

Combining prayers for the resident

source: fatāwā jeddah ~ rulings from jeddah ~ tape no. 13

Question #5: “Is it allowed for the resident to combine between two prayers without (the presence of) rain?”

Shaykh al-Albānī answers:

“Imām Muslim brought out in his Sahīh, the hadīth on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbās who said: ‘The Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) combined (prayers) in Madīnah between Dhuhr and ‘Asr, and between Maghrib and ‘Ishā, without (being in a state of) traveling or (the presence of) rain.’ They said, ‘What did he intend by that O Abu I-‘Abbās[1] {the kunya of ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Abbās}?’ He said, ‘He wanted to not put his ummah into difficulties.’[2] So the apparent meaning of the hadīth is that it is permissible to combine between two prayers in the state of residence and without the excuse of rain, because rain is an Islamically legislated excuse that allows combining between two prayers. And here Ibn ‘Abbās says that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) combined as a resident and combined without the excuse of rain. And he confirmed that when the previous question was addressed to him: ‘Why did he do that?’ (Ibn ‘Abbās) said, ‘He wanted to not put his ummah into difficulties.’ This is the hadīth and it is in Sahīh Muslim but not al-Bukhāri. There is the like of this hadīth in al-Bukhāri, (mentioning that) he combined between the prayers in Madīnah as eight (rak‘ah),[3] but there isn’t this detail that Imām Muslim mentioned or narrated from Ibn ‘Abbās, in which there is this important point that is the answer to this question, namely his (radiAllāhu ‘anhu) saying: ‘He wanted to not put his ummah into difficulties.’

So some of the scholars in old times and recent times believe in the permissibility of this combining during residence without an excuse, and I don’t consider that to be correct; that is because the narrator of

the hadīth explains the combining of the Messenger (of Allāh) (صلى الله عليه وسلم) without an excuse, to be another excuse as a method of legislating (from Allāh) and explaining to the people, since Ibn ‘Abbās said, ‘He (صلى الله عليه وسلم) wanted to not put his ummah into difficulties.’ And the meaning of that is: the ruling of combining during residence is tied to the presence of difficulty (that would arise) due to not combining. So when there is difficulty in performing the prayers in their known appointed times, it is permissible to combine in order to remove the difficulty, which Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, has removed in the likes of His Saying: ‘And He has not laid upon you in religion any hardship.’[4] As for if there is no difficulty, then it is obligatory to maintain performing the five prayers, each prayer in its (due) time, because there is no difficulty.

For example, I am sitting here and I hear the adhān (call to prayer) there in the masjid near me, while I am capable of going out and there is no difficulty upon me at all to go out, so it is not permissible for me to combine. And the opposite of that as well; when I came in this journey, I found this electric elevator to be out of order, and it is very difficult for me, as you see because of a pain in my two knees, to go down or up by way of stairs. So some prayers passed by me (but) I didn’t go out to the masjid. But when the electric elevator was fixed such that it saved me the difficulty of descending and ascending, it became obligatory upon me to pray every prayer in the masjid because I did not find this difficulty that I had found when I had just moved here. Therefore, combining is only allowed for the purpose of removing a difficulty; so, when there is no difficulty, there is no combining. They are two inseparable affairs: no difficulty, no combining; (but if) there is difficulty, there is (the possibility and permissibility of) combining. And this is the best that can be said with regard to reconciling between this authentic hadīth and those ahādīth that came stating that every prayer (is to be prayed) in its (due) time[5] and that it is not allowed to distract oneself from it – especially

because in most circumstances, combining requires abandoning prayer with the congregation, as I described to you my first situation (with the electric elevator).”

~ asaheeha translations ~

[1] The addition “O Abu I-‘Abbās” is found in Musnad Ahmad 4/192

[2] Sahīh Muslim #705

[3] Sahīh al-Bukhārī #543

[4] Sūrat ul-Hajj, 22:78

[5] Sahīh Muslim #648

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