

Salat Times

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This is interesting news.

According to Qur'an 4:103, *salat* has to be done at given times.

فَإِذَا قُضِيَتْ الصَّلَاةُ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ فَإِذَا اطْمَأْنَنْتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا
الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَّوْقُوتًا (١٠٣)

Pickthall: When ye have performed the act of worship, remember Allah, standing, sitting and reclining. And when ye are in safety, observe proper worship. Worship at fixed times hath been enjoined on the believers.

Other translators have used the word “*salat*”, “prayer”, etc., in their translations.

The holy Qur'an has four different verses describing the times of *salat*. Here is one of them: (Quran, 17:79)

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَىٰ غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْءَانَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْءَانَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا.
(قرآن ١٧:٧٩)

As one can see very clearly, there are only three times mentioned in it. After the sun begins to decline (*dhuhr/ 'asr*), the night falls (Maghrib/Isha) and Al-Fajr.

But the five-times *salat* are coming down to us via *Hadith-al-Mutawatir* or continuous tradition in the community. So much so that the practice is common across sects, except the Shi'a who do exactly as the Qur'an has said here. In that, *dhuhr* and '*asr* are done one after the other without a long break in-between and similarly the Maghrib and Isha.

Here are the records in *hadith*.

Some schools of thought consider that the combining of prayers at the time of travelling or at the time of heavy rains or at home in the time of need is also allowed. As ibn Abbas said:

'The practice of the Prophet (pbuh) was that before starting on a journey if he saw that the sun had declined he would first offer the *dhuhr* and '*asr* prayers at the time of *dhuhr* and then set out on the journey. On the other hand if he saw that the sun had not yet declined, he would set out on the journey and combine the *dhuhr* and '*asr* prayers on the way at '*asr* time. Similarly, if he saw that the sun had set, he would combine the Maghrib and Isha prayers at home and then start the journey; but if the sun had not yet set, he would set out and combine the Maghrib and Isha prayers on the way at Isha time". (Sahih Muslim).

The above statement was formulated from the reports quoted in *Sahih Muslim* and the *musnad* of Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

Bukhari reported that the Prophet combined the Maghrib and Isha prayers on a rainy night. Ibn Abbas reported that the Prophet (pbuh) combined the *dhuhr* and '*asr* and Maghrib and Isha prayers in Medina without any reason. People asked Ibn Abbas why did the Prophet do that and he answered that the reason was that his *ummah* should not be in distress. (Sahih Muslim)

Muslim, in his *Sahih*, has quoted 17 reports about combining the two prayers as above, Bukhari and Tirmizi one each. There is difference of opinion among the four Sunni schools of *fiqh* on combining the two prayers. According to the Hanafi school, the combining of two prayers is allowed only during Hajj. Others view this differently. Novi in his *Sharah* (commentary) of *Sahih Muslim* explains that combining can be done without any reason as the Prophet did. In Saudi Arabia, Maghrib and Isha are usually

combined in the government supervised mosques on chilly evenings of December and January.

Of course, combining of two prayers means that *azan* is said once for the assembly while *iqamat* is said once for each prayer.

It is quite clear from these reports that it is a facility accorded to the Muslims that they can do *dhuhr* and *'asr*, and Maghrib and Isha prayers without a long interval between them. The Muslims are free to exercise that facility as they find fit. The Shi'a are doing exactly that.

There is also a long and detailed discussion on this topic on this [website](#).

There are some things in the discussion at the above site with which I do not agree, e.g., the analysis with number 19, and a few others. Readers should analyse the discussion with prudence and common sense.



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Thank you.

Sincerely,

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