

Chapter One: Combining The Two Prayers

In the Name of Allah, the most Merciful, the most Kind

Noteworthy is that there is no difference amongst all the Islamic schools of thought, the ahl al-qibla, in allowing the combination of the two obligatory prayers; al-zuhr and al-`asr, at `Arafa [ground which is included in the rites of ‘Hajj’ (the Pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia)] at the time of the noon (al-zuhr) prayer. Technically, this is [called] ‘jam’ al-taqdim’ (the preceding combination). Similarly, there is no difference between them in allowing the combination of the two obligatory [prayers] – al-maghrib and al-`isha’ – at al-Muzdalifa [another ground near Mecca, Saudi Arabia] at the time of the `isha’ [prayers].

Technically, this is called ‘jam’ al-ta’khir’ (the delayed combination). There is no difference [amongst the scholars] in preferring these two combinations. Indeed, they are amongst the prophetic practices. However, they (the scholars) have differed as to the permissibility of combining the prayers in daily performances.

The point of disagreement here is the permissibility of combining two [individually performable] obligatory prayers by performing them together at the time stipulated for one of them either by bringing it forward (taqdiman) as at `Arafa, or, by delaying it [until the time stipulated for the later prayer] (ta’khiran) as done at al-Muzdalifa [for al-maghrib and al-isha prayers respectively].

The Imams [twelve] from the family of Muhammad (S) have declared that this is permissible at all times although it is better to separate them [prayers]. Their followers (Shi`as) have followed them in this [ruling] at all times and places. Most of the time, they combine al-zuhr and al-`asr, and al-maghrib and al-`isha’ [prayers], whether they are traveling, are at home, or, they have an excuse [to combine], and without no excuse at all. ‘Jam’ al-taqdim’ and ‘jam’ al-ta’khir’ are equally valid for them [at all times].

As for the School of Hanafis [jurisprudence], they have prohibited the combination [of prayers] absolutely, with exception being at `Arafa and al-Muzdalifa. [This is] despite the presence of numerous clear sahih (authentic traditions) which allow the combination, especially when traveling. However, despite the clear [traditions], they (the School of Hanafis) interpreted them to refer to an unintentional combination (al-jam’ al-suri). The invalidity of this [view] will become clear to you soon, God willing.

As for the School of Shafi`is, Malikis and Hanbalis (three differing jurisprudence respectively), they have allowed it (the combination) when travelling although there are differences between them. Otherwise, they are not allowed to combine except for [genuine] excuses; for example, when there is rain, soil, sickness and fear. There are also differences between them on the conditions which consider traveling as a legitimate requisite to combine chronologically separated prayers.

Our proofs, for the issue whether the chronologically separated prayers could be combined, or, not, rely on between us, and our God, the Almighty, as well as other issues on the authentic [traditions] from our Imams (twelve, utmost chaste, males from the progeny of the Prophet Muhammad A.S.), peace be upon them. We shall argue with the masses (jumhur) by referring to their authentic traditions since they clearly point to what we claim. For our sake of discussion, the sufficient proofs are [provided by] the two Shaykhs have reported in the Sahihs (the reporters of Prophet's sayings' recorded). We present to you what [Sahih] Muslim (one of the reporters) has narrated in his 'Sahih' in the chapter on the combination of prayers at home. He says:

"Yahya b. Yahya reported: `I read from Malik from b. Abu al-Zubayr from Sa`id b. Jubayr from Ibn `Abbas [who] said: `The Prophet of God (S) prayed the zuhr and `asr prayers together and [he also offered] the maghrib and `isha' prayers together even though there was neither any fear, nor was he traveling."

Muslim said: "And, Abu Bakr b. Abi Shayba narrated to us that Sufyan b. `Uyayna reported from `Amr b. Dinar from Abu Sha`sha' Jabir b. Zayd from Ibn `Abbas who said: `I prayed with the Prophet (S) the eight [rakahs'(standings)] (of prayer) together and the seven [standings] together.' `Amr b. Dinar said: `I said: `O Abu Sha`sha' I think he delayed the zuhr and hastened [to pray] the `asr and he delayed the maghrib and hastened [to pray] the `isha'.' He (Abu Sha`sha') said: `I think so too.'" I (the author) say: "They only follow [their] conjectures, and the conjecture does not lead to the truth."

Muslim said: "Abu al-Rabi`i al-Zahrani said that Hammad b. Zayd reported from `Amr b. Dinar from Jabir b. Zayd from Ibn `Abbas: `Indeed the Prophet of God (S) prayed in Medina the seven, and eight cycles, the zuhr and `asr and the maghrib and the `isha' [together]."

He (Muslim) said: "And, Abu al-Rabi`i al-Zahrani told me that Hammad narrated to us from al-Zubayr b. al-Kharit from `Abd Allah b. Shaqiq who said: `One day Ibn `Abbas delivered a sermon to us after the `asr [prayer] until the sun had set, and the stars had begun to appear. The people started to say: `The prayer! The prayer!.' He said: `A man from the Banu Tamim, who was not smiling or inclined [in stature], came to him (Ibn `Abbas) and said: `The prayer! the prayer!.' Ibn `Abbas said: `Do you teach me the sunna O one who has no mother?' Then he said: `I saw the Prophet of God (S) combine the zuhr and `asr and the maghrib and `isha'.' `Abd Allah b. Shaqiq said: `Something about that bothered me, so I came to Abu Hurayra, and I asked him about it and he verified his statement."

Muslim said: "And Ibn Abi `Umar told us that Waqi' reported that `Imran b. Hudayr reported from `Abd

Allah b. Shaqiq al-Uqayli that a man said to Ibn `Abbas: `The prayer!', then he kept quiet. Then he said: `The prayer!' then he kept quiet. Then he said: `The prayer!' and he kept quiet. Ibn `Abbas said: `You have no mother! Do you teach us about the prayer, we used to combine the two prayers in the time of the Prophet of God (S).'"

I (the author) say: Al-Nasai narrated from `Amr b. Harm from Abu Sha`sha' that Ibn `Abbas prayed the zuhr and `asr in Basra without any interval between them. He did that as he was busy, he reported it from the Prophet (S).

Muslim said that Ahmad b. Yunus and `Awn b. Salaam both told us from Zuhayr. Ibn Yunus said that Zuhayr narrated that Abu al-Zubayr reported from Sa`id b. Jubayr from Ibn `Abbas who said: "The Prophet of God (S), prayed the zuhr and `asr together in Medina when there was neither fear, nor, [was he] travelling." Abu al-Zubayr said: "I asked Sa`id: `Why did he do that?' He replied: `I asked Ibn `Abbas just as you have asked me. He said: `He did not wish to impose any difficulty on anyone in his community.'"

Muslim said: "And Abu Bakr b. Abu Shayba and Abu Karib reported to us, they said: `Abu Mu'awiya, Abu Karib and Abu Sa`id al-Ashaj said (and the words are of Abu Karib) that they (Abu Karib and Abu Sa`id) said that Waqi' and Abu Mu'awiya said, both of them [reporting] from al-A`mash from Habib b. Abu Thabit from Sa`id b. Jubayr from Ibn `Abbas who said: `The Prophet of God (S) combined the zuhr and `asr and the maghrib and `isha' [prayers] in Medina even though there was neither fear, nor, rain.'"

He (Muslim) said: "In the tradition of Waqi'i he said: `I asked Ibn `Abbas: `Why did he do that?' He said: `So that he should not [impose a] burden on his community.'" And, [according to] the hadith of Abu Mu'awiya, Ibn `Abbas was asked: "What did he intend by that?" He said: "He did not wish to impose difficulty on his community."

Muslim said: "Yahya b. Habib al-Harithi said that Khalid b. al-Hirh said that Qurra b. Khalid said that Abu al-Zubayr told us that Sa`id b. Jubayr reported that Ibn `Abbas said: `Indeed the Prophet of God (S) combined the prayers when on a journey, and during the undertaking in the battle of Tabuk, he combined the zuhr and `asr and the maghrib and `isha.'" Sa`id said: `I asked Ibn `Abbas: `What made him do that?' He replied: `He did not wish to burden his umma.'"

Muslim said: "Yahya b. Habib said that Khalid b. al-Hirh told us that Qurra b. Khalid narrated that Abu al-Zubayr said that `Amir b. Wa'ila Abu al-Tufayl reported that Mu`adh b. Jabal said: `In the battle of Tabuk, the Prophet of God (S) combined the zuhr and `asr and the maghrib and `isha' [prayers].' He said: `I asked: `What made him do that?' He (Mu'adh) said: `He did not wish to burden his community.'"

I (the author) say: These authentic traditions are clear to the reason for the legislation of combining [the prayers]. All of these [indicate] give respite to the community, so as not to burden it with separating [the prayers], [thereby] having mercy on the diligent ones who [comprise] are most of the people. The last two traditions; the hadith of Mu`adh and the one before it, are not restricted to the specific situation (I

mean traveling) since the reason for combining [the prayer] in them (the two traditions) is general.

It is not the journey per se, nor, for sickness, rain, soil, and fear. Rather it is a general [ruling] which can be applied in any specific case. So, it is not restricted to it; but, it is applicable to all occasions. Due to that you see that Imam Muslim did not mention the [last] two traditions in the chapter on "combining [the prayer] when traveling," since they are not restricted to it (traveling).

Rather, he cited the traditions in the chapter on the "combination [of prayer] when at home" so that they can be a proof for the permissibility of combining [the prayers] at all times. This is based upon his understanding, knowledge, and judgement.

Muslim's 'sahih hadiths' on this issue, and those which you have heard, and not heard are all according to the conditions stipulated by al-Bukhari. The transmitters in their 'isnads' (the chain of custody) have all been used by al-Bukhari in his 'Sahih'; so, I wonder what prevented al-Bukhari from mentioning all of them (the traditions) in his 'Sahih'? What led him to reduce them to a negligible portion? Why did he not append a chapter in his book on the combination [of prayer] when at home, or, while traveling?

Given the abundant 'sahih hadiths' according to the conditions stipulated by him which are available on the combination [of prayers] and given that, on the whole, most of the Imams (twelve, utmost chaste, males from the progeny of the Prophet Muhammad A.S.) do accept it (the combination of prayers), why did he select those traditions on combining which have the least [impact] in pointing to it (the combination of prayer)? Why did he (al-Bukhari) insert them in a chapter which could alter its (intended) meaning? I consider al-Bukhari above, and exclude him from being like those who alter words from their intended meanings, or, like those who hide the truth even though they may know it.

I present to you what he has selected on this topic and has inserted at an improper place. He says in the chapter on the delaying of the zuhr prayer until the [time of] `asr in the book of the timings of prayers in his Sahih: "Abu Nu`man narrated to us that Hammad b. Zayd told him from `Amr b. Dinar who reported from Jabir b. Zayd on the authority of Ibn `Abbas who said: `The Prophet (S) prayed in Medina the seven and eight [standings] of the zuhr and `asr and the maghrib and `isha.' Ayyub said: `Perhaps it was a rainy night.' He said: `Maybe.'" I (the author) say: they only follow conjectures.

He (al-Bukhari) also reported in the chapter on the time of the maghrib from Adam: He said: "Shu`ba told us: `Amr b. Dinar reported: `I heard Jabir b. Zayd reporting from Ibn `Abbas who said: `The Prophet (S) prayed the seven [standings] together, and the eight [standings] together.'" "

And, he reported with an incomplete chain of transmission (arsala) in the chapter on remembering the `isha' and darkness from Ibn `Umar, Abu Ayyub and Ibn `Abbas that the Prophet (S) prayed the maghrib and `isha' [one after another without significant time lapse between the two prayers], that is he combined them at the time of one of them at the expense of the other.

This is a very small portion from a large number of authentic traditions on the combination [of prayers]

which are sufficient to prove what we maintain, as is obvious. This is supported by what [is reported] from Ibn Mas`ud when he said: "The Prophet (S) conjoined the two prayers, in Medina, the zuhr and `asr, and the maghrib and `isha', and this [fact] was mentioned to him. He (the Prophet) said: "I did this so that my umma should not be burdened." Al-Tabrani has reported this.

It is reported from `Abd Allah b. `Umar when it was said to him: "Did you not see the Prophet (S) conjoined the zuhr and `asr and the maghrib and `isha' prayers whilst he was staying [in town], not travelling?" He replied saying: "He did that so as not to impose a burden on his community."

In short, there are, among all the `ulama' of the masses, those who say that it is permissible to conjoin the prayers, and those who negate it; they ratify the authenticity of these traditions, and their apparent inference. This is what we say, that it is allowed [to conjoin the prayer] in all cases. Refer, if you wish, to what they have appended to it so that it may be clear to you.

Yes, they have interpreted the traditions in accordance with their (biased perspective) schools of thought. They were bemused by their interpretation, like one who is in the total darkness of the night. It is sufficient for you to note what al-Nawawi has related from them in his comment on these traditions in his commentary on the Sahih of Muslim. He says, after considering the apparent meaning in [the traditions on] combining [the prayers] at home: "The `ulama' have [differing] interpretations and views on this, some of them interpreted the combination [of prayer] due to rain".

(He said): "This is the famous [opinion] from the prominent erstwhile scholars (al-kibar al-mutaqaddimun)." (Al-Nawawi said): "It (the opinion of the `ulama') is weak due to the second narration (riwaya) from Ibn `Abbas [which states the Prophet prayed together] without fear, or, rain." (Al-Nawawi said): "Some of them have interpreted that it was due to cloudiness, and that he (the Prophet) prayed the zuhr then the clouds cleared, and it became apparent to him that the time for the `asr prayer had set in so he offered it at that time."

(He said): "This is also not valid for [although] it may be remotely possible for the [prayers of] zuhr and `asr, it is not possible [for the clouds to have covered the sun to have occurred] at the [time of] maghrib and `isha'." (Al-Nawawi said): "Among them are those who have interpreted it as referring to the delaying of the first [prayer] to it's latest time for offering it so he offered it at the last [possible] time, and when he had finished it (al-zuhr) the time for al-`asr had entered so he offered it at that time; hence, the combination of the two prayers was not intended."

(He said): "This is a weak [argument] too, or, it is invalid as it is completely opposite to that which is apparent, it is not possible [to admit it]." (Al-Nawawi said): "The act of Ibn `Abbas when delivering a sermon and the fact that people called out to him 'the prayer! the prayer!' and he (Ibn Abbas) was not paying heed to them, his deriving proof from a hadith to justify his act of delaying the maghrib to the time of `isha' and his combining them at the time of the second [prayer] (`isha') and Abu Hurayra's verification of him and his (Ibn Abbas') not disapproving it is clear in refuting this interpretation."

I say: Ibn `Abd al-Barr and al-Khattabi and others have refuted him, saying that the combination is a dispensation (rukhsa). If it (the combination) is not intended, it would be most difficult to undertake every prayer at its [specified] time since the beginning, and end of the [prayer] times are things which many specialists are not aware of, let alone the general masses. (They said): "Amongst the proofs that the combination is a dispensation is the saying of Ibn `Abbas: `He did not wish to impose a burden on his community.'"

(They said): "Also, the clear reports on the combination of two mandatory [prayers] is only to undertake them together at the time [assigned] for one of them rather than the other [offering at two separate times], either by bringing forward (al-taqdim) the second one (prayer) from its appointed time and offering it with the first one at it's time, or, by delaying the first one (prayer) from it's appointed time to the time of the second one, and offering them together at that time." (They said): "This is what immediately comes to mind by the general usage of the word combining (al-jam`) in all the sunna, and this is the point of dispute."

(Al-Nawawi said): "Amongst them are those who have interpreted [the traditions] claiming that the combination was due to an excuse, like sickness, or, something like it in meaning." (He said): "This is the view of Ahmad b. Hanbal, and the Qadi Husayn amongst our companions. Al-Khattabi, al-Mutawalli and al-Ruwyani from our companions have [also] chosen it, and this is the chosen interpretation as it is the apparent [meaning] of the traditions."

I say: There is no apparent [meaning] in the traditions, and no remote proof for it, it is an arbitrary judgement as al-Qastalani in his commentary on the 'Sahih of al-Bukhari' has admitted.

Some of the eminent scholars have followed it up by saying: "It has been stated that the combination [of prayers] was due to illness," al-Nawawi has supported this view. However, there is an objection to it since if the [prayers] were combined for illness then only those who were ill would have prayed with him (the Prophet). It is apparent that he (S) combined [the prayers] with his companions, this is what Ibn `Abbas clearly announced in a tradition which has been established from him.

I say: When the authentic traditions on combining [the prayers] do not have an interpretation which the `ulama [uniformly] accept, a group of the masses have reverted to a position which is close to our opinion on the issue though they did not [even] intend to do so. Al-Nawawi mentioned them after [citing their] false interpretations as you have read. He further states: "A group of the Imams have allowed the combining of prayers when at home for a need if one does not become habituated to it (the combination of prayers).

This is the view of Ibn Sirrin and Ashhab amongst the companions of Malik. Al-Khattabi has reported it from al-Qaffal al-Shashi al-Kabir from the companions of al-Shafi'i, and from Ibn Ishaq al-Maruzi and from a group of hadith transmitters. Ibn al-Munzir has [also] chosen this opinion." Al-Nawawi [further] said: "This view is supported by the apparent [meaning] of Ibn `Abbas' saying: `He did not wish to

burden his community', he was not afflicted by sickness, or, by anything else, and God knows this matter best."

More than one of their prominent scholars has stated this conjecture. Perhaps in this era, their researchers are in agreement with our views, as more than one of them has told me. However, they do not dare to openly declare that to the public. Perhaps caution prevents them [from doing that]. There is no difference of opinion on separating the prayer, it is better [to separate] as opposed to combining where there is a difference of opinion. However, it has escaped their notice that separating [the prayers] could lead to many busy people [as in the life today in many societies] abandoning the prayer as we have sometimes seen, whereas combining [the prayers] is the best [solution] to ensuring they are performed.

Therefore, it is more prudent for the jurists to issue a juridical verdict to the people to combine [the prayers] and they should make things easy, not difficult, for Allah wishes ease not hardship for you. He (Allah S.W.T.) has not made religion a burden for you. The proof that combining [the prayers] is permissible at all times is available, thanks to God (Allah S.W.T.), it is a correct sunna, enunciated as you have read. Rather, it is a clear, written and fixed prescription.

Do not be inattentive, I will relate to you the clear [verses] so that it will become clear that the times of the obligatory prayers are only three: the time of the two obligatory prayers, al-zuhr and al-`asr, which are shared between them, and time of the two obligatory prayers al-maghrib and al-`isha' which are also shared between them and the third is the obligatory morning prayer especially fixed; so hear it and remain silent.

Undertake the prayer at the time of the declining sun to the darkness of the night and the morning recitation; for indeed the morning recitation is witnessed (17:78).

Imam Razi has said about its interpretation in the chapter of Isra' (chapter 17) page 428 in the fifth volume of his Tafsir al-Kabir: "If we interpret the ghasaq (darkness) as being the time when darkness first appears then the [term] ghasaq refers to the beginning of al-maghrib. On this basis, three timings are mentioned in the verse: "the time of noon, the time of the beginning of al-maghrib and the time of al-fajr."

(Al-Razi said): "This requires that noon be the time of al-zuhr and al-`asr, this time is shared between these two prayers. The time of the beginning of al-maghrib is the time for al-maghrib and al-`isha' so this time is also shared between these two prayers." (He said): "This requires allowing the combining between al-zuhr and al-`asr and between al-maghrib and al-`isha' at all times." (Al-Razi said): "However, there is proof to indicate whether combining [the prayer] while at home without any excuse is prohibited. This leads [to the view] that the combining be allowed when traveling, or, [when there is] rain etc."

I say: We have examined the discussion on what he has mentioned concerning the proofs that

combining [the prayer] whilst home without any excuse is not allowed and we have not found, God is our witness, a trace, or, relic for it. Yes, the Prophet (S) used to combine [the prayer] when he had an excuse just as he used to combine when there was no excuse so that his community would not be burdened.

There is no dispute that the separation [of prayer] is better therefore the Prophet of God (S) would prefer it except when there was an excuse as was his habit in all the recommended [practices], peace be upon him and his family.

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