

Combining Salah in Shi'i and Fatimi-Isma'ili Tayyibi Fiqh

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Abstract: *This paper examines the Shi'i legal position on al-Jam bayn al-Salatayn, namely the combining of Zuhr with Asr and Maghrib with Isha, with particular reference to Fatimi-Isma'ili Tayyibi Fiqh. It argues that the Shi'i view does not reduce the five Fardh daily Salah to three, nor does it merge separate Faraidh into a single Salah. Rather, the five Fardh Salah retain their individual legal identity, Niyyah, Rak'ah, conditions, and status, while certain Salah may be performed consecutively within broader recognised time intervals. The Qur'ani basis is principally located in Qur'an 17:78, which may be read as indicating three principal time periods for the five Salah: the decline of the sun, the darkness of night, and the morning recitation. This interpretation is supported by Hadith reports, including narrations from Ibn Abbas that Rasulullah (S) combined Salah in Madinah without travel, fear, or rain, in order to remove hardship from the Ummah. The paper further distinguishes the Shi'i position from the approaches of the Sunni schools, which generally restrict combination to specific circumstances, while Shi'i Fiqh permits it more broadly without denying the merit of praying each Salah at its preferred time. Particular emphasis is placed on the Fatimi-Isma'ili Tayyibi tradition, especially Sayyiduna Al-Qadi al-Nu'man's "Da'aim al-Islam", which recognises formal Salah as a foundational Fardh and preserves the permissibility of combining the relevant prayers. The study also stresses the need to distinguish contemporary Tayyibi practice, including Dawoodi Bohra Masjid-centered congregational Salah, from contemporary Nizari Isma'ili devotional structures. It concludes that combining Salah in Shi'i Fatimi-Tayyibi Fiqh is best understood as a lawful, disciplined, Sunnah-based concession grounded in Qur'an, Hadith, Imami authority, and the principle of removing hardship, rather than as neglect or diminution of formal Ibadah.*

Keywords: *al-Jam' bayn al-Salatayn; Shi'i Fiqh; Fatimi-Isma'ili Tayyibi Fiqh; Da'aim al-Islam; Salah; Dawoodi Bohra; Ahl al-Bayt; Qur'an 17:78; combining Salah; Sayyiduna Al Qadi al-Numan.*

1. Introduction:

The Shi'ah believe, without disagreement, in the five daily Fardh Salah. The difference between the Shi'i position and some other juristic approaches does not concern the number of daily Salah. The five Fardh Salah remain unchanged: Fajr, Zuhr, Asr, Maghrib, and Isha. The distinctive Shi'i legal position relates to the lawful combining of certain Salah within their recognised shared time periods. In Shi'i Fiqh, Zuhr and Asr may be performed one after the other, and Maghrib and Isha may likewise be performed consecutively. This is known as "al-Jam bayn al-Salatayn", meaning the combining of two Salah. The practice does not mean that two Salah become one, nor does it mean that any Fardh Salah is omitted, reduced, or treated as optional. Each Salah retains its own identity, Niyyah, Rak'ah, conditions, and legal status. The question is therefore not whether Muslims are required to perform five daily Salah. That Fardh is accepted. The real question is whether the Shariah permits Zuhr and Asr, and Maghrib and Isha, to be offered in succession within a broader lawful period. The Shi'i answer is that such combining is permissible, grounded in the Qur'an, supported by Hadith, preserved by the Hidayah of the Ahl al-Bayt (as), and reflected in the legal practice of the Shi'i schools, including the Fatimi-Ismaili Tayyibi Fiqh tradition.

The Shi'i position should not be misunderstood as a rejection of punctuality in Salah. Performing each Salah at its earliest proper time remains meritorious and preferable where one is able to do so. At the same time, combining Salah reflects the revealed ease and flexibility embedded within the Shariah. It allows Muslims to preserve their Faraidh in circumstances where repeated interruptions during the day may be difficult, impractical, or likely to cause neglect of Salah. Accordingly, combining Salah is not a relaxation of Ibadah in the sense of carelessness. Rather, it is a lawful concession, a Sunnah-based practice, and a disciplined method of fulfilling all five Fardh Salah within valid time periods.

2. Combining Salah as Rahmah, Not Bidah: Basis of Qur'an:

The purpose of combining Salah is not to reduce the importance of Ibadah. Rather, it is to protect Ibadah from being missed. Many Muslims live in circumstances where daily life does not easily accommodate repeated breaks for Salah. Workplaces, schools, universities, public offices, courts, and other institutions often do not provide time and space for each Salah separately. In such situations, combining Zuhr with Asr, and Maghrib with Isha, allows Muslims to remain regular in their Faraidh. It is often a means of preserving Salah rather than neglecting it. A person who might otherwise miss Asr because of work or travel can perform it with Zuhr. A person who may struggle to gather again for Isha can perform it with Maghrib. The obligation is thereby fulfilled, not diminished. The same principle applies to Jama'ah. When believers have already gathered for one Salah, and the law permits combining the next Salah with it, performing both in congregation strengthens communal Ibadah. It allows the community to fulfil its obligations collectively and preserves the Masjid-centred rhythm of Ibadah. This is especially relevant in the Tayyibi context, where Masjid-based congregational Salah remains part of the living religious order. Combining Salah in this setting is not casual convenience. It is performed within a disciplined structure, under appointed authority, and in accordance with inherited Fatimi-Tayyibi Fiqh.

A central Qur'ani proof relied upon in this discussion is the following Ayah:

“Undertake the Salah at the time of the declining sun to the darkness of the night and the morning recitation; for indeed the morning recitation is witnessed.” Qur'an, 17:78

This Ayah refers to the establishment of Salah from the decline of the sun until the darkness of the night, and then separately mentions the morning recitation, namely Salah al-Fajr. On a Shi'i reading, the Ayah indicates broader periods within which the prescribed Salah are performed. The phrase beginning with the decline of the sun includes the period associated with Zuhr and Asr. The reference extending to the darkness of the night includes the period associated with Maghrib and Isha. The morning recitation is then mentioned separately, corresponding to Fajr. In this way, the Ayah can be read as pointing to three principal Salah intervals:

- i. The period for Zuhr and Asr;*
- ii. The period for Maghrib and Isha; and*
- iii. The separate period for Fajr.*

This does not mean that there are only three Salah. Rather, it means that five Salah may fall within three broader time intervals. This distinction is essential. The Fardh remains fivefold, while the timing framework may permit certain Salah to be performed successively. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, in “al-Tafsir al-Kabir”, discusses the implications of this Ayah. He notes that if “Ghasaq” is understood as the “beginning of darkness”, the Ayah may indicate three times: the time of noon, the beginning of Maghrib, and the time of Fajr. The word “Ghasaq” carries meanings connected with darkness, nightfall, twilight, and the deepening darkness after sunset. In Qur'ani usage, it may denote the darkening night or, in some explanations, the setting or disappearance of the moon. Although al-Razi himself does not adopt the unrestricted Shi'i position on combining Salah, his exegetical observation remains important. It shows that the Qur'ani language may be understood as organising Salah into broader time periods. From a Shi'i perspective, this provides a legal basis for performing Zuhr with Asr, and Maghrib with Isha, within their valid time periods. Thus, the Qur'ani foundation of the Shi'i position is not that Salah are reduced from five to three. Rather, the foundation is that the Qur'an recognises broader periods within which the five Salah are to be performed. The Shi'i interpretation treats this as consistent with both the Fardh of five daily Salah and the permissibility of al-Jam' bayn al-Salatayn.

3. The Legal Position of the Sunni and Shi'i Schools:

The question of combining Salah is not treated identically across the Muslim legal schools. Among the Sunni schools, there are different approaches. The Hanafi School generally restricts the combining of daily Salah and permits it in very limited circumstances, such as at al-Muzdalifah during Haj. The Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali schools permit combining in recognised situations, including travel, rain, fear, illness, hardship, or comparable circumstances. These schools therefore acknowledge the legality of combining Salah, but usually confine it to specific situations. The Shi'i Schools take a broader view. They hold that combining Zuhr with Asr, and Maghrib with Isha, is permissible even in ordinary circumstances and without a special excuse. This does not mean that the Shi'ah deny the virtue of praying each Salah separately at its preferred time. Nor does it mean that combining is compulsory. Rather, combining is treated as a lawful option established by Wahy, Sunnah, and the Talim of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). The

difference is therefore one of legal scope. Some schools permit combining only when a recognised difficulty exists. Shi'i Fiqh permits combining more generally, while still acknowledging that praying each Salah at its preferred time may carry greater merit where circumstances allow. This distinction is important in inter-sectarian discussion. A Shi'i Muslim who combines Zuhr and Asr, or Maghrib and Isha, is not abandoning Salah, changing the number of Salah, or inventing a new form of Ibadah. He is acting according to a recognised juristic understanding that regards such combining as valid and textually supported.

4. Hadith Evidence for Combining Salah:

The Hadith evidence for combining Salah is of particular importance because it shows that the practice was known during the time of Rasulullah (S) and was not limited to theoretical inference from the Qur'an. Reports from Ibn Abbas state that Rasulullah (S) combined Salah in Madinah. In one narration, Ibn Abbas reports that Rasulullah (S) prayed seven Rak'ah, referring to the combining of Maghrib and Isha, and eight Rak'ah, referring to the combining of Zuhr and Asr. Similar narrations are found in major Hadith collections, including "al-Bukhari" and "Sahih Muslim". Another important narration states that Rasulullah (S) combined these Salah in Madinah while residing there, without being in a state of travel, fear, or rain. This is especially significant. If the combining had occurred only during travel, war, severe weather, or emergency, it could be argued that the rule was confined to exceptional circumstances. However, the narration expressly removes those limitations. It indicates that the combining occurred in Madinah in settled conditions. The reason for this practice is also explained in the narrations. When Ibn Abbas was asked why Rasulullah (S) combined Salah in this way, he replied:

"it was done so that the Ummah should not be placed in unnecessary hardship".

This explanation is central to the Shi'i understanding. It shows that the combining of Salah was not a casual or incidental act. It was a deliberate Nabawi concession rooted in Rahmah, ease, and the removal of hardship.

The Hadith evidence therefore establishes several principles:

First, Rasulullah (S) did combine Salah.

Second, the combination included Zuhr with Asr and Maghrib with Isha.

Third, the combining was not confined to travel, fear, or rain.

Fourth, the purpose was to prevent hardship for the Ummah.

Fifth, combining did not abolish the separate identity of each Salah.

For this reason, the Shi'i position treats al-Jam bayn al-Salatayn as a legitimate Sunnah-based practice. It is not an abandonment of Salah discipline. It is a means of preserving Salah while applying the ease allowed by Allah and practised by Rasulullah (S).

5. The Juristic Meaning of Combining Salah:

The combining of Salah must be understood precisely. It does not mean that Zuhr and Asr become one Salah. Nor does it mean that Maghrib and Isha become one Salah. It also does not mean that the number of Rak'ah is reduced or that one Niyyah covers both obligations. Each Salah remains separate. Zuhr is performed with its own Niyyah and Rak'ah. After its completion, Asr is performed with its own Niyyah and Rak'ah. Similarly, Maghrib is performed first, followed

by Isha as a separate Salah. The two Salah are combined only in the sense that they are performed consecutively within a valid time framework. This distinction protects the integrity of the five daily Faraidh. It also answers the common misconception that Shi'ah "pray three times" rather than five. More accurately, the Shi'ah perform five Fardh Salah, but may perform them in three time intervals. Fajr is performed separately. Zuhr and Asr may be performed together. Maghrib and Isha may be performed together. The better formulation is therefore: The Shi'ah believe in five daily Fardh Salah, while permitting their performance in three intervals where the Shariah allows combination. This formulation safeguards both the fixed number of daily Salah and the legal recognition of combining them in prescribed circumstances.

6. Why the Shi'ah Commonly Combine Salah:

Although Shi'i Fiqh permits combining Salah, it does not require that Salah must always be combined. A Shi'i Muslim may perform each Salah separately at its preferred time. This is valid and meritorious. However, combining has become common in Shi'i religious life for several religious and practical reasons.

First, combining Salah helps Muslims maintain regularity in Ibadah. In many modern societies, schools, universities, offices, courts, businesses, and workplaces are not structured around the Salah schedule. Muslims may not always have the ability to pause repeatedly during the day. In such circumstances, combining Zuhr with Asr, or Maghrib with Isha, helps ensure that all Fardh Salah are performed and not missed.

Second, combining reduces the risk of negligence. Where a person is unable to stop repeatedly, insisting on separate performance may result in delay, forgetfulness, or even missing Salah. By permitting combination, the Shariah protects the obligation itself. The purpose is not to make Salah casual, but to secure its performance.

Third, combining Salah strengthens congregational Ibadah. When Muslims gather for one Salah in the Masjid or Markaz, they may perform the next Salah immediately thereafter if it is permissible to combine. This enables the community to fulfil both Faraidh in "Jama'ah" and benefit from the spiritual reward of collective Ibadah.

Fourth, combining preserves a Sunnah that was practised by Rasulullah (S). The Shi'ah consider it important that a Sunnah established for the removal of hardship should not be forgotten or treated as illegitimate. Preserving the practice is therefore an act of fidelity to the Nabawi example.

Fifth, combining Salaah reflects the broader Qur'ani and Nabawi principle that religion is not intended to impose unnecessary hardship. The Shariah contains discipline, but it also contains mercy, flexibility, and practical wisdom. Combining Salah is one example of that balance.

For these reasons, the Shi'i practice of combining Salah is best understood as a means of protecting Ibadah, not weakening it.

7. Fatimi-Ismaili Fiqh on Formal Punctual Salah and Lawful Concession:

It is preferable, where possible, to offer each formal Salah at its earliest proper time. This principle should be clearly maintained. The legal allowance to combine prayers does not diminish the merit or rank of performing Salah punctually. Rather, the two principles exist together. On the one hand, Salah at its proper first time reflects attentiveness, discipline, and eagerness in Ibadah. On the other hand, combining is a lawful concession where need, convenience, congregation, or the avoidance of hardship makes combination appropriate. The existence of a concession does not mean that the ideal is abandoned. It means that the Shariah provides lawful flexibility so that the Fardh may be preserved in real human circumstances. From the Shi'i perspective, therefore, combining Salah is not meant to make formal Salah casual or secondary. The better course, where one is able, remains to pray each Fardh Salah at its proper first time. But where one combines Zuhr with Asr, or Maghrib with Isha, within the lawful time framework, the Salah remains valid and the person remains within the bounds of Shariah. This balanced understanding is particularly important in Fatimi-Ismaili Tayyibi Fiqh, where formal Salah, punctuality, order, and obedience to religious authority are all preserved within the wider framework of the Hidayah of the Imam and the transmitted practice of the Du'at.

Shi'i Fatimi-Ismaili legal literature contains substantial material on Salah and its legal significance. The most important source is "Da'aim al-Islam" of Sayyiduna al-Qadi al-Nauman, the foremost Faqih of the Fatimi-Ismaili tradition and the authoritative compiler of Fatimi-Ismaili Fiqh. "Da'aim al-Islam" occupies a central position in the legal and religious articulation of the Fatimi tradition. It treats Salah as one of the foundational Faraidh of Islam, alongside other Faraidh such as Walayah, Taharah, Zakah, Sawm, Haj, and Jihad. The inclusion of Salah within these pillars demonstrates that formal Salah was not alien to Ismaili Fiqh. On the contrary, it was an integral component of the religious-legal order articulated under the Fatimi Imams. In the Shi'i Fatimi-Ismaili Tayyibi tradition, formal Salah is neither marginal nor merely symbolic. It is part of the regulated Shariah order preserved from the Fatimi Imams and transmitted through the authorised Du'at. The practice of Salah is therefore not detached from the structure of authority in Ismaili Aqidah. It is understood through the framework of Walayah, Mithaq, and obedience to the Imam of the time.

This point requires careful expression. In Ismaili understanding, Mithaq to the Imam occupies a foundational and governing position. It does not replace formal Salah. Rather, it provides the authoritative framework within which the Faraidh of the Shariah, including Salah, are correctly understood, preserved, and practised. During the period of Satr, obedience to the Imam is mediated through his authorised representatives. In the Tayyibi tradition, this includes the authority of the Da'i and the continuing religious order of the Dawah. Formal Salah is therefore governed by the legal and spiritual order transmitted through the Fatimi Imams and their authorised representatives. It is consequently inaccurate to suggest that formal Salah is foreign to Ismaili Fiqh or absent from Ismaili religious practice as such. That broad statement fails to distinguish between different Ismaili communities and their respective lines of authority.

8. Combining Salah in Fatimi Ismaili Fiqh And Contemporary Ismaili Tayyibi Practice:

On the specific question of combining Salah, the Fatimi-Ismaili Tayyibi position recognises the lawful performance of Zuhr with Asr, and Maghrib with Isha, within their appropriate time frames. This is consistent with the inherited Shi'i understanding and forms part of the juristic order reflected in "Da'aim al-Islam". In "Da'aim al-Islam", Sayyiduna al-Qadi al-Nu'man narrates from "Ja'far ibn Muhammad (as) narrated from his father, from his forefathers, from 'Ali (as), that he said:

"The Jum'ah Salah is performed at the time of Zawal (midday).' It is also narrated from Ja'far ibn Muhammad (as) that he permitted combining the two Salah - Zuhr and Asr, and Maghrib and Isha - during travel, and in Salah with Jamat while resident if there is an excuse such as rain, cold, wind, or darkness. One Adhan and two Iqamah are given for the combined Salah. He gives the Adhan, then the Iqamah, and performs the first Salah. When he finishes and gives Salam, he stands and performs the second Salah. It is recommended that the first Salah be prayed at the end of its time, and the second at the beginning of its time..."

This is legally important because it demonstrates that the two Salah are not merged. Each Salah remains a separate Fardh. Each has its own Niyyah. Each has its own Rak'ah. Each has its own legal identity. Combining concerns the timing and sequence of performance, not the substance or number of the obligations.

"Da'aim al-Islam" further indicates that, when combining, it is recommended that the first Salah be prayed towards the end of its time and the second at the beginning of its time. This method preserves the preferred timing of both Salah as closely as possible. At the same time, if both are prayed in the time of the first, the performance remains valid. This reflects the balance between punctuality and ease. The Fatimi-Ismaili Tayyibi position therefore maintains both discipline and flexibility. It does not treat combining as a means of diminishing Salah. Rather, it treats combining as a lawful mode of performance within the Shariah, grounded in the authority of the Imams and preserved in the Fatimi legal tradition. This is why combining Salah in the Tayyibi context should not be described as an exceptional concession invented for convenience. It is better understood as a structured Fatimi-Tayyibi Fiqh practice, grounded in the authority of the Imams, transmitted through the authorised Du'at, and reflected in the juristic tradition of "Da'aim al-Islam".

Contemporary discussion of Ismaili practice must be denominationally precise. It is not accurate to speak of "Ismailis" as though all Ismaili communities follow one uniform devotional practice. Contemporary Tayyibi Ismailis, particularly the Dawoodi Bohras, preserve a Masjid-centered religious order in which formal Salah is performed communally under appointed religious authority, by the Da'i. Masjid and religious centers remain places of congregational Ibadah. Formal Salah continues to form part of the living devotional discipline of the community. In this setting, the combining of Salah does not signify informality, abandonment, or neglect. It is practised within a regulated religious structure. Zuhr and Asr remain separate Salah. Maghrib and Isha remain separate Salah. Their combined performance reflects a valid legal framework, not a reduction of the number of Faraidh Salah.

It is therefore inaccurate to state broadly that “Shi’i Ismailis do not perform formal Salah” or that Ismaili religious practice is necessarily confined to non-Salah forms of communal devotion. Such a statement may describe certain features of contemporary Nizari Ismaili communal practice, where religious life is centered upon the Jamatkhana and community-specific devotional forms under the guidance of the Nizari Imam of the time. It does not accurately describe the Ismaili Tayyibi position, particularly that of the Dawoodi Bohras. The correct formulation is that classical Fatimi-Ismaili Fiqh, as preserved in Sayyiduna al-Qadi al-Nu‘man’s “Da‘aim al-Islam”, recognises formal Salah as a fundamental Fardh of Islam, while giving foundational primacy to Mithaq to the Imam. Mithaq does not displace Salah. Rather, it supplies the authoritative framework through which Salah and the other Faraidh are preserved and practised. For Ismaili Tayyibis, the position is therefore clear. Formal Salah, including congregational Salah and the combined performance of the Zuhr-Asr and Maghrib-Ishaht Salah, remains part of the continuing Fatimi-Tayyibi religious and legal order.

9. The Need to Distinguish Tayyibi and Nizari Practice:

A major source of confusion arises when statements about one Ismaili community are applied to all Ismailis. This produces both legal and historical inaccuracy. The contemporary Nizari Ismaili tradition follows a distinct religious order centered on the Jamatkhana and the guidance of the present Nizari Imam. Its communal devotional forms differ from those of the Tayyibi tradition. That contemporary Nizari practice should not be used to define the entirety of Ismaili Fiqh. The Tayyibi tradition, including the Dawoodi Bohra community, preserves a distinct Fatimi-Ismaili legal inheritance. In this tradition, formal Salah is recognised, regulated, and practised. The authority of “Da‘aim al-Islam”, the transmitted guidance of the Fatimi Imams, and the continuing order of the Dawah remain central to the understanding of Salah. The correct approach is therefore to speak with precision:

Contemporary Nizari Ismaili practice follows a Jamatkhana-centred religious order under the guidance of the Nizari Imam of the time. Contemporary Tayyibi Ismailis, including the Dawoodi Bohras, preserve Masjid-based congregational Salah in accordance with Fatimi-Tayyibi Fiqh. This distinction avoids over generalization and allows the discussion to remain legally and historically accurate.

10. The Authority of Da‘aim al-Islam and Related Legal Source:

“Da‘aim al-Islam” is the principal legal authority for the present discussion. It is the foremost Fatimi-Ismaili legal text and remains particularly important for the Tayyibi tradition. It was authored by Sayyiduna al-Qadi al-Nu‘man, the leading jurist of the Fatimi Dawah, and is closely associated with the legal order of the Fatimi Imams. For the purpose of discussing formal Salah, “Da‘aim al-Islam” may properly be cited as authoritative Fatimi-Ismaili legal evidence for the Fardh, structure, and significance of Salah. It further confirms that the combined performance of the relevant daily Salah is accommodated within the Shi’i Fiqh framework. The significance of “Da‘aim al-Islam” is not merely that it mentions Salah. Its deeper importance lies in presenting Salah as part of a structured religious-legal order. Salah is not treated as optional, symbolic, or merely communal. It is part of the Faraidh of Islam. It belongs to the Shariah order governed by the Imam’s authority and transmitted through the recognised channels of the Dawah. Accordingly, when addressing the Fatimi-Ismaili Tayyibi position, Da‘aim al-Islam should remain

the primary source. Other sources may provide supporting context, but the strongest and most direct authority remains “Da’aim al-Islam”.

Apart from “Da’aim al-Islam”, the broader legal corpus of Sayyiduna al-Qadi al-Nu’mān may be cited to show that Fatimi-Ismaili Fiqh was a structured juristic system and not confined to a single text. The relevant works include “Kitab al-Iqtisar”, “Kitab al-Ikhtisar”, “Mukhtasar al-Athar”, and “Ikhtilaf Usul al-Madhahib”.

a. “Kitab al-Iqtisar”:

“Kitab al-Iqtisar” is a separate legal work of Sayyiduna al-Qadi al-Nu’mān. It is part of his Fatimi legal writings and may be described as a concise legal digest or abridgement connected to the larger legal project represented by “Kitab al-Idah”. The word “Iqtisar” carries the sense of confining oneself to what is sufficient or limiting the discussion to essentials. In this context, the work may be understood as a concise treatment of legal material within the Fatimi juristic tradition. For the present issue, Kitab al-Iqtisar may be cited as a supporting Fatimi legal source alongside Da’aim al-Islam. Its importance lies less in being the primary text on combining Salah, and more in demonstrating that the relevant principles form part of an established Fatimi legal corpus.

b. “Kitab al-Ikhtisar”:

“Kitab al-Ikhtisar” is also attributed to Sayyiduna al-Qadi al-Nu’mān and is associated with the abridgement of earlier legal material. The word “Ikhtisar” means abridgement or summary more directly. It is another part of the process by which large bodies of legal traditions were distilled into usable legal texts. “Kitab al-Ikhtisar” is important because it shows that Fatimi-Ismaili Fiqh was not limited to “Da’aim al-Islam” alone. Rather, it belonged to a broader legal system, grounded in the Qur’an, Sunnah, and the Madhhab or Talim of the Imams from Ahl al-Bayt (as).

c. “Mukhtasar al-Athar”:

“Mukhtasar al-Athar” is particularly relevant because it is associated with transmitted reports and early Fatimi legal material. Since the combining of Salah is often supported through transmitted narrations, “Mukhtasar al-Athar” may be a promising additional source where evidentiary material is required. However, care should be taken before making a firm quotation from it. The precise Arabi text should be checked before relying upon it for a specific formulation. It is safer to use Da’aim al-Islam as the principal authority and refer to “Mukhtasar al-Athar” as part of the supporting Fatimi legal corpus unless the exact passage has been verified.

d. “Ikhtilaf Usul al-Madhahib”

“Ikhtilaf Usul al-Madhahib” is more concerned with legal theory and the differences between juristic schools. It is not primarily a manual of Salah practice. Its relevance lies in methodology. This work assists in establishing the Fatimi-Ismaili principle that law is taken through the Imam and the authoritative line of Ahl al-Bayt (as), rather than through independent Ra’y or Qiyas. For

the issue of combining Salah, it is therefore better used to support the underlying legal method, not as the main authority for the specific rule.

11. Difference between Kitab al-Iqtisar and Kitab al-Ikhtisar:

It is useful to clarify the difference between “Kitab al-Iqtisar” and “Kitab al-Ikhtisar”, because their names are close and may easily be confused. They are not the same work. Both are connected with Sayyiduna al-Qadi al-Nu‘man’s sequence of abridgements from his larger early legal work, “Kitab al-Idah”, but they are treated as distinct titles in the bibliographical tradition.

“Kitab al-Iqtisar” carries the sense of restricting, limiting, or confining the discussion to what is sufficient. It may therefore be described as a concise legal work or abridgement drawn from the larger legal material.

“Kitab al-Ikhtisar”, by contrast, means abridgement or summary more directly. It is also connected with the abridgement of “Kitab al-Idah” and is associated with “Mukhtasar al-Athar” or “Ikhtisar al-Athar”.

The distinction is therefore not merely one of spelling. They are separate but closely related works within the Fatimi-Isma‘ili legal corpus. Substantively, both belong to Sayyiduna al-Qadi al-Nu‘man’s effort to distil the extensive legal traditions of Ahl al-Bayt (as) into accessible juristic texts. Both works also reflect a broader legal principle: Sayyiduna al-Qadi al-Nu‘man rejects Ra’y and Qiyas as independent sources of law and grounds legal decision-making in the Qur’an, the Sunnah, and the Madhhab or Talim of the Imams from Ahl al-Bayt (as). Doubtful or unresolved matters are to be referred to the Imam. This principle is highly relevant to the Fatimi-Isma‘ili understanding of Salah and its lawful performance.

12. General Shi‘i Evidence and It’s Supporting Role:

Non-Isma‘ili Shi‘i sources, particularly Ithna Ashar works, also discuss the legal basis for combining Zuhr with Asr, and Maghrib with Isha. These sources commonly state that the five Fardh Salah remain five, but may be performed in three intervals. Such materials are useful as broader Shi‘i evidence. These sources demonstrate that combining Salah is not an isolated Fatimi-Isma‘ili rule, but forms part of a broader Shi‘i legal understanding. However, where the argument concerns the Isma‘ili Tayyibi position specifically, the primary authority should remain Fatimi-Tayyibi: “Da‘aim al-Islam”, supported where appropriate by “Kitab al-Iqtisar” and “Kitab al-Ikhtisar” and the broader legal methodology reflected in “Ikhtilaf Usul al-Madhahib”.

The best structure of argument is therefore:

- i. First, establish the general Qur’an and Hadith basis for combining Salah.
- ii. Second, show that the Shi‘i schools understand these sources as permitting combination without restricting it to exceptional circumstances.
- iii. Third, it should be demonstrated that Fatimi-Isma‘ili Tayyibi Fiqh recognises formal Salah as a Fardh while preserving the Aqidah of combining Salah within its own legal tradition.
- iv. Fourth, distinguish Tayyibi practice from contemporary Nizari practice so that the term “Isma‘ili” is not used imprecisely.

This approach gives the argument both breadth and denominational accuracy.

13. Suggested Legal Formulation

The position may be formulated as follows:

Apart from “Da’aim al-Islam”, the broader Fatimi legal corpus of Sayyiduna al-Qadi al-Nu’man, including “Kitab al-Iqtisar”, “Kitab al-Ikhtisar”, and “Mukhtasar al-Athar”, confirms that Fatimi-Ismaili Fiqh possessed a structured and authoritative treatment of the Faraidh of the Shariah, including formal Salah. While “Da’aim al-Islam” remains the principal and most authoritative Ismaili Tayyibi legal text for the Fardh, structure, and order of formal Salah, these related works demonstrate that the rule was not isolated, but formed part of a wider Fatimi juristic tradition grounded in the authority of the Imam and the transmitted Talim of Ahl al-Bayt (as). The combining of the Zuhur Salah with the Asr Salah, and the Maghrib Salah with the Isha Salah, is therefore best presented as a Shi’i-Fatimi legal position preserved within the Tayyibi Dawah tradition. “Da’aim al-Islam” should be cited as the primary authority, while the wider legal corpus of Sayyiduna al-Qadi al-Nu’man may be cited as supporting context. The answer, therefore, is that there are other Ismaili and Fatimi legal sources, but the strongest specific authority remains “Da’aim al-Islam”. The best additional candidates are “Kitab al-Iqtisar”, “Kitab al-Ikhtisar, and, subject to verification of the Arabi text, “Mukhtasar al-Athar”.

14. The Role of the Imam and Ahl al-Bayt (as)

The Shi’i approach to Salah, including the question of combining, is inseparable from the authority of Rasulullah (S), the Ahl al-Bayt (as), and the Imams. Shi’i Muslims regard the Imams from the family of Rasulullah (S) as the rightful Hadi for understanding the Qur’an, the Sunnah, and the continuing needs of the community. Both Imami and Ismaili Shi’ah recognise al-Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq (as) as an Imam and acknowledge the importance of Hidayah through Imamah. From a Shi’i-Ismaili perspective, Ibadah is understood through the Hidayah of the Imam of the time. This does not weaken the Shariah. It provides the authoritative framework through which the Shariah is preserved and correctly practised. In the Fatimi-Ismaili Tayyibi tradition, the authority of the Imam and, during Satr, his authorised representatives, is central. Formal Salah is not separated from Bay’ah, Mithaq, or Walayah. Rather, these principles organise the way in which the Faraidh are understood and maintained. Thus, the combining of Salah is not merely a matter of personal convenience. It belongs to a larger legal and spiritual order in which Ibadah is guided by the Imam’s authority, transmitted through the Dawah, and practised in accordance with Fatimi-Tayyibi Fiqh.

15. Final Conclusion

The Shi’i position on combining Salah is clear and coherent. The five daily Fardh Salah remain obligatory. No Salah is abolished, merged, or reduced. A Muslim may pray Zuhur, Asr, Maghrib, and Isha separately at their respective preferred times, and this remains valid and meritorious. At the same time, it is also permissible to combine Zuhur with Asr, and Maghrib with Isha, within their lawful time periods. This practice is not Bid’ah. It is grounded in the Qur’anic understanding of Salah times, supported by Hadith reports concerning the practice of Rasulullah (S), and explained as a mercy intended to remove unnecessary hardship from the Ummah. It preserves all five Salah while permitting them to be performed in three intervals: Fajr

separately, Zuhr and Asr together, and Maghrib and Isha together. In Fatimi-Ismaili Tayyibi Fiqh, formal Salah is recognised as a fundamental Fardh of Islam. Da'aim al-Islam of Sayyiduna al-Qadi al-Nu'man remains the principal authority for this position. It establishes the significance of formal Salah within the Fatimi legal order and affirms the combined performance of the relevant Salah without compromising their separate legal identities. The wider Fatimi legal corpus, including Kitab al-Iqtisar, Kitab al-Ikhtisar, Mukhtasar al-Athar, and Ikhtilaf Usul al-Madhahib, provides further context for the structured and authoritative nature of Fatimi-Ismaili Fiqh. These works demonstrate that the Tayyibi position is not an isolated practice, but part of a broader legal inheritance grounded in the Qur'an, Sunnah, Ahl al-Bayt (as), and the authority of the Imam.

It is therefore inaccurate to suggest that formal Salah is absent from Ismaili Fiqh or that all Ismaili practice is identical. Contemporary discussion must distinguish between Nizari and Tayyibi Ismaili practice. Tayyibi Ismailis, including the Dawoodi Bohras, preserve Masjid-based congregational Salah in accordance with Fatimi-Tayyibi Fiqh, including the recognised practice of combining the noon-afternoon and sunset-night Salah. Combining Salah is best understood not as a relaxation of Ibadah, but as a faithful and textually grounded application of revealed ease. It protects the obligation of Salah, assists the Ummah in maintaining regular worship, encourages Jama'ah, and preserves a Sunnah of Rasulullah (S). The practice therefore deserves to be recognised as a legitimate, disciplined, and well-supported expression of Islamic devotion.

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