



## Prayer on an Airplane. Definition of Prayer, Linguistically and Legally

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**Abstract:** This research highlights a solid Islamic concept, which is the rulings from Islamic Sharia concerning prayer, and how it applies to the context of an airplane journey. The Noble Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and the Duties Imposed on Individual Muslims Regarding these Obligatory Teachings and Their Performance:

The respected scholars and knowledgeable religious authorities have affirmed that it is permissible for a Muslim to perform prayers on an airplane. It has been authentically reported from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he used to pray while riding on his mount. There is a distinction between obligatory (Fard) and voluntary (Nafl) prayers when it comes to praying on an airplane. In the case of obligatory prayers, it is mandatory for the individual to face the direction of the Kaaba (Qibla) and make efforts to maintain that orientation. They should adjust their position as the plane moves to stay oriented towards the Qibla. Additionally, they are required to stand, bow, and prostrate if they are physically able.

As for voluntary prayers, facing the Qibla is not a strict requirement, and individuals have more flexibility in how they perform these prayers. It is indeed a consensus among the majority of scholars that during prayer on an airplane, an individual is required to perform the standing (Qiyam), bowing (Ruku), and prostration (Sujood). However, when it comes to sitting, they can sit and gesture for the bowing and prostration, with the prostration being done in a lower position than usual. This view is supported by the majority of scholars.

This approach is based on the general understanding of the Quranic verse in Surah Al-Imran (3:191), which emphasizes the remembrance of Allah while standing, sitting, and lying down. The verse encompasses various situations of worship and contemplation, and it doesn't specifically address the unique circumstances of prayer on an airplane. Therefore, scholars have employed the principle of analogy (Qiyas) to derive a suitable method for performing prayers during air travel, as this matter did not have a direct precedent in the Quran and Sunnah or in the actions of the companions of the Prophet. The use of Qiyas allows scholars to make informed decisions and adapt Islamic practices to new or unprecedented situations while staying within the framework of Islamic jurisprudence. "Praying on a ship."

**Keywords:** Prayer, linguistical and legally

## Introduction:

Praise be to Allah, who guides whomever He wills to His obedience and the quest for His pleasure, and who forbids whoever He wills from His disobedience, thereby making the nearness to Him a source of joy. We send blessings and peace upon the one whom His Lord sent to bring happiness to humanity and guide them to salvation, our master and Prophet, Muhammad, may Allah's blessings and peace be upon him, and upon his family and companions. After this...

Indeed, Allah, the Most High, created humankind and placed them on Earth to worship Him, as He said: "And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (Quran 51:56) Worshipping Allah is both the purpose and the means to fulfill this heavy responsibility. As Allah says: "Verily, I am Allah! There is no god but I, so worship Me and establish regular prayer for My remembrance." (Quran 20:14)

The Islamic Ummah (community) holds a high status, and it is the duty of the believers to reciprocate this great blessing with gratitude. Expressing gratitude is accomplished by establishing and performing the prayer with all its integral components.

And the conditions for prayer include complete humility, full submission to Allah, seeking refuge in Him, and seeking His assistance in repelling all harm. Prayer is one of the pillars of Islam, and it is a great source of help in facing the challenges of life, both in this world and the Hereafter. Allah, the Most High, says, "Recite what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows what you do." (Quran 29:45) [4].

The topic of prayer on an airplane is one of the matters that did not exist in the Quran and Sunnah because it is a modern issue. Every Muslim needs to know the ruling on praying on an airplane, how to perform this prayer, whether it is permissible to pray while sitting, and the rulings regarding the Qibla direction. Also, one needs to know if it is allowed to delay the prayer beyond its prescribed time, and how to perform both obligatory and voluntary prayers while on an airplane. These are important matters for every Muslim to understand, and to be aware of the opinions of scholars

Regarding them.

The concept of inventing the airplane can be traced back to the Muslim scholar Abbas ibn Firnas, who The first flight, using large wings, marked the beginning of aviation. However, it neglected the tail, leading to its downfall. Everything beneficial in the universe is known and discovered by those who invent it. Airplanes fly above the clouds. (See: Tafsir al-Shaarawi - Al-Khawatir, by Muhammad Metwally al-Shaarawi, Chapter 73) [5].

## Chapter 1: Definition of Prayer, Linguistically and Legally

This chapter consists of two sections:

Section 1: Linguistic Definition of Prayer

Linguistically, "Salah" (prayer) means supplication or invocation. [6]

Allah, the Most High, says, "Take from their wealth a charity by which you purify them and cause them increase, and invoke [ Allah 's blessings] upon them. Indeed, your invocations are reassurance for them. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing." (Quran 9:103) [7]. It means to make supplications for them. This indicates that the prayer for the deceased is essentially a supplication (du'a) for them, and it does not involve bowing or prostration. [8]

Prayer can take various forms:

1. The prayers of the Prophet for the Muslims: His supplications and remembrance of them.
2. Allah's prayers (blessings) upon His prophets and the righteous among His creation: His approval, mentioning them in a good way, and some scholars even interpret it as His forgiveness.

3. The prayers of people for the deceased: Making supplications for them.
4. The prayers of the angels: Seeking forgiveness for them.
5. The term "Salla" can also mean kindling a fire or flames. [9]

There have been differences of opinion in the derivation of the term "Salah." Some people have said that it means supplication, such as saying "Allahumma salli 'ala Muhammad" (O Allah, bless Muhammad). In the early days of Islam, when someone came to collect charity, they would say, "Salla," when asking for donations, meaning supplicate or invoke Allah's blessings. They said, "Salla 'alayh," meaning invoke blessings upon him. Some people said that the derivation of "Salah" is from raising the head in prostration (Sujood). The preferable view is that it comes from a higher source. [10]

"Salah" is a term used for prayer, and when it comes from Allah, it signifies His mercy. "Salah" is a singular form, and it is used as a noun referring to the act of prayer. For example, you say, "I performed Salah," and you don't say, "I performed it." "I sent blessings upon the Prophet (peace be upon him)," and "I kindled the stick with fire," when you want to make it soft and pliable. [11]

In Arabic, "Salah" can be categorized into three types:

1. The well-known prayer that involves bowing and prostration, as mentioned in the Quran: "So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone]." (Quran 108:2) [12].

2. It can mean invoking blessings or showing mercy. For example, "They will have salawat (blessings) from their Lord and mercy." (Quran 2:157).

3. Salah can also refer to supplication or prayer in a general sense, where it doesn't necessarily include the ritual acts of bowing and prostration. - "And their prayer (salawat) upon them (the deceased) will be a means of mercy." (Quran 2:157) [13].

- "Salah" can also mean supplication, as in the case of praying for the deceased, which means making supplications for them because there is no bowing or prostration involved. For example, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "When one of you is invited to a meal, let him respond. If he is fasting, let him pray for blessings upon them," meaning, let him supplicate for them to have blessings. [14].

- "Salah" can refer to mercy from Allah, seeking forgiveness from the angels, or supplication from people. [15].

- Different parts of the prayer serve different purposes. For example, prostration is a state of nearness to Allah and is the most honorable aspect of prayer, likely to earn mercy. Prayer during times of distress can alleviate anxiety and sorrow. Prayer strengthens the connection with Allah, bolsters faith, and instills tranquility in the heart. [16].

The second topic: The definition of "Salah" in terminology:

Salah is the complete act of bowing, prostration, recitation, humility, and turning towards it. It is called Salah because the one performing it is exposed to the success of seeking Allah's reward through their actions, along with what they ask their Lord for. - "And among its (the Quran's) uses is that it is added to a ruling when it exists, not as an obligation. For example, ablution is a condition for prayer, but it is not part of the prayer, and it does not affect it." [18].

- "Salah" is defined as specific pillars, known supplications, with specific conditions within specified times. It seeks to honor the side of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in this world and the Hereafter. [19].

- "Salah" is considered the mother of all worship acts, akin to the heart within the body because it prohibits all obscenities, and it is the most challenging and persistent act of worship. [20].

- "Complete prayer" refers to its bowing and prostration, which occur at the two ends of the day, meaning the morning, forenoon, afternoon, and the two ends of the night, meaning the evening and

night prayers. The good deeds, i.e., the five daily prayers, erase sins as long as major sins are avoided. [21] "Al-Kaba'ir" ("major sins" أو "grave sins")

- "When you have finished the prayer, remember Allah while standing or sitting or [lying] on your sides. But when you become secure, re-establish [regular] prayer. Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times." [23]. This verse outlines the obligation of prayer and its specific times.

- "Prayer is one of the obligatory acts of Islam, enjoined upon every sane Muslim. It consists of five prayers a day, each with prescribed times, and it is not permissible to intentionally delay them. These prayers are Fajr (Dawn), Dhuhr (Noon), Asr (Afternoon), Maghrib (Evening), and Isha (Night). In addition to these obligatory prayers, there are also voluntary prayers, funeral prayers, and the prayer for seeking rain (Istisqaa). Prayer is the second pillar of the five pillars of Islam and is considered the closest a worshiper can be to Allah, especially during prostration. Prayer is often described as the backbone of the religion." [25].

The second section discusses the definition of the term "airplane" both linguistically and technically.

"Aviation: The movement of a being with wings in the air using its two wings. It flew, flying, and flight. The word 'bird' is used to refer to a group of creatures that fly, with 'bird' being the singular form. The female bird is called a 'bird' as well, and they are relatively few in number.

Airplane: A flying vehicle that operates in the sky, resembling a bird in its form and function."

Here is the translation of the provided text into English:

"And war. [The Arabic word 'حرب' (harb)]" ([29]). Al-Muajam Al-Waseet: Arabic Language Institute in Cairo (Ibrahim Mustafa, Ahmed Al-Zayat, Hamed Abdel Qader, Mohammad Al-Najjar), Publisher: Dar Al-Da'wa, Chapter: '2/574) ).

"30] ). Tuḥfat Al-Arib bimā Fī Al-Qur'ān min Ghareeb: Abu Hayyan Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn Ali ibn Yusuf ibn Hayyan Athir al-Din al-Andalusi, Chapter: '1/209) ).

The poet Shawqi excellently depicted the plane as it rapidly ascends in the sky. With every rise, it takes on a different image, unlike its previous or subsequent ones. He said:

Where mountains appear in various forms, ranging from small to large and from visibility to concealment ([31]). Tafsir Al-Qur'ani: Abdul Karim Younis Al-Khatib, Chapter: 14/556)).

"One of the manifestations of the power of Allah, the Most High, is creation and innovation. Allah brought people out of their mothers' wombs, knowing nothing, and created for them the means of knowledge and perception, which are hearing, sight, and understanding. Allah made the intellect the key to understanding and distinguishing between good and evil, benefit and harm. Allah taught human beings to invent the airplane. There are characteristics that Allah has placed in the atmosphere to enable the airplane to fly. All of these blessings deserve gratitude, and gratitude is not just expressing it with words but also obeying the command of Allah and following His orders." ([32]) Tafsir Al-Wasit by Al-Zuhayli, Chapter: Surah An-Nahl (6) (2/1286).

"The Third Issue: The Ruling of Obligatory Prayer

Prayer is obligatory upon every Muslim, sane, adult. Allah, the Most High, says: 'And when you have completed the prayer, remember Allah standing, sitting, or [lying] on your sides. But when you become secure, re-establish [regular] prayer. Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times.' (Surah An-Nisa, 4:103). Prayer is obligatory and must be performed at its designated time. Performing the obligatory act of worship in its specified time is a duty, and the Prophet (peace be upon him) specified the prayer times in detail. Praying outside of the designated time is a violation of Allah's limits. Allah says: 'Divorce is twice. Then, either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment. And it is not lawful for you to take anything

of what you have given them unless both fear that they will not be able to keep [within] the limits of Allah. But if you fear that they will not keep [within] the limits of Allah, then there is no blame upon either of them concerning that by which she ransoms herself.' (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:229). Therefore, whoever prays before its time intentionally is sinful and must repeat it. If it was not intentional, there is no sin, but it must be repeated. Whoever delays the prayer intentionally beyond its time without a valid excuse has committed a grave sin."

"An excuse, even if it is sinful, does not allow one's prayer to be accepted according to the stronger opinion. Therefore, a Muslim should be conscious of Allah and not be lenient in this great matter. It is incumbent upon the Muslim to fear Allah and not take this matter lightly.

The issue of praying on an airplane is a contemporary one, and the answer to this issue should be based on similar situations, not the exact same circumstances. Since the matter is as such, it is necessary to consider the contemporary incident as similar to those that were answered by scholars at their times. In this case, there is no way to avoid using analogy (Qiyas) and reasoning, which is the fourth evidence in Islamic jurisprudence. This requires Ijtihad (independent juristic reasoning) by those qualified to do so.

A scholar from northern Syria was asked: Is it permissible to pray on an airplane? He answered: Yes. He was then asked whether this was based on imitation (Taqlid) or independent reasoning (Ijtihad). He responded: It is based on independent reasoning (Ijtihad). When asked if there was any textual evidence supporting prayer on an airplane, he said no.

Someone then asked: How did you deviate from your original position and issue a fatwa without textual evidence? He answered: Based on analogy (Qiyas). It was asked: What was the basis of your analogy? He replied: The analogy was made with prayer on a ship. ([36]) Collection of Authentic Hadiths and Some of Their Jurisprudence and Benefits by Abu Abdul Rahman Muhammad Nasser al-Din Al-Albani, Chapter 87 (1/174).

**The First Issue:** The Ruling of Prayer on an Airplane and the Opinions of Scholars on it:

Praying on an airplane is permissible if there is fear of missing the prayer time, such as the sun rising before the Fajr prayer or setting before the Asr prayer, and this is before the plane lands at the airport. In this case, one should pray on the airplane without delaying the prayer beyond its time, and they should pray in the best way possible, not transferring to another place unless it is absolutely necessary. If one finds a place to pray while standing, they should do so. If not, they can pray while sitting in their seat, even by making gestures if needed. However, if one is unable to do that, they can pray in their seat even without gestures, considering their situation:

"If a person is on an airplane and there is a fear of missing the prayer time before the plane lands at an airport, scholars unanimously agree that they must perform the prayer within its prescribed time to the best of their ability, including bowing and prostrating and facing the Qibla ([37]).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, 'When I command you with something, do as much of it as you can' ([38]). This means that if a person is on an airplane and they are able to perform the prayer while standing, bowing, and prostrating, they should do so. If they are unable to do so, they can pray while sitting and make gestures for bowing and prostrating. If there is a place on the airplane where they can stand and perform the prayer on the ground instead of making gestures, it becomes obligatory upon them to do so, as Allah says, 'So fear Allah as much as you are able and listen and obey and spend [in the way of Allah]; it is better for your selves. And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful' (Quran, Al-Taghabun, 64:16) ([39]).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) advised Imran ibn Husain (may Allah be pleased with him) when he was ill, 'Pray standing, and if you can't, then sitting, and if you can't, then on your side' ([40]). The preferred way is to pray the prayer as early as possible within its time. If one delays it to the end

of its time, they can still perform it on the ground without any issues due to the generality of the evidence ([41]) ([39]).

In cases of necessity, when there is a need to pray on the airplane, whether it's an obligatory or voluntary prayer, if there is an opportunity to pray before or after the flight, it's preferable to do so while standing. If the journey becomes excessively long, one can pray according to their circumstances, even if it's an obligatory prayer. However, they should pray facing the Qibla, turning with the direction of the Qibla even while sitting. If it's possible for them to stand and pray, it's better."

- Some scholars say: "It is obligatory for a Muslim on an airplane, when the prayer time arrives, to pray to the best of their ability. If they can pray while standing, bowing, and prostrating, it is obligatory upon them to do so, even during the obligatory prayers. As for voluntary prayers, it is permissible to pray them while sitting. They should pray in the direction of the airplane's movement, just as the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to do while riding his camel during voluntary prayers" ([42]).

- Others say: "If the prayer time comes while the airplane is still in flight, and there is a fear of missing the prayer time before landing at an airport, scholars unanimously agree that one must perform the prayer to the best of their ability, including bowing, prostrating, and facing the Qibla, as Allah has commanded. This is based on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying, 'When I command you with something, do as much of it as you can' ([44]).' Therefore, if one knows that the airplane will land before the prayer time expires, with enough time to perform the prayer, or if the prayers can be combined (e.g., Dhuhr and Asr or Maghrib and Isha), or if one knows that the airplane will land before the next prayer time, scholars agree on the permissibility of performing the prayer on the airplane due to the requirement of performing it within its prescribed time. However, the Maliki school holds that it is not valid to pray on the airplane because one of the conditions for valid prayer is that it should be performed on the ground or something connected to the ground, like a riding animal or a ship. This is based on the Prophet's (peace be upon him) saying, 'The earth has been made a place of prayer and a means of purification' ([45])." ([46]).

So, there are different opinions among scholars regarding the permissibility of praying on an airplane. Some consider it permissible, especially for obligatory prayers, while others do not find it valid - Some scholars suggest different approaches to praying on an airplane:

1. Praying while seated in one's airplane seat, facing the direction of the airplane's movement, making gestures for bowing and prostrating, and keeping the prostration lower than usual.

2. Only praying the obligatory prayers on the airplane if one can face the Qibla and perform all the required prayer postures (standing, bowing, prostrating, sitting). For voluntary prayers, it is permissible to pray while sitting.

3. If one cannot perform the prayer on the airplane, they should delay it until they land at an airport and then pray on the ground. If they fear missing the prayer time before landing, they can delay it until just before the next prayer time, provided the prayers can be combined (e.g., Dhuhr and Asr, Maghrib and Isha).

- It's important to note that there are varying opinions among scholars on this matter, and the permissibility of praying on an airplane depends on individual circumstances and interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence based on their interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence. - Regarding the permissibility of praying on an airplane, scholars have various opinions, but there seems to be a consensus that it is allowed in cases of necessity, such as during long flights when it is impossible to stop the plane or disembark for prayer. In such cases, one should do their best to pray while seated, facing the direction of the plane's movement if possible, and making gestures for bowing and prostrating.

- If a person can stand and perform all the required prayer postures, it is recommended to do so. However, if standing is not possible due to turbulence or other reasons, praying while seated is permissible.

- If one cannot pray while seated and cannot face the Qibla, they should wait until they can pray on the ground. If there is a risk of missing the prayer time before landing, they can delay the prayer until just before the next prayer time, especially if the prayers can be combined (e.g., Dhuhr and Asr, Maghrib and Isha).

- It is important to note that there are different views on this matter, and individuals may follow the opinion of their trusted scholars or make a judgment based on their circumstances and the availability of a suitable place to pray on the airplane.

- The key principle is to do one's best to perform the prayer within its designated time and following the proper postures and facing the Qibla whenever possible.

"Sheikh Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Abdul Latif Al Sheikh, Muhammad bin Ibrahim bin Abdul Latif Al Sheikh, Chapter: Avoidance of Impurity (2/178)." - If a Muslim traveler is on an airplane and the time for a mandatory (Fard) prayer arrives while they are not facing the Qibla, it is recommended that they make an effort to determine the direction of the Qibla, such as asking someone or using a compass if available. Once they have determined the Qibla direction, they should pray the obligatory prayer, as it is not permissible to pray a mandatory prayer in a direction other than the Qibla. As for voluntary (Nafil) prayers, they can initially face the Qibla for the Takbir (saying "Allahu Akbar" at the beginning of the prayer) and then adjust their direction to follow the movement of the airplane, vehicle, or animal they are on.

- If a traveler cannot determine the Qibla direction or faces difficulty in doing so, they should still perform their obligatory prayers according to their circumstances and capabilities. If water is available on the plane, they should perform ablution (Wudu) and pray. If there is no water or they are unable to use it, they should perform dry ablution (Tayammum) if they find sand or a suitable substitute. If neither water nor a suitable substitute is available, they should pray according to their condition, and it is not obligatory for them to face the Qibla.

- Travelers should do their best to maintain their prayers within their prescribed times and follow the general guidelines for prayer while adapting to their specific situation on the airplane. The key is to ensure that the obligatory prayers are performed with proper purification and within their designated times as much as possible.

- These rulings take into account the flexibility provided in Islamic jurisprudence for situations of hardship and travel. However, it is always advisable for individuals to consult with a knowledgeable scholar or religious authority for specific guidance based on their circumstances.

#### **- What is the ruling on delaying prayer due to being on an airplane?**

Regarding praying on an airplane, if it's not possible to land before the prayer time ends or before the next prayer time comes in, and they need to combine two prayers, then the prayer in this case is obligatory, and it should not be delayed beyond its prescribed time. The passenger should pray while facing the Qibla (the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca), standing if possible, and performing the bowing and prostration. However, during the prostration, they should sit and indicate by bowing slightly due to the limited space in airplane seats. If it's possible for the plane to land before the current prayer time ends or before the next one begins, which can be combined, then the person should not pray in the airplane. Instead, they should delay the prayer until they can perform it on the ground, ensuring they can fulfill the prayer's obligations properly. If it's not possible for them to do so or if there is harm in doing so, and they have valid reasons to perform the prayer while on the plane, they should pray according to their capability, doing what they can and omitting what they can't. They should also face

the Qibla and adjust their position as the airplane turns during the obligatory prayer. As for voluntary prayers, they can be performed in the direction of the airplane's movement. It's important to note that praying the obligatory prayer should always involve facing the Qibla.

**- What is the ruling on performing the obligatory prayer on an airplane?**

When a Muslim is on an airplane or in the desert, it is their duty to make an effort to determine the direction of the Qibla, either by asking experts or by observing landmarks that indicate the Qibla's direction, so that they can pray toward it with certainty. If it is not possible to obtain this knowledge, they should make an effort to estimate the Qibla's direction and pray accordingly. Even if they later discover that they prayed in the wrong direction, they are excused because they made a sincere effort and feared Allah to the best of their ability. It is not permissible to pray the obligatory prayer on an airplane or in the desert without making this effort. If someone does so without making an effort to determine the Qibla's direction, they should repeat the prayer because they did not fulfill their duty to Allah properly.

- Sheikh Muhammad Al-Amin Al- Shanqiti has written a letter regarding the ruling of prayer on an airplane, in which he mentioned:

"If the Book, Sunnah (the practices and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad), and consensus confirm the validity of praying on a ship at sea, then there is no difference in the ruling between a ship and an airplane; they both have the same effect in terms of the ruling. Both are moving vehicles on which all the obligatory acts of prayer can be performed, such as standing, bowing, prostration, and other aspects. Both are considered a means of transportation. For example, if one inflates a balloon, observers would think it is filled with water. If the air was not substantial (i.e., had no volume), it would not have filled the empty space. Therefore, the argument of air being insubstantial is not valid. Therefore, one can perform all the acts of prayer on an airplane as well as on a ship."

Islamic beliefs are not just theoretical matters; they should interact and manifest in people's daily lives. Worship is not limited to specific times or places, such as mosques or the pilgrimage months. It should occur at all times and in all places. Whether on an airplane, on land, or at work, we worship Allah and uphold His rituals because Islam is a way of life.

"A comprehensive system that has not left any aspect of life without regulation, Allah has said: 'Forbidden to you (for food) are: dead meat, blood, the flesh of swine, and that on which hath been invoked the name of other than Allah; that which hath been killed by strangling, or by a violent blow, or by a headlong fall, or by being gored to death; that which hath been (partly) eaten by a wild animal; unless ye are able to slaughter it (in due form); that which is sacrificed on stone (altars); (forbidden) also is the division (of meat) by raffling with arrows: that is impiety. This day have those who reject faith given up all hope of your religion: yet fear them not but fear Me. This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion. But if any is forced by hunger, with no inclination to transgression, Allah is indeed Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.' (Quran, Surah Al-Ma'idah, 5:3). That is why we should be dyed with the color of Islam and the color of servitude to Allah. Fear Allah whenever you are, and this is our noble Islamic religion.

**- What is the ruling on combining and shortening prayers?**

A traveler may shorten their prayers, whether they are traveling by land, air, or sea. As soon as they leave their hometown, they start shortening the prayers, which means praying two units instead of four. Once outside the town, whether at an airport or elsewhere, they should continue shortening the prayers as long as they are considered travelers. This is the consensus opinion of the scholars.

- When is prayer obligatory on an airplane, and how should obligatory and voluntary prayers be performed on the airplane?



Prayer becomes obligatory on an airplane when its time has entered. However, if it's not possible to perform the prayer on the airplane as one would on land, then the obligatory prayer should not be offered on the airplane. If the airplane can land before the time for the current prayer or the next prayer that can be combined arrives, the passenger should not pray on the airplane. Instead, they should delay the prayer until they can perform it on the ground. For example, if the plane took off from Jeddah shortly before sunset, and the sun sets while the person is in the air, they should not pray the Maghrib prayer until they land at the airport and can perform it properly. If they fear that the prayer time will end while the plane is still in the air, they can make the intention to combine it with the Isha prayer, and when they land, they can perform it accordingly.

As for how to perform the obligatory prayer on an airplane, the person should stand facing the Qibla, recite Al-Fatiha, and any other Quranic verses or supplications that are recommended before or after it. Then they should bow, prostrate, and perform the rest of the prayer as much as possible, given the limited space. If they cannot prostrate due to space constraints, they should sit and indicate their prostration position. This way, they maintain the Qibla direction throughout the prayer.

Regarding voluntary prayers on the airplane, they can be performed while seated on the airplane seat, with bowing and prostration, making the prostration slightly lower to accommodate the limited space."

These rulings are based on Islamic jurisprudence and the interpretation of Islamic texts by scholars. They provide guidance for Muslims on how to perform their prayers while traveling on an airplane.

#### **- What is the ruling if the departure time of the plane is immediately after the call to Friday prayer (Adhan)?**

If the call to Friday prayer (Adhan) is announced while one is still in their hometown, they are obligated to attend the Friday congregational prayer. Allah has commanded believers to respond to the call to prayer and leave aside trade or business when the call to Friday prayer is made. Traveling is also prohibited at this time because it prevents one from attending the Friday prayer. However, if someone fears missing their companions or their intended purpose for the journey if they delay their travel, it is permissible for them to travel out of necessity. Traveling before the Adhan is called is permissible.

In conclusion, it is permissible for Muslims to pray while on an airplane. It is confirmed that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) used to pray on his riding animal. There is a difference between the obligatory (Fard) and voluntary (Sunnah or Nafl) prayers performed on the airplane. For the obligatory prayer, one must face the Qibla (the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca), make an effort to maintain the Qibla direction as the plane moves, and perform the prayer as much as possible given the limited space, including standing, bowing, and prostrating if possible. For voluntary prayers, it is not necessary to face the Qibla, and one can perform them while seated on the airplane seat, making the prostration lower to accommodate the limited space.

This guidance is based on the consensus of scholars and is derived from Islamic jurisprudence, and it provides instructions for Muslims on how to perform their prayers while traveling on an airplane.

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