

Sunnah prayers explained

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

Question: What are the Rawatib (Sunnah prayers associated with obligatory prayers) which can be made up if the person misses them?

Shaykh ibn Baaz (May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him): The Rawatib which the Prophet (May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him), used to preserve are twelve Rakats, these are the Rawatib; for the resident not the traveller. Twelve Rakats; four before Dhuhr prayer with two tasleems, and two after Dhuhr prayer; this is six. Two after Maghrib prayer and two after ‘Ishaa prayer; this is ten. And two before the morning (Fajr) prayer; this is twelve. The Prophet (May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him), used to practice these consistently while present at his residence. And he (May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him), said:

“Whoever preserves four Rakats before Dhuhr and four after it, Allaah will make him forbidden for the Fire.”

If the person prays four after Dhuhr, thus adding two Rakat then this is better, but it is not Rawatib. The Rawatib is two Rakats. If he prays four after Dhuhr prayer then this has in it virtue and a tremendous amount of good.

In a similar fashion before ‘Asr prayer it is recommended for the person to pray four Rakats, but these are not Rawatib, rather they are recommended. This is based upon the statement of the Messenger of Allaah (May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him):

“May Allaah have mercy upon the person who prays four Rakats before ‘Asr prayer”.

Likewise if he prays two Rakats before Maghrib prayer and two Rakats before ‘Ishaa prayer, between the Adhaan and the Iqaamah, this is recommended; but these are not Rawatib. Rather it is recommended after the Adhaan to pray two Rakats, after the Adhaan for Maghrib and after the Adhaan for ‘Ishaa the person prays two Rakats; two Rakats which are different than the two Rakats to greet the Masjid.

As for greeting the Masjid, if the person enters the Masjid even before the Adhaan then he greets the Masjid with two Rakats of prayer. And if he enters after the Adhaan, the Adhaan of Maghrib or after the Adhaan of ‘Ishaa, then he greets the Masjid with two Rakats of prayer and this will suffice him from the two Rakats between the Adhaan and the Iqaamah.

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As for travel; then it is only prescribed to pray the Sunnah prayers of Fajr and the Witr prayer. During travel the person only prays the Witr and Tahajjud prayers during the night, and he prays the Sunnah prayers of Fajr. As for the Sunnah prayers of Dhuhr, Maghrib, and 'Ishaa, then it is better to leave them during travel. But as it relates to the Sunnah prayers of Fajr, then the Prophet (May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him), used to preserve them during travel and while he was a resident.

And if the person misses the Sunnah prayer for Fajr he prays them after the Fajr prayer or after the sun has risen. As for the other Rawatib, for Dhuhr, Maghrib, and 'Ishaa, then they are not made up after the time has passed; if the time passed they are not made up. Therefore one would not make up the Sunnah prayers for Dhuhr after Asr, nor the Sunnah prayers for Maghrib after 'Ishaa, nor the Sunnah prayers for 'Ishaa after Fajr. These prayers are not made up. As for the Sunnah prayer for Fajr then it is made up. If he prays it after the Fajr prayer then there is no problem with this. And if he prays it after the sun has risen and reached its height then this is better.

As for the Sunnah prayer of Duha and Tahajjud prayers at night then they are prescribed for the traveller and the resident. Likewise is the Sunnah prayer after completing Wudoo; after the person completes Wudoo it is recommended (for him to pray) whether he is on a journey or a resident.

Likewise if a person enters a Masjid while upon a journey he also prays two Rakats of prayer, even if he is travelling. May Allaah reward you with good.

Therefore we will summarise the answer once again, if you will allow me; the Sunnah prayers which are recommended to make up.

First the summary of the answer: The twelve Rawatib which are specific to the resident are: Four Rakats before Dhuhr with two tasleems, two Rakats after Dhuhr with one tasleem; two Rakats after Maghrib with one tasleem; two Rakats after 'Ishaa with one tasleem, and two Rakats before the morning prayer after the rising of the Fajr. These are the Rawatib that the Prophet (May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him), used to preserve.

As for those that are made up then it is only the Sunnah prayer for Fajr, if it is missed then it is made up after Fajr or after the rising of the sun. Likewise the Sunnah prayers that come before Dhuhr can be made up after Dhuhr. If the four Sunnah prayer that come before Dhuhr are missed they are prayed after Dhuhr, then he prays the two Rakats after Dhuhr; thus praying six Rakats. The four that come before Dhuhr, and the two Rawatib that come after Dhuhr. May Allaah reward you with good.