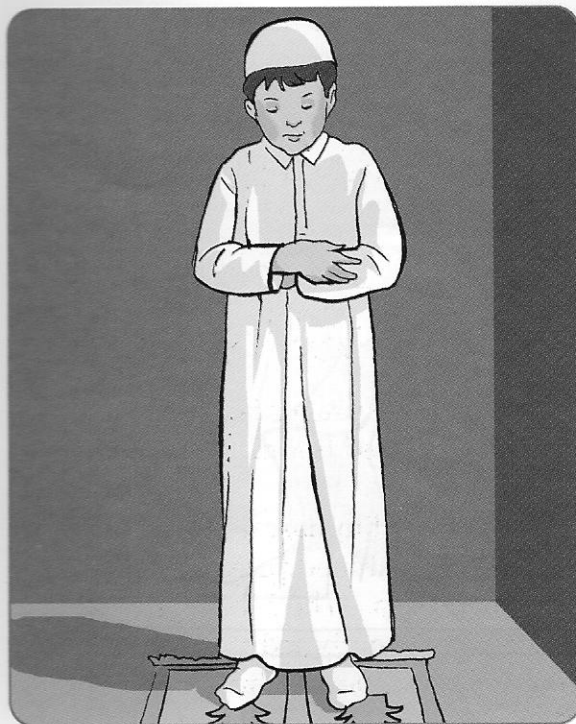
fact, the determining factor between true faith and disbelief is the leaving of the prayers. Allah (SWT) said about missing prayers: "And then there came after them a later generation who wasted the prayers and followed their own lusts, but they will meet with destruction." He also mentions in another verse, "Woe unto the worshippers who are heedless of their prayers!" Therefore, it is imperative that the prayers be made and during its allotted time!

### How missed prayers should be made up:

Missed prayers are made up in the same manner that the regular prayers are made. For example, if the Fajr prayer is missed, two Rak'aat should be made up as soon as possible, preferably before the time of Thuhr prayer has begun. The same thing applies to the Asr prayer if it is missed; it should be made up before the Maghrib. If you miss more than one prayer, you should make them up as soon as possible, keeping the same order of the prayers. It is not befitting for us to change that order and make prayers out of place.

## Sujood-us-Sahw

It is sometimes necessary to make up for mistakes during prayer. Even the Messenger of Allah (SWT) would forget during prayer. It is confirmed that the Prophet ﷺ sometimes forgot something in the Salah. It is also true that he said: "I am a human being and

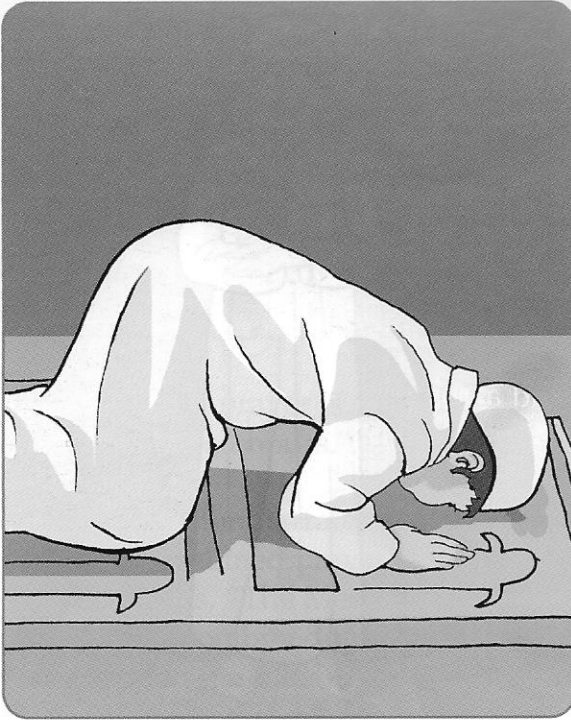


forget like you forget. If I forget, remind me." Therefore, what are the ways that we make up for mistakes during the prayer? We will examine those ways and discuss their details during the next section.

### What is Sujood-us-Sahw?

Sujood-us-Sahw (سجود السهو) refers to two prostrations made at the end of prayer for missing an obligatory act of prayer unintentionally. These two prostrations are made at the end of prayer.

Most of the scholars, including Maliki, Shafi'i, and the Hanbali schools, are of the opinion that these two prostrations are made during the prayer before the Tasleem (saying "Assalamu-Alaikum"). However, the Hanafi school holds that these two prostrations should be made after making one Tasleem to the right.



The two prostrations made at the end of prayer was a confirmed Sunnah of Rasoolullah ﷺ. It is recorded from Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri that the Prophet said: "If one of you has some doubts during his Salah and he does not recall (the number of Rak'aat) he has prayed, three or four, then he can put an end to his doubt by performing Salah according to what he was certain of [the lesser amount] and then making two Sujood before the Tasleem." In the story of Thul-Yadayn, in the two Sahihs, we are told the Prophet ﷺ made the prostrations after the Tasleem.

**When should Sujood-us-Sahw be made?**

Sujood-us-Sahw should be made under the following circumstances:

- If a person completes Tasleem before actually finishing the prayer, like skipping one Rak'ah or more. In this case you stand up and make up the missed rak'ah or Rak'aat, and then make Sujood-us-Sahw before Tasleem.

- If an additional Sujood, Rukoo', rak'ah, or Rak'aat have been made to the prayer, you make Sujood-us-Sahw before Tasleem.

- If the first Tashahhud is forgotten along with any other Wajib or sunnah acts of prayer, you don't have to make up the first Tashahhud, or a Sunnah act of the prayer, but instead make Sujood-us-Sahw before Tasleem.

- If you doubt whether you have prayed three or four units of prayer, you follow certainty. If you were more convinced that you prayed a Rak'ah less, for example, then you make up what you think you missed and then you make Sujood-us-Sahw before Tasleem. However, if you were more convinced that you prayed the right number of Rak'aat, then you complete your Salah without making Sujood-us-Sahw.

These cases show the importance of the performance of two prostrations after the prayer if someone forgets any Wajib or Sunnah act during the prayer unintentionally. However, when mistakes such as these are made willfully and intentionally, prayers must be made up from the beginning, and it is not permissible to make Sujood-us-Sahw for any mistakes done intentionally.

## Projects and Activities



1. Imagine that you were traveling and it is the time of Thuhr prayer. Make the Thuhr and Asr prayers in a combined and shortened manner.
2. Suppose you were praying Maghrib prayer and at the final Tashahhud position you remembered that you forgot to perform the first Tashahhud. Practice what should you do in this case.

## Stretch Your Mind



1. Are you allowed to do Qasr and Jama' during travel, even if you are not tired?
2. Since you are allowed to shorten your prayer during travel time, are there other worships that are made easier for you during travel? What are they?

## Study Questions

- 1 What does Salat-ul-Musafir mean?
- 2 What does Qasr mean?
- 3 What does Jama' mean?
- 4 What can you do if you are traveling and want to pray?
- 5 What are the prayers that you can shorten?
- 6 What are the prayers that you can combine together?
- 7 Should you pray the Sunnah prayers while during travel?
- 8 What are the Sunnah prayers that the Messenger of Allah (saw) used to keep praying even during travel?
- 9 What should you do when you miss a prayer until its time is out?