

Duration during which traveller could shorten prayer

Shaykh Aboo `Abd-al-Mu`iz `Alee Farkous al-Qoobee

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Question: What is the manner of performing Salaat (prayer) for a traveller and what is the ruling concerning it during a travel and when one stops (in his travel)? May Allaah bless you.

Shaykh Aboo `Abd-al-Mu`iz `Alee Farkous al-Qoobee (*May Allaah preserve him*): All praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon whom Allaah sent as a mercy to the Worlds, upon his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

The traveller, who does not intend to dwell for good in the place he travels to and does not know when he will be back to the place of his residence, can shorten the prayer, even though he stays a long time exceeding the duration of shortening the prayer (according to the Ulema who limited it), even if he stays many years. This is the soundest opinion of scholars. It is the opinion of Ishaq Ibn Raahawayh. It is also reported to be the opinion of Ibn `Umar, Anas and others¹, since the fact of residing does not mean that one is no longer a traveller, whether the duration is long or short, as he does not settle the place permanently. This is the choice of Ibn al-Qayyim (*May Allaah have mercy on him*). Ibn al-Mundhir said: "The scholars agreed that a traveller can shorten his prayer as long as he does not intend to reside permanently, even if he stays many years". In fact, it is not mentioned in the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) but the non-traveller and the traveller. Allaah (*Mighty and Majestic is He*) said:

(يَوْمَ ظَعْنُكُمْ وَيَوْمَ إِقَامَتِكُمْ)

[When you travel and when you stay]²

The dweller is the person who takes up a special permanent residence in which he decides to settle, and in which he is comfortable, such person has not the right to shorten the prayer. Whereas, the person who is resident but only for a while and who does not intend to stay there and does not feel comfortable in such place can shorten the prayer even if he stays there for months, because the Prophet (*May the peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) did not restrict the state of being resident by a definite time (neither by three days, nor four, nor twelve nor fifteen).

¹ See: "Al-Majmoo" of An-Nawawee (4/365).

² Soorah an-Nahl (The Bee)[16:80]

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Moreover, some reported traditions of the Predecessors consolidate this opinion. Among them, the fact that the Muslims resided at Nahavand six months and shortened the prayer during that period, though they knew that their affair would not end in four days nor even in more than four days. Besides, Ibn `Umar (*May Allaah be pleased with them both*) sojourned in Azerbaijan for six months; they were stuck by snow. During that period, he prayed two Rak`as³ ⁴. It is known that snow does not melt in only four days. It is also reported from Aboo Al-Minhaal al-`Anzi that he said: I told Ibn `Abbaas (*May Allaah be pleased with them both*): "I stay at Madeenah a whole year without travelling?" Ibn `Abbaas replied: "Pray two Rak`as"⁵. It is also reported that Masrooq stayed at As-Silsila two years, and during that period, he shortened the prayer, and by doing so, he intended to follow the Sunnah⁶. There are other traditions that consolidate this opinion which is supported by all the evidences.

The perfect knowledge belongs to Allaah (*The Exalted, The Most High*). Our last prayer is all praise is due to Allaah, the Lord of the Worlds. Peace and blessing be upon our Prophet, his Family, his Companions and his Brothers till the Day of Resurrection.

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³ A portion of the Salaat, that combines a ritual of bows and prostrations with the recitation of prayers.

⁴ Reported by Al-Baihaqee (3/152), Ahmad reported a hadeeth similar to it, its chain of narration is Hassan (good) (2/83-154), see: "Al-Irwaa'" (577).

⁵ Reported by `Abd Ar-Razzaaq in his "Mussannaf" (2/209).

⁶ Reported by `Abd Ar-Razzaaq in his "Mussannaf" (2/210) and Ibn Abee Shaybah in his "Mussannaf" (2/353).