

Sunnah Prayers before and after the Obligatory 'Asr Prayer

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

It is a recommended Sunnah act to offer two Rak'ah voluntary prayer after 'Asr prayer.

A'ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) never abandoned offering two Rak'ah (voluntary prayer) before the Fajr (dawn) obligatory prayer, nor two Rak'ah (voluntary prayer) after the 'Asr (prayer)¹.

Shaykh al-Albaanee (رحمته الله) said: "Many people do not know that it is a recommended Sunnah act to offer two Rak'ah voluntary prayer after 'Asr prayer."

It is reported by Muslim on the authority of 'A'ishah (رضي الله عنها) that she said: "*Any time the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) entered upon me after offering the obligatory 'Asr prayer, he offered two Rak'ah Sunnah prayer.*"²

It is correct that when the Prophet (ﷺ) was occupied with something and couldn't offer the two Rak'ah Sunnah prayer after Dhuhr prayer, he would make them up after the 'Asr prayer. However, the Prophet (ﷺ) continued offering them (these two Rak'ah) and it became a Sunnah. He did not offer them once and the matter finished, nor are we forbidden from offering them. No, the reason behind offering these two Rak'ah Sunnah prayer is because he was occupied with something and couldn't offer the two Rak'ah Sunnah prayer after Dhuhr but he (ﷺ) continued offering them after that. On this occasion it is incumbent upon us to remember another fact which many have become heedless of, which is in regards to the Ahadeeth which mention clearly that no Salaat should be offered after 'Asr prayer until the sun sets. The prohibition is referring to when the sun becomes yellow (during its setting) and not directly after the 'Asr prayer.

In addition to the aforementioned Ahadeeth of 'A'ishah (رضي الله عنها), Muslim reported a Hadeeth on the authority of 'Alee ibn Abee Taalib (رضي الله عنه) who said that the Prophet (ﷺ) said concerning the 'Asr prayer: "*No prayer should be offered after 'Asr except when the sun is high (i.e. in its early time).*"³

Accordingly, it is prescribed to offer the Salaat if the sun is white and high and has not started declining for its setting. The prohibited time of offering the Salaat after the 'Asr prayer is not the time when the person finishes offering the 'Asr obligatory prayer till the time of the setting of the sun. No. It is the last part of 'Asr (afternoon) when the sun becomes yellow, its heat is weakened and it is about to set.

¹ As-Silsilah as-Saheehah and authenticated by al-Albaanee, no. 2920, and no. 3174

² Also reported by An-Nasaa'ee and authenticated by Al-Albaanee no. 574

³ As-Silsilah as-Saheehah no. 200

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The Hadeeth of 'Alee ibn Abee Taalib (رضي الله عنه) restricts the known Ahadeeth which are generally saying, ***"No Salaat is to be offered after the 'Asr until the sun sets."***⁴

Accordingly we say: "No Salaat is to be offered except if the sun is high and clear."

Similarly the Hadeeth of the Prophet (ﷺ) in which he says: ***"Do not be keen to offer the Salaat at the setting of the sun, i.e. when it is yellow,"*** means it is permissible to offer the Salaat before the sun becomes yellow.

In this way all the Ahadeeth become joined together without contradictions, and one can offer two Rak'ah Sunnah prayer after the 'Asr as one can offer two or four before it according to the following Ahadeeth: ***"There is a Salaat between the two Adhaan*** (i.e. Adhaan and Iqaamah), ***there is a Salaat between the two Adhaan."*** And while saying it the third time he (ﷺ) added, ***"For the one who wants to (pray)."***⁵ This is because he did not like the people to take it as a Sunnah.

He (ﷺ) also said: ***"May Allaah have mercy on a person who prays four Rak'ah before the 'Asr prayer."***⁶

In conclusion:

A person is allowed to offer four Rak'ah Sunnah prayer before the Asr prayer or at least two Rak'ah prayer. Similarly, he is allowed to offer two Rak'ah Sunnah or more after 'Asr prayer, up until the sun starts to become yellow and begins to set, at which time it becomes forbidden." [End quote of the Shaykh]

⁴ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree and Saheeh Muslim

⁵ Saheeh al-Bukhaaree

⁶ Reported by Ahmad, Aboo Daawood and At-Tirmidhee