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Salat During Travel (Salat al-Musafir)

The schools concur that the shortening (*qasr*) of prayers during travel is limited to the obligatory four-*rak'ah* prayers. Hence *zuhr*, *'asr* and *'isha'* prayers will be performed in two *rak'ahs*, like the morning prayer. The schools differ as to whether *qasr* is obligatory during travel or if there is an option between it and complete *salat*?

The Hanafis and the Imamis observe: It is obligatory and has to be performed.
The other schools state: There is an option and a person may either perform it *qasr* or complete.

Conditions for Qasr

Qasr requires the following conditions:

1. There is consensus that travelling over a certain distance is a condition. The distance in the opinion of the Hanafis, is 24 parasangs in the direction of journey; below this, *qasr* is not permissible.

The Imamis consider it to be 8 parasangs in the direction of journey or to and fro together.[1]

The Hanbalis, Malikis and Shafi'is regard it as 16 parasangs, only in the direction of journey, though it does not matter if the distance travelled is less than this distance by two miles (eight miles, in the opinion of the Malikis).

A parasang is equal to 5.04 km (*al-Fiqh 'ala al-madhahib al-'arba'ah*, vol. 4, "mabhath shurut al-qasr"). Hence the minimum distance to be travelled in the opinion of the Hanafis, the three other schools, and the Imamis is 120.96 kms, 80.64 kms and 40.32 kms respectively.

2. The schools concur that the intention to travel the complete distance should be present at the start of the journey, and that the intention of a 'follower' – such as wife, servant, captive or soldier – is subject to the intention of the 'commander' whom he follows, provided that the one under command knows the intention of that commander or leader; in the event of ignorance he/she will perform the *salat* complete.

3. *Qasr* is not valid in the opinion of the four schools except after leaving behind the buildings of a town.

The Imamis observe: Leaving the constructed areas is not sufficient; rather, it is necessary that either the walls of the town should disappear from sight or its *adhan* should not be hearable. The limit they have set for the beginning of the journey is also the limit for terminating it; i.e. if a person is returning back home, he is supposed to pray *qasr* until he sees the walls of his town or is able to hear its *adhan*.

4. The journey should be for a legitimate purpose. Hence if it is for an illegitimate purpose, such as a journey for the sake of committing theft, etc., he may not pray *qasr* in the opinion of all the schools, except the Hanafis, who observe: He will pray *qasr* in all journeys, even if the journey is an illegitimate one; at the most he will be sinning by performing an unlawful act.

5. In the opinion of the four schools, the traveller may not pray in a *jama'ah* being led by a local imam or another traveller whose *salat* is complete. If he does so, it is *wajib* for him to perform the complete *salat*.

The Imamis do not accept this condition and consider it valid for a person whose *salat* is complete to pray behind a person praying *qasr* and vice versa, provided each performs his own duty. Therefore, if a traveler prays behind a local resident the *zuhr*, *'asr* and *'isha*' prayers, he will perform two *rak'ahs* and *tashahhud* along with the imam and say the *taslim* individually, while the imam continues with his *salat* till its end. And if a local person prays behind a traveller, he will perform two *rak'ahs* in *jama'ah* and complete the remaining part of his *salat* individually.

6. The *niyyah* of *qasr* is essential for the *salat* being so performed. Hence if a person prays without making *niyyah* of *qasr*, he will perform that *salat* complete in the opinion of the Hanbalis and the Shafi'is.

The Malikis state: It is sufficient to make the *niyyah* of *qasr* in the first *qasr salat* of the journey, and it is not necessary to repeat it in every *salat*.

The Hanafis and the Imamis observe: The *niyyah* of *qasr* is not a condition for *qasr* becoming *wajib*, so that if one does not make it he will have to perform it complete, because the actual status of a duty is not altered by intentions. Moreover, such a person has intended the journey from the very beginning. However, the Imamis say: If a traveller intends to stay at a particular place and later changes his mind, he will offer *qasr* as long as he has not performed any complete *salat*. Hence if he performs even one complete *salat* and then changes his plan of staying there, he will continue to perform *salat* completely.

7. His intention should not be to stay continuously at one place for: fifteen days in the opinion of the Hanafis, ten days in the opinion of the Imamis, and four days in the opinion of the Malikis and the Shafi'is, and a period during which more than 20 *salats* become *wajib* in the opinion of the Hanbalis. The Imamis further add: If he is unable to decide for how long he will stay at a particular place, he will continue to perform *qasr* for thirty days, and after this period it will be *wajib* for him to perform complete *salat* even if it happens to be a single one.

8. The traveller's nature of work should not require continuous travel – e.g. one who hires out his beast of burden or a tradesman whose trade requires continuous travelling – so that he is unable to stay at home for the stipulated period of days. This condition has been upheld only by the Hanbalis and the Imamis.

9. The traveler should not be a nomad who has no fixed house and keeps moving from place to place. Only the Imamis have expressly stated this condition.

10. The Hanafis, Hanbalis and Malikis observe: If a traveller changes his mind and intends to return to the place from where he began his journey, in the event of his not having travelled the distance required for performing *qasr*, his journey will be considered concluded and he will perform his *salat* complete. But if he has travelled the distance stipulated by the Shari'ah, he will pray *qasr* till returning back to his native place.

The Shafi'is say: Whenever a person decides to tum back in the course of his journey, he will perform his *salat* complete (al-Ghazali, *al-Wajiz*, "salat al-musafirin"). This implies that he will start performing *salat* complete on his way back despite having travelled the stipulated distance, because the absence of the mention of any conditions proves inclusiveness and generality.

The Imamis state: If one desists from his journey or becomes hesitant before covering the stipulated distance, it is *wajib* for him to offer his prayers completely; and if the stipulated distance has been covered, he will pray *qasr*. The continuous presence of the intent of journey is a condition as long as the stipulated distance has not been travelled, but after it has been covered, the subject is, of necessity, realized and its existence no longer depends upon intention.

There is consensus among the schools that every condition that entails *qasr* is also a condition for the validity of breaking one's fast during journey, though some schools have added other conditions for the validity of breaking the fast which will be mentioned in the chapter on fasting. The Imamis add no further conditions; they observe:

مَن أفطر قصر، ومَن قصر أفطر

i.e. one who breaks the fast (consequent to travelling) will perform his *salat* as *qasr*, and he who performs *salat* as *qasr* will break his fast.

Successive Performance (Jam') of Two Salats

Malik, al-Shafi'i and Ahmad consider it permissible while travelling to perform *zuhr* and '*asr* prayers, as well as *maghrib* and *'isha'*, successively by either advancing the performance of one of them or delaying the performance of the other. Abu Hanifah observes: It is not valid to perform two *salats* successively for

the excuse of journey under any circumstance.

The meaning of 'advancing' their successive performance is to perform *zuhr* and '*asr* prayers in the time meant for *zuhr*, and by 'delaying' is meant their successive performance in the time specified for '*asr*.

Ignorance and Forgetfulness

The Imamis observe: The *salat* of one who intentionally performs complete *salat* while travelling is *batil*, and he is supposed to repeat it *ada'* if its time has not elapsed, and *qada'* if it has elapsed. But if a person who is ignorant about *qasr* being *wajib* does so, he will not repeat the *salat*, irrespective of whether its time has elapsed or not. If a person performs it complete out of forgetfulness and then remembers while its time has not elapsed, he will repeat the *salat*, and if he remembers it after its time has elapsed, he will not repeat it.

The Imamis further state: If the time of a *salat* sets in while a person is at home and capable of performing it and he sets out on his journey before performing it, he will perform it *qasr*. But if the time of a *salat* comes while a person is travelling and he does not perform it till he has reached his native place or a place where he intends to remain for ten days, he will perform the *salat* complete. Hence the criterion is the time when the *salat* is performed and not the time when it becomes *wajib*.

1. Provided he returns within one day and one night, because in this case his journey has taken up all his day. Some others among them say: One should perform qasr if he intends to return within 10 days.

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