



286098 - Will doing Sunnah and supererogatory acts of worship make up for what one omits or falls short in of obligatory acts of worship?

the question

Will doing Sunnah and obligatory acts of worship make up for what a person omits or falls short in of obligatory acts of worship?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

With regard to making up for shortcomings in obligatory acts of worship on the Day of Resurrection, it is narrated in the authentic hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that he said: “The first of his deeds for which a person will be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayer. If it is good, then he will have succeeded and attained what he wanted, but if it is lacking, then he will have lost and will be filled with regret. If anything is lacking from his obligatory duties, the Lord, may He be Glorified and Exalted, will say: Look and see whether My slave has any voluntary [acts of worship] to his credit, then complete therewith whatever is lacking from his obligatory duties. Then the rest of his deeds will be dealt with in a similar manner.”

Narrated by Abu Dawud, 864; at-Tirmidhi in his *Sunan*, 413. Classed as authentic by Shaykh al-Albani in *Sahih Abi Dawud*, 810.

A similar report was narrated from Tamim ad-Dari, from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), who said: “The first thing for which a person will be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayer. If he did it properly and completely, it will be recorded for him as complete, and if he did not do it properly and complete it, He will say to the angels: Look and see whether you can find any voluntary [acts of worship] that My slave did, then complete therewith



what he neglected of obligatory prayers. Then zakah and other obligatory deeds will be dealt with in a similar manner.”

It was also narrated by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad*, 16954; classed as sahih by Shaykh al-Albani in *Sahih Abi Dawud*, 812.

There are two issues here:

The first issue is whether supererogatory acts of worship will make up for obligatory prayers that a person omitted, or he deliberately omitted some of the obligatory parts of the obligatory prayer, or will they make up only for what he omitted by mistake and out of forgetfulness?

Ibn Rajab said in *Fat-h al-Bari* (5/14 4): The scholars differed regarding what is meant by completing obligatory prayers with supererogatory prayers on the Day of Resurrection.

One group said that what is meant is that for one who omitted any of the obligatory or recommended parts from his prayer by way of forgetfulness, that will be completed for him from his supererogatory acts of worship on the Day of Resurrection. As for the one who omitted any of the obligatory or Sunnah parts of his obligatory prayers deliberately, that will not be made up for him from his supererogatory acts of worship, because the intention of offering a supererogatory prayer cannot take the place of the intention of offering an obligatory prayer.

This is the view of `Abd al-Malik ibn Habib al-Maliki and others.

Another group said that the apparent meaning of the hadith refers to omitting both obligatory and Sunnah parts of the prayer, deliberately or otherwise.

This is the view of al-Harith al-Muhasibi and others.

It is also the view of a group of our companions and of Ibn `Abd al-Barr, but they said that this only applies to one who does not do that deliberately.

Others interpreted it as being applicable to both, and this is the view that is most likely to be correct – in sha Allah. End quote.



The second issue is: Which supererogatory acts of worship will make up for obligatory acts of worship?

There are three possibilities:

1. The first possibility is that it is the supererogatory prayer that accompanies the obligatory prayer in question, such as the Sunnah prayer of Zuhr, which will make up for any shortcoming in the obligatory prayer of Zuhr, and so on.
2. The second possibility is that it is a supererogatory act of worship of the same type, meaning that supererogatory prayers will make up for any shortcoming in obligatory prayers in general, and supererogatory charity will make up for any shortcomings in obligatory charity (zakah), and so on.

The apparent meaning of the hadith quoted above indicates that a supererogatory act of worship, if it is connected to a particular obligatory act of worship, or it is an act of worship of the same type, will make up for shortcomings in the obligatory acts of worship of the same type.

Al-Qari said in *Mirqat al-Mafatih*, 3/997: “Does My slave have any voluntary acts of worship” in his record of deeds, although Allah knows better about that than them. What is meant is Sunnah or supererogatory prayers, as may be understood from the context, that are offered before or after the obligatory prayer, or supererogatory prayers that are offered at any other time.

Al-Mazhari said in *Al-Mafatih fi Sharh al-Masabih* (2/306): The words “then all other deeds will be dealt with in a similar manner” mean: fasting will be dealt with in a similar manner; if he omitted any of the obligatory fasts, it will be made up from what he observed of Sunnah and supererogatory fasts. And if he omitted to give any zakah, it will be made up from what he gave of (voluntary) charity. End quote.

3.. The third possibility is that voluntary acts of worship, even if they are not of the same type as the obligatory act of worship [in which there are some shortcomings], may make up for shortcomings in obligatory acts in general. Based on that, shortcomings in the obligatory prayer may be made up by supererogatory fasts or charity, for example.



This view was mentioned as a possibility by Abul Qasim al-`Abadi (may Allah have mercy on him), who was one of the Shafa'is.

Al-`Abadi said in his commentary on *Tuhfat al-Muhtaj* (2/219): It is prescribed to make up for shortcomings in obligatory duties, as was mentioned in *Al-`Ubab*: If a person falls short in his obligatory duties, it will be made up from his supererogatory deeds, and that is applicable to all other obligatory duties. End quote.

His referring to supererogatory deeds may include supererogatory deeds other than the Sunnah prayers connected to that obligatory prayer. This is supported by the hadith: "If anything is lacking from his obligatory duties, the Lord, may He be Glorified, will say: Look and see if My slave has any voluntary deeds to his credit. Then what is lacking from his obligatory deeds will be made up from that." In fact, that may also include voluntary acts of worship that are not of the same type as the obligatory act of worship, so let him reflect on that. End quote.

His words "In fact, that may also include voluntary acts of worship that are not of the same type as the obligatory act of worship" suggest that voluntary deeds in general may make up for shortcomings in all obligatory duties, and it is not far-fetched to think that this may be part of Allah's mercy.

However, the most correct view regarding this matter, and the closest to the apparent meaning of the hadith, is the second possibility, which says that a supererogatory act of worship may make up for shortcomings in an obligatory act of the same type, meaning that supererogatory prayer may make up for shortcomings in obligatory prayers in general, and supererogatory acts of charity may make up for shortcomings in giving the obligatory zakah, and so on.

Whatever the case, the Muslims should not be careless in doing obligatory acts of worship or in making them up, relying on his supererogatory deeds, because many of the scholars do not think that supererogatory acts of worship make up for what is omitted deliberately of obligatory acts of worship, as noted above, and because the main issue is to make sure that our acts of worship are accepted. So how could he be sure that Allah will accept his supererogatory acts of worship when



he has neglected his obligatory acts of worship?

Allah, may He be Glorified and Exalted, says in the hadith qudsi: “My slave does not draw near to Me by anything more beloved to Me than that which I have made obligatory for him, and My slave continues to draw close to Me by doing supererogatory acts of worship until I love him.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 6502.

For more information, please see the answer to question no. [49698](#).

And Allah knows best.