22387 - Ruling on Returning Home after Joining Prayers

the question

When I am travelling, I join together Zuhr and ‘Asr, or Maghrib and ‘Isha’, at the time of the earlier one of the two, and shorten the prayers. But sometimes it so happens that I go back to my own city before the Adhan for the later of the two prayers, or shortly after it. Should I repeat the obligatory prayer or is it waived in either case because I have already offered it, joined to the other prayer at the time of the earlier prayer and shortened?.

Summary of answer

A traveller who joins two prayers at the time of the earlier one does not need to repeat the later prayer upon returning home, even if he reaches before the end of the time for the later prayer . Scholars state that since the prayer was valid at the time of performance, it remains valid even if the excuse (travel) ceases later.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Ruling on Combining Prayers while Travelling

The concession regarding prayers that are connected to travel is that one is allowed to join Dhuhr and `Asr, and Maghrib and `Isha’ , at the time of the earlier or later of the two.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not make it a habit to join his prayers on all his journeys; rather he joined prayers sometimes and did not join prayers sometimes, praying each prayer at its own time instead.

Hence the scholars said: it is better for the traveller not to join his prayers unless he needs to

because it will be too difficult for him to do each prayer at its usual time, even though the concession allowing joining of prayers is established for every traveller . (See Al-Mughni, 3/131 and Ash-Sharh Al-Mumti`, 4/550-553)

Joining Prayers Knowing One will Reach Before the Second prayer?

Once it is established that you come under the definition of a traveller, then it becomes permissible to join the prayers, even if you know that you will return to your city before the end of the time for the second prayer , or before the time for it begins, because the evidence indicates that it is permissible for the traveller to join his prayers; so as long as a person is travelling, he may join his prayers.

Is Repeating the Later Prayer Necessary?

In Al-Majmu` (4/180), An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) mentioned the difference of the scholars; there are two views concerning the issue of a traveller who joins two prayers at the time of the earlier one, but then reaches his destination and is no longer a traveller. Does his joining of the prayers then become invalid, requiring him to repeat the second prayer at its proper time, or not?

Then An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The more correct of the two scholarly views is that his joining of the prayers does not become invalid, the same as if he were to shorten the prayers and then reach his destination and no longer come under the heading of a traveller.

Does Returning Home Affect the Validity of Joined Prayers?

Ibn Qudamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Al-Mughni (3/140):

If a person completed two prayers at the time of the earlier one, then the excuse for doing so ceased to exist after he had finished praying , before the time for the later prayer began, that is still sufficient and he does not have to repeat the later prayer when the time for it comes, because his prayer was valid and he discharged his duty to perform it, and that duty no longer applies after that. He discharged his duty at a time when he had an excuse, and it is not invalidated by the fact that the excuse ceases to exist after that. This is like the case of the one who does Tayammum, if he finds water after finishing his prayer (he does not have to repeat it).

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about a traveller who joined Dhuhr and `Asr at the time of the earlier prayer, although he knew that he would reach his destination before the time of `Asr. Is this permissible?

He replied:

Yes, this is permissible, but if he knows or he thinks it most likely that he will arrive before the time for `Asr, then it is better for him not to join the prayers, because there is no need to do so. (End quote from Majmu` Fatawa Ibn `Uthaymin, 15/422)

The Standing Committee for Issuing Fatwas was asked about the same matter, and they replied:

… If you joined Maghrib and `Isha' while travelling and shortened them, there is nothing wrong with that, even if you reached your destination at the time of `Isha'. (End quote from Fatawa Al-Lajnah Ad-Da'imah, 8/152)

And Allah knows best.