

Oversights in the Prayer

An oversight means a mistake or omission done unintentionally. When someone forgets or commits an oversight in his prayers by adding or decreasing from his prayers or when he thinks that he may have increased or decreased from it, then *sujud as-sahw* or the prostration of oversight is prescribed for him.

Also if he mistakenly adds a standing, bowing, or sitting, or the like to his prayer, he must prostrate two prostrations after *tasleem* to rectify the error he has committed. Similarly, when he mistakenly reduces something from the prayer by leaving any action or word.

If the omitted word or action is a pillar (*Rukn*) and he remembers it before commencing recitation in the following *rak'ah*, he must return to perform the missing pillar or that basic element, then observe the other aspects following it, and then do the prostration of forgetfulness.

However, if he could not recollect it except after he has begun recitation in the following *rak'ah*, that particular *rak'ah* in which the omission occurred becomes void and the following *rak'ah* takes its place.

If he could not accomplish the forgotten *ruk'n* (basic element) except after the *tasleem*, but there has not been a long period between the prayer and the time he recollects, he should observe a full *rak'ah* and prostrate the prostration of forgetfulness. However, if there has been a long time gap or his ablution has been vitiated, he should repeat the whole prayer.

If he forgets an obligatory aspect of the prayer (*Wajib*) such as the sitting for the first tashahhud or the like, he should observe the two prostrations of forgetfulness before making the *tasleem*. However, in case of nursing doubts about the number of *rak'ahs* observed like when he doubts whether he has observed two or three *rak'ahs*, he should consider the lower number and carry on therefrom. This is because he is certain about the lower number but he must observe the prostration of forgetfulness before making *tasleem*.

If he doubts having omitted a basic element (*ruk'n*), he should do as if he has actually omitted it by observing it and the other aspects following it and then observe the prostration of forgetfulness.

If he thinks that he is most likely to have done one of the two, then he should act according to the stronger probability and observe the prostration of forgetfulness.