

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

The ruling on praying behind an Imam of ill creed

By

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Question:

Is it permissible to pray behind an Imam who adheres to the methodologies of the Najdi sect or not? If not then what is the appropriate ruling pertaining to those individuals in Pakistan who pray behind such people, and the thousands of individuals who pray behind such Imams in the two holy sanctuaries year after year?

Also if there is a belt of Masajid under the supervision of a council that instates Najdi and/or Deobandi Imams in their respective mosques, is it permissible to pray behind those Imams and what is the ruling regarding the establishment which instates these Imams?

Answer:

Prior to delving into a detailed answer(s) in respects to the two questions presented to us, it is necessary that we present the reader with a preliminary premise which if the reader pays proper attention to he will understand our answer with ease. *In Sha' Allah.*

According to all Muslims if the congregational prayer is absent of the conditions of *iqtida*¹ between the Imam and the *muqtadi* then that prayer is rendered null and void. It is paramount that the relation specific to the *imam* and *muqtadi* be fulfilled. This relationship is not something apparent nor is it something that can be identified merely by looking at someone's outer state; rather it is something internal which is both of a spiritual and creedal nature. This relationship between the imam and the *muqtadi* materialises and can be indentified by looking at whether both the imam and the *muqtadi* are in agreement on the tenants of their creed. Shirk opposes Tawhid, and disbelief and ignorance are in direct opposition to Islam, so if the *muqtadi* knows that something which he believes to be part of his creed the Imam considers to be Shirk,

¹ *Iqtida* – The role/relation between the individual and the imam who he prays behind.

Muqtadi – The individual who prays behind an imam.

disbelief and Ignorance then by virtue of this the condition of *iqtida* is not fulfilled and in such a case how can an individual consider his prayer behind such an imam to be valid?

To substantiate what we have presented we can give the example that prayer behind an individual who rejects the finality of Prophethood is void, because the *muqtadi* affirms the finality of Prophethood while the Imam doesn't therefore the condition of *iqtida* is not fulfilled and the essential tenant of *iqtida* no longer remains intact.

To further clarify our claim we wish to present a summary of an excerpt from 'Hidayah'. In the case that the *muqtadi* and the *imam* are in such a location that they differ on the direction of the *qiblah*, if the *muqtadi* prays behind the *imam* believing that the *imam* is mistaken in his deduction of which direction he believes the *qiblah* to be in the *muqtadi's* prayer is void. The author of 'Hidayah' substantiates his ruling by presenting a statement which in reality is a principle

Li annahu I'taqada Imamahu alal Khatai'

"Because he believes his imam to be mistaken"

Thus it is necessary that for a *muqtadi's* prayer to be considered valid behind a particular *imam*, he cannot believe that the imam is mistaken in his deductions, least in his creed. However in the case that the *muqtadi* is oblivious to the Imam's mistakes he is excused and his prayer will be considered to be valid.

After paying attention to this opening premise the reader should now understand that when the *muqtadi* knows that the *Imam* believes that to seek aid or intercession via the Prophets (Peace be upon them) and the pious men of Allah (May Allah sanctify their noble secrets) is Shirk, and he believes that to visit the resting places of the Prophets (Peace be upon them) and the men of Allah (May Allah sanctify their noble secrets), rather to even respect such places of significance is shirk yet the *muqtadi* believes these [and things of the kind] to be part of his creed, then how can his prayer be considered valid behind such an imam?



Three types of *muqtadi*:

All that remains now is that year after year thousands of Muslims flock towards the two noble sanctuaries to perform both the major [Hajj] and minor [Umrah] pilgrimage. What is the correct ruling regarding their prayers?

We can categorise these Muslims into three categories. The first are those who are well aware that the creed of the Imams of the two noble sanctuaries opposes their creed [and are also aware of the manner in which it opposes their creed] and we have explained their respective ruling in the opening premise, such Muslims will be sure to avoid praying behind such Imams. The second type consists of those Muslims who affirm the fact that the Imams oppose part of our creed yet they are unaware of the heinous manner in which they do so which is to label our beliefs as Shirk and disbelief, and they only ever conceive praying behind such imams while in the two noble sanctuaries purely because of the state of felicity they experience while in al Masjid al Haram and al Masjid al Nabwi and as a result of their love for Allah and His Messenger (Peace be upon him). Such Muslims are recipients of the mercy of Allah and cannot be reprimanded for praying behind such Imams while in the two noble sanctuaries. The third type consists of those Muslims who are completely oblivious to the errs of the Imams in their creed and have arrived at al Masjid al Haram and al Masjid al Nabwi in a state of love and sincerity and in this state of being completely oblivious to the creed of the Imams pray behind the Imams. They too are recipients of the mercy of Allah and cannot be reprimanded for praying behind the Imams of the two noble sanctuaries.

The proof that the second and third categories are exempt from the ruling applied to the first is the elevated and authentic narration of Sayiduna Thawban (May Allah be pleased with him) recorded by Tabrani:

Rufia' en Ummati al Khatau wal Nisyanu wa mastukrihu elihi

“Mistakes and forgetfulness have been raised from my nation along with that which they are coerced to perform.”



Story:

Mawlana Jalal al Din al Rumi (May Allah sanctify his noble secret) in his work 'Mathnawi' speaks of the parable of Sayiduna Musa (Peace be upon him) and the Shepherd. One day the Shepherd while in a state of ecstasy proclaimed

“Oh Allah! If you were to come to me I would bathe you, I would comb your hair, I would give you milk, I would massage your feet”

Upon hearing this Sayiduna Musa (Peace be upon him) harshly reprimanded the Shepherd and prevented him from continuing his speech. Upon which Allah revealed unto him

“Oh Musa! My slave in a state of love was addressing me why did you stop him?”

Wahi Amad Suai Musa az Khuda Bandah Mar Chura Kardi Juda

Tu Barai Wasal Kardan Amadi Ne Barai Fasal Kardan Amadi

My aim in presenting this occurrence wasn't just to illustrate that the sincere lover of Allah is a recipient of the vast mercy of Allah, but to illustrate that if in a state of obliviousness an individual prays behind the imams of the two noble sanctuaries he is excused from his mistake. However we understand that individuals who do not pray [or are new to prayer] will struggle to understand our method of explanation so to further clarify our point if an imam has some impurity on his clothes [by agreement of the jurists] it is not permissible to pray behind him. So the individual who does not pray [or is new to prayer] should understand that if it is not permissible to pray behind someone who has some impurity on his clothes then try and imagine the impurity of the creed of these deviant imams.



Types of people who pray:

One type of individual who prays is the one who realises that he has some impurity on his clothes and knows the implications of having impurities on his clothes and understands that to pray in such clothes is impermissible. He will surely avoid praying in those clothes. Another type is that individual who realises that he has some impurity on his clothes but does not know that to pray in those clothes is impermissible but purely out of a love to pray and love for Allah he prays, he will not be reprimanded for praying in such a state. The last type is that individual who does not even know that he has impurities on his clothes and out of love for Allah and the love to pray he prays, he too will not be reprimanded for praying in such a state. It is correct however that to inform such people of the correct course of action and ruling is necessary but until they are informed their affair is not tainted.

An Owaisi *Tabahirah*²:

Some people have falsely concluded that this is a matter pertaining to subsidiary issues such as the differences between the *Hanafi*, *Shafi*, *Maliki*, and *Hanbali* schools of thought and is the same as a *Maliki* praying behind a *Hanbali* Imam for example. The answer to this is clear and simple that the differences of the four schools of thought are subsidiary, yet to believe that the differences between the *Sunnis* and the *Deobandis* and in fact all deviant sects³ is something subsidiary is foolish as who does not know of the derogatory remarks made by these individuals in their works. If anyone doubts the existence of any kind of derogatory remarks from these individuals then he can read my epistle ‘The difference between Deobandis and Barelvīs’. Read it once carefully and then take a conclusive stance on what you think of the Deobandis as you will come to realise that such individuals are those people who have insulted the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him).

Bei Adab Mahrum Manad Az Fazl Rabb

“The one without etiquette is exempt from the bounties of his Lord”

So if the one who lacks etiquette with the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) is exempt from the mercy of Allah, where will he lead you as the imam of your prayer? Decide for yourself.



² As this Fatwa is translated from Mufti Faiz Ahmad Owaisi’s epistle on the topic he interjects at this point and continues on from the Fatwa of Ghazali al Zaman.

³ Such as the ‘Shia’ and their respective factions.

Question:

The Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) said

Sallu Khalf kulli Birrin wa Fajirin

“Pray behind every pious individual and transgressor”

Answer:

The meaning of the narration is not as it has been understood. Even if it is to be understood as it has here it would necessitate that one repeats his prayer afterwards, as is the case if one prays behind someone who shaves or trims his beard less than a fistful – the prayer will be done but it is *Wajib* to repeat it afterwards. Yet to pray behind someone whose creed takes him out of the fold of Islam or who is a hypocrite (with respects to creed) such a prayer is null and void. These people aren't just transgressors but their attitude towards the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) is emulative of the hypocrites who lived in his time. So the narration is correct but the ruling which was extrapolated from it was not.

Oh nation of the beloved of Allah!

We all believe that those individuals who do not possess love for the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) are hypocrites and apostates, and are those misfortunate individuals who shall dwell in the lowest level of the inferno. If only Muslims would begin to realise the esteemed rank of the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) regarding which Allah Himself says

Wa Rafa'na laka Dhikrak

“And we raised your remembrance”

It is sad that even besides affirming this fact unconcern has become rampant. In this time of tribulations the light is shone on the deviants and those who lack the correct etiquette with the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him). Not only this, but the impure Najdis have seized the holy sanctuaries and have chosen to make it the centre of their propaganda. Therefore it is an obligation upon every Muslims who has

read the declaration of faith that he understands the mischievous nature of these individuals; otherwise he will be accountable on the day of reckoning along with them.



Appendix:

The Najdi's seizure of the two noble sanctuaries and a brief introduction to Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab. (*Taken from the introduction to Sayyid Ahmad ibn Zaini Dahlan's 'Fitna al Wahabiyyah'*)

All praise is due unto Allah Lord of the worlds, and may prayers and salutations be upon the best of His creation Muhammad and upon his household and his companions.

Know, indeed Sultan Salim the third throughout the duration of his sultanate spoke of numerous tribulations that had befallen the Muslim world. From amongst them is the tribulation of the Wahabis which arose in the Hijaz and seized the two noble sanctuaries and prevented the Syrians and Egyptians from performing the holy pilgrimage. Along with this is the tribulation of the French who seized Egypt and ruled there for the period of thirteen to sixteen years. We shall briefly mention what is related to these two tribulations because the two have been discussed in detail throughout history, and individual works have been authored in relation to both.

As for the Wahabbis they initially began their series of bloodshed with the commander of Makka Mawlana Sharif Ghalib ibn Musaid who was the spokesman of the lofty sultanate of the Hijazi provinces at that time. The bloodshed between the Wahabbis and the sultanate began in the year (1205AH) during the sultanate of Mawlana Sultan Salim the third the son of Sultan Mostafa the third the son of Ahmad. As for the actual inception of the Wahabbi sect then that predates this event by many years. Initially their strength and numbers did not exceed the boundaries of their own home towns but over time their numbers increased and with it the harm they would inflict upon the Ummah. Eventually their evil spread to neighbouring countries and they killed people in such numbers that cannot be enumerated, stole their money and spoiled their women, and the proponent of their sect is the *Khabith* Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab.

Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab originated from the East and hailed from the tribe *Banu Tamim*, and some may even say that he can be counted from amongst the great spectacles of this world as he lived close to one hundred years in which time he dissipated his misguidance throughout the world. He was born in the year (1111AH) and died in the year (1206AH). He began his adolescent years as a student of knowledge in the blessed city of Madinah Munnawarah, his father was a pious man and was from amongst the people of knowledge likewise his brother Shaykh Sulaiman. Both his father and brother along with the senior scholars of the time foretold that he would be a source of deviation and misguidance from what they witnessed from him in his sayings, his actions, and the manner in which he would argue in the matters of the religion.

It so happened that they were correct in their premonitions and he began to oppose the senior authorities of the religion which led to him passing rulings of infidelity upon the believers, spreading the fallacy that to visit the resting place of the Messenger of Allah (Peace be upon him) and to seek intercession while there, to seek intercession via the Prophets, Gnostics, and the pious, and to visit their graves is *Shirk* [Polytheism].

Also that to call upon the Prophet (Peace be upon him) is *Shirk* as well as calling upon anyone else. As well as this he claimed that whoever ascribes something to a being other than Allah even if it is by way of *Majaz Aqli* is a *Mushrik* [Polytheist]. For example saying “This medicine has made me better” or “This man of Allah helped me” according to him was *Shirk*. In this effort to categorically label those things which are permissible as *Shirk* he relied upon evidences which in reality do not do justice to his claims, and misconstrued numerous texts and fooled the general masses into believing that the majority of the Muslims had committed infidelity.

Eventually he became well acquainted with many of the monarchies of the East and convinced them to aid him in his efforts to supposedly rectify the faults of the Muslim world. They aided him in such a manner that they acted as an army for him and helped him in his mission to rule over the Arab lands under the delusion that whoever opposes Ibn Abd al Wahhab is an apostate and polytheist and is to be stripped of his assets and killed. The beginning point of his deviance was in (1143AH) and the spread of his false propaganda against the orthodox Muslims was in (1150AH). Numerous scholars of the time penned refutations against him including his own brother Shaykh Sulaiman.

One of the primary individuals who aided him in his false campaign was Muhammad ibn Saud the leader of Dariah, who hailed from the tribe *Banu Hanifa* who were the people of Musailamah the false prophet, and after him his son Abd al Aziz ibn Muhammad Saud. Many of Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab’s previous teachers in Madinah Munawwarah said of him that he shall become misguided and that Allah will misguide by him.



Appendix:

Ibn Abidin and the Wahabbi sect. (*Taken from 'The chapter on rebellions' from his magnum opus in the Hanafi school 'Rad al Mukhtar'*)

“... As has occurred in our time in the form of the followers of Muhammad ibn Abd al Wahhab who sprung from *Najd* and seized the two noble sanctuaries. They apparently ascribe to the *Hanbali* School, yet they believe that they are the only Muslims remaining while others have committed apostasy and fallen into polytheism. Under this delusion they saw the murder of members of the *Ahl as Sunnah* permissible along with the murder of their scholars.”

