



214323 - What to Do If You Pray an Extra Rak`ah?

the question

If a man is praying by himself (a four- Rak`ah prayer) then he gets confused and stands up for a fifth Rak`ah, what should he do?

Summary of answer

If you realize the extra Rak`ah during prayer, sit down immediately and complete the Tashahhud. Then, perform Sujud As-Sahw after the Salam. If you realize after finishing prayer, perform Sujud As-Sahw after the Salam to correct the mistake.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The Ruling on Adding an Extra Rakah in Prayer

The Imam, the one who is praying on his own and the one who is praying behind an Imam come under the same ruling with regard to [doing extra Rak`ahs](#). [If any of them adds a Rak`ah deliberately](#), knowing that it is additional, his prayer is invalidated; but hardly anyone does that.

Correcting the Mistake: Sitting Down and Saying Tashahhud

[But if the addition to the prayer was by mistake](#), then either the worshipper (whether he is an Imam, praying behind an Imam or praying on his own) realizes that it is something additional during the extra Rak`ah, in which case he must sit back down immediately, otherwise his prayer will become invalid, because he deliberately added something to the prayer. He must also recite



the Tashahhud if he did not do so previously, and prostrate twice ([the two prostrations of forgetfulness](#)) after the Salam.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The phrase “if he realises” means: if he realises that it is something additional during the additional Rak`ah itself.

The phrase: “he should sit back down immediately” means: as soon as he realises it, and he should not delay; even if he remembers whilst bowing that this is an additional Rak`ah, he should sit down.

Some seekers of knowledge may think that the ruling on this issue is the same as the ruling on one who stands up following the first Tashahhud and thinks that if he has stood up for the extra Rak`ah and started to recite, it is prohibited for him to sit back down.

This is a mistaken notion, because one should never continue with the additional Rak`ah. As soon as he realises, he must sit back down, in order to put a stop to this additional Rak`ah, because if he continues with it when he is aware of it, he will be adding something to the prayer deliberately, which is not permissible and renders the prayer invalid.

The phrase “must also recite the Tashahhud if he did not do so previously” means: when he realises that he is doing something additional and sits back down, then he should recite the Tashahhud, unless he recited it before he stood up for this additional Rak`ah. But this begs the question: is it possible that anyone could get up to do another Rak`ah after reciting the (final) Tashahhud?

The answer is yes, it is possible, if he recited the Tashahhud in the fourth Rak`ah, then he got confused and thought that it was the second Rak`ah, so he got up for what he thought was the third Rak`ah, then after standing up he realized that this was a fifth Rak`ah and that the Tashahhud he had recited was the last Tashahhud.

The words “he should prostrate and say the Salam” clearly mean that he should prostrate ([the two prostrations of forgetfulness](#)) before the Salam. This is the adopted view, because they do not



think that the two prostrations of forgetfulness should be done after the Salam, except in the case where one has said the Salam before completing the prayer. But in all other cases, it should be done before the Salam. However the more correct view, which was favoured by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah, is that two the prostrations of forgetfulness for adding something to the prayer should be done after the Salam in all cases.

Question: if a person gets up for a third Rak`ah in Fajr prayer, what should he do?

Answer: he should sit back down even if that is after bowing; he should sit back down, recite the Tashahhud and say the Salam, then do the two prostrations of forgetfulness and say the Salam again, according to the more correct view, which is that in this case the prostration should come after the Salam. (End quote from Ash-Sharh Al-Mumti`, 3/342-343)

But if the worshipper did not realise that he had done something extra until after he had finished the prayer, then in this case his prayer is valid and the two prostrations of forgetfulness should come after the Salam, for the extra actions that occurred during the prayer.

In Majmu` Fatawa Ibn `Uthaymin (14/31) there is a question about a man who prayed Thuhr with five Rak`ahs, and did not realise until he was reciting the Tashahhud. What is the ruling in this case?

He replied:

If a person does an extra Rak`ah in his prayer, and does not realize until he has finished the Rak`ah, then he must do the two prostrations of forgetfulness; these two prostrations should come after saying the Salam at the end of the prayer.

The evidence for that is the fact that when the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) offered a prayer with five Rak`ahs, and they told him about that after the Salam, he prostrated twice. As he prostrated after the Salam, and did not say that the two prostrations **for having added this Rak`ah** should come before the Salam, we know that the two prostrations for having added something to the prayer should come after the Salam. This is also supported by the



Hadith of Dhul-Yadayn. (End quote)

And Allah knows best.