111783 - How to Make Up Missed Prayers

the question

How can he make up for missed prayers?

Summary of answer

If you missed prayers for a reason, there is no sin on you but you have to make it up. If you missed prayers with no excuse, you have committed a major sin and you have to repent to Allah. It is not valid for you to make it up according to the more correct of the two scholarly opinions.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Prayers in Islam have set times

Allah has allocated specific times for acts of worship for reasons that are known to Him. We know some of them, but some of them are hidden from us. Whatever the case, we are enjoined to adhere to them and it is not permissible to transgress against that except for reasons permitted in shari'ah.

Scenarios of missing prayers

If a person misses the prayer , one of two scenarios must apply:

1. He missed it for a reason, such as falling asleep or forgetting it. There is no sin on him in this case, but he has to make it up when he wakes up or remembers it.

Anas ibn Malik (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever forgets a prayer, let him offer it as soon as he remembers, for

there is no expiation for it other than that.” (Narrated by al-Bukhari (572) and Muslim (684) Muslim narrated an additional phrase: “or sleeps and misses it”.

Muslim also narrated (684):

“If one of you sleeps and misses a prayer, or forgets it, let him offer the prayer when he remembers, for Allah says ‘and perform As-Salah (Iqamat-as-Salah) for My remembrance’ [Ta-Ha 20:14].”

1. He missed the prayer with no excuse ; rather he ignored it until the time for it ended, out of laziness and carelessness. This person is sinning according to the consensus of the Muslims, and has committed a major sin.

It is not valid for him to make it up according to the more correct of the two scholarly opinions, rather he has to repent and regret it, and resolve not to do that again, and he should do a lot of good deeds and offer a lot of voluntary prayers.

Ibn Hazm said:

“As for the one who deliberately omits to pray until the time for the prayer ends, he can never make it up, so he should do a lot of good deeds and offer a lot of voluntary prayers, so that his balance (of good deeds) will weigh heavily on the Day of Resurrection, and he should repent and ask Allah for forgiveness.” (Al-Muhalla, 2/235)

This is also the view of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab and his son ‘Abd-Allah, and of Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas, Salman, Ibn Mas’ud, al-Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr, Badil al-‘Aqili, Muhammad ibn Sirin, Mutarrif ibn ‘Abd-Allah and ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz. It was also the view of Dawud al-Zahiri and Ibn Hazm, and was the view favoured by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah and al-Shawkani. Among contemporary scholars it was regarded as more correct by al-Albani, Ibn Baz, Ibn ‘Uthaymin and others.

They quoted as evidence the following:

- The words of Allah (interpretation of the meaning):

“Verily, As-Salah (the prayer) is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours.” [al-Nisa 4:103]

They said: There is a set time for prayer and it is not permissible to do it at any other time except with evidence.

- The words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): “Whoever forgets a prayer , let him offer it as soon as he remembers, for there is no expiation for it other than that.”

The words “let him offer it as soon as he remembers, for there is no expiation for it other than that” mean: If he is slow in offering the prayer after he remembers it, then it is not an expiation, so how about the one who neglects it deliberately without forgetting or sleeping? It is even more likely that it will not be an expiation in that case, and making it up will be of no benefit.

- Because Allah has allocated a specific time for each obligatory prayer, specifying the beginning and end thereof, so it is as if it is not valid to do it before that time just as it is not valid to do it afterwards. (Al-Muhalla, 2/235)

- Ibn Hazm said:

“Also, making it up should be based on evidence, and it is not permissible for anything to be prescribed other than by Allah on the lips of His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). We ask those who say that the one who deliberately omits the prayer is obliged to make it up to tell us about this prayer that you are telling him to do – is it the prayer that was enjoined by Allah or some other prayer? If they say it is the one that was enjoined by Allah, then we say to them: Then the one who deliberately omits it is not a sinner, because he has done what Allah commanded him to do and there is no sin according to what you say, and there is no blame on the one who deliberately omits to pray until the time for it ends. But that is something that no Muslim can say. If they say that it is not the prayer that Allah has enjoined him to do, then we say: You are right, and that is enough, because they have admitted that they told him to do something that was

not enjoined by Allah.” (Al-Muhalla, 2/236)

Those who say that he has to make it up did so by analogy with the one who forgets or falls asleep, and they said that if the one who forgets has to make it up, then it is more likely that the one who deliberately omitted it should do so.

The response is that there is no comparison between the two scenarios, because the one who omits it deliberately is sinning, which is not true in the case of the one who forgets, so how can an analogy be drawn between the one who is sinning and the one who is not sinning?

Al-Shawkani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“Ibn Taymiyah said: Those who disagree – i.e., those who say that he should make up the prayer – do not have any proof to support their argument. Most of them say that he does not have to make it up unless there is a clear command (based on evidence), but there is no such command in this case. We do not disagree that it is obligatory to make it up; rather we disagree as to whether the made-up prayer will be accepted from him and whether prayer offered at the wrong time is valid. He discussed this matter at length and he favoured the view that was mentioned by Dawud and those who agreed with him, and the matter is as he put it, because I made a thorough study of this matter and I did not see any reliable evidence that obliges the one who misses a prayer deliberately to make it up.” (Nayl al-Awtar, 2/26)

The more correct view – and Allah knows best – is that the one who deliberately omits the prayer should not make it up, rather he has to seek forgiveness and repent.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) discussed this issue at length and examined the evidence of both sides in his useful book al-Salah (p. 67-109).

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said:

“The scholars who say that he should make up the prayer do not say that by making it up he is absolved of sin, rather they say that by making it up his burden of sin is reduced, but the sin of missing and delaying the prayer beyond its prescribed time is like any other sin, it needs either

repentance or good deeds that will erase it or other things that will waive the punishment.” (Minhaj al-Sunnah, 5/233)

And Allah knows best.