



مفتى محمد يوسف دنكا
Mufti Muhammed Yusuf Danka

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الحمد لله حمد الشاكرين، والصلاة والسلام على المبعوث رحمة للعالمين، وهادياً للناس أجمعين.
صلاةً وسلاماً دائمين إلى يوم الدين، وآله وصحبه ومن تبعهم بإحسان، وسلم تسليماً كثيراً، أما بعد:

الدليل المحكم فى ترك القراءة خلف الإمام

The Muqtadi behind the Imam in Salah is Not required to Recite Qiraat as proven from the Holy Qur'an & Sunnah

وقال الله تعالى: وإذا قرئ القرآن فاستمعوا له وانصتوا لعلكم ترحمون (سوره الأعراف 7:204)

Allah ﷻ has stated in the Holy Qur'an: 'So, when the Qur'an is recited, Listen to it, and be Silent that you may receive Mercy'. (Al A'raf s7, v204)

The Qur'an is a limitless treasure of knowledge. Therefore, it is the right of the Qur'an that when it is recited, those listening to it should respectfully listen to it attentively and contemplate over its verses. This is only to make us amongst those upon whom Allah ﷻ bestows His Mercy. (Tafsir Uthmani p234)

The interpretation given by the pious predecessors and the scholars of the later age is that the above verse of the Qur'an clarifies the fact that a Muqtadi is not to recite behind an Imam in Jamat. The obligation of reciting is upon the Imam and the Muqtadi is required to listen silently.

Mujahid رحمه الله stated: 'There was a Companion ﷺ from amongst the Ansar who used to recite behind the Prophet ﷺ in Salah. This is the very reason this verse of the Qur'an was revealed.' (Tafsir Ahkamul Qur'an, vol 3, p48)

The Sayings of the Sahaba ﷺ and Early Muffasireen In Relation To This Verse of the Quran:

Abdullah bin Masood ﷺ stated: 'By Allah, there is no verse in the Qur'an about which I do not know the reason for its revelation.' There is no greater scholar of the Qur'an than him amongst the Companions ﷺ. (Sahih Muslim, vol 2, p293)

The Prophet ﷺ himself stated: 'O People, Learn the Book of Allah from Abdullah bin Masood.' (Sahih Bukhari, vol 1, p531)

On one occasion Sayyidina Abdullah bin Masood ﷺ was reading Salah and he heard some people reciting whilst praying behind an Imam. When he completed his Salah, he said (to them): 'You still do not understand! When the Qur'an is recited, remain silent and listen to it attentively, just as the Qur'an has ordered: 'So, when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive Mercy' (Tafsir ibn Jareer, vol 9, p103)

The leader of the Muffasireen, Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Abbas ﷺ, for whom the Prophet ﷺ prayed: 'O Allah! Grant him the understanding of Deen and knowledge of the Qur'an.' (Musnad Ahmed, vol 1, p328)

Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Abbas ﷺ narrated: 'The reason for the revelation of the verse is that when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive Mercy... was in relation to the Fard Salah'. (Tafsir ibn Katheer, vol 2, p281/ Tafsir ibn Jareer, vol 9, p109/ Tafsir ibn Abbas, vol 2, p473)

From amongst the Tabi'een, was a great Muffasir of the Qur'an was Mujahid bin Jubair رحمه الله. About Mujahid, Sufyan Thawri رحمه الله would say: 'When the Tafsir of Mujahid reaches you, it is sufficient for you (above other Tafsirs).'

Mujahid رحمه الله stated: 'The cause of the revelation of the verse: 'So, when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive Mercy...was in relation to Salah'. There are also many other renowned Muffasireen and Muhaditheen from amongst the Tabi'een that state the same. From amongst them are: Sa'eed ibn Musayib, Sa'eed ibn Jubair, Hasan Basri, Ubaid ibn Umayr, Ata' ibn Abi Rabah, Dahaak, Ibrahim Nakai, Qatada, Abdur Rahman bin Zaid, Imam Sha'bi رحمه الله etc. (Tafsir ibn Katheer, vol 2, p281/ Tafsir ibn Jareer, vol 9, p103/ Qitabul Qarat by Baihaqi, p10)

Shaikul Islam ibn Taymiyyah رحمه الله writes: 'Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal رحمه الله has narrated the unanimous agreement of the scholars upon the fact that this verse (So, when the Qur'an is recited, listen to it...) is in relation to Salah. When the Imam is reciting in Salah, then recitation is not Wajib upon the Muqtadi. (Fatawa ibn Taymiyyah, vol 2, p168/ Fatawa Qubara, vol 2, p168)

Some individuals say this verse of the Qur'an relates to the matter of remaining silent in the Salah and also Khutbah of Jumah. وإنما قلنا ذلك أولى بالصواب، لصحة الخبر عن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال "إذا قرأ الإمام فاتصتوا" وإجماع الجميع على أن من سمع خطبة الإمام. (Tafsir Al-Tabari, vol 6, p220-221)

We also accept this due to the narration of Salman Farsi رضي الله عنه in Sahih Bukhari: 'The Prophet ﷺ ordered that we prepare ourselves in a good manner on the day of Jumah. When reaching the Masjid, one should perform as many Sunnah and Nawafil as possible. When the Imam comes out for the Khutbah, then listen to him with your full attention. If you do so, Allah ﷻ will forgive all your sins (minor) between this Jumah and the next.'

The Saheeh Ahadith, Sayings of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ and Aima Mujtahideen رحمهم الله.

Musa bin Uqba رحمه الله narrated: 'The Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, Umar رضي الله عنه and Uthman رضي الله عنه would warn against the Muqtadi reciting behind the Imam.' (Musnad Abdur Razaq, vol 2, p139)

Imam Sha'bi رحمه الله stated: 'I met 70 Companions of the Prophet ﷺ who participated in Badr, they ALL prohibited from reciting behind the Imam. (Roohul Ma'ani, vol 9, p152)

In Light of The Sahih Ahadith, There Are The Following Narrations:

Abu Musa Ashari رضي الله عنه narrated: 'The Prophet ﷺ taught us (the Companions) the Sunnah and told us the manner in which to offer our Salah. The Prophet ﷺ stated: 'In congregation, the rows should be made straight first of all, and then one from amongst you should be made the Imam. When the Imam says Takbir, you too should say it, when the Imam recites, you should remain silent, when the Imam completes Surah Fatiha, you should say Ameen.' (Sahih Muslim, vol 1, p174/ Sunan Abu Dawood, vol 1, p140) This is the only Hadith in Sahih Muslim that when it was narrated by Imam Muslim he attached the following words at the end صحيح (This Hadith is Sound).

Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated: 'The Prophet ﷺ stated: 'The Imam has only been appointed, so that he is followed. When he says Takbir, you too should say it, when the Imam recites the Qur'an, you should remain silent, when the Imam completes Surah Fatiha, you should say Ameen'. (Sunan Nasai, vol 1, p107/ Sunan Ibn Majah, p61/ Sunan Tahawi, p128)

In these Hadith the entire manner in which Salah is to be offered has been explained by the Prophet ﷺ. It is the responsibility of the Imam to recite and the Muqtadi to remain silent, it is therefore absolutely clear that the Muqtadi is not allowed to recite anything behind an Imam in the Jah'ri (audible voice recitation) or Sir'ri (low voice recitation) Salah.

Sayyidina Jabir bin Abdullah رضي الله عنه narrated: The Prophet ﷺ stated: 'Whoever is following the Imam in Salah, for him the recitation of the Imam is sufficient.' (Sunan Ibn Majah, p61)

The person who is acting as a Muqtadi behind an Imam, there is no need for him to recite independently, the recitation of the Imam is sufficient for all following behind the Imam, this guideline applies for both the (audible or low voice Salah) mentioned in the above Hadith.

Sayyidina Abu Darda رضي الله عنه narrated: the Prophet ﷺ was asked: 'Is there recitation of Qiraat in every Salah?' The Prophet ﷺ replied: 'Yes.' A man from the Ansar said: 'Recitation has been made compulsory.' I (Abu Darda رضي الله عنه) was close to The Prophet. He ﷺ looked towards me (Abu Darda) and said: 'I understand that the recitation of the Imam alone is sufficient.' (Sunan Nasai.# 924/ Dare Qutani #1248)

It Is Compulsory (Fardh) for the Imam (in Jamat) and Munfarid (alone) To Recite Qiraat:

Allah ﷻ has stated in the Holy Qur'an: 'So recite you of the Qur'an as much as may be easy for you'... (s73, v20) From the Ayat above it is clear that it is a compulsory to recite any part of the Qur'an for its acceptance (i.e. Fulfilment of Fardh) in the Standing position (Qiyaam). (سنن ابوداود رقم 810) لا صلوة الا بقرآن ولو بفاحة الكتاب فما زاد (سنن ابوداود رقم 810) Additionally, in Sahih Hadith Rasulullah ﷺ has also categorised Surah Fatiha as being necessary (Wajib) for the Salah. Further in every Nawafil Rakaat and first two Rakaats of Fardh Salat, the recitation of Qur'an after Surah Fatiha is also considered necessary (Wajib) for its acceptance, as supported by further Ahadith. (Sahih Bukhari # 770/ Muslim #453/ Musnad Abdur Razaq, vol 1, p327)

Sayyidina Ubada bin Samit رضي الله عنه narrated: the Prophet ﷺ stated: 'The Salah is not complete without the recitation of Surah Fatiha.' (Sahih Bukhari p104/ Muslim p169) This Hadith indicates that the recitation of Surah Fatiha in every Salah is necessary (Wajib) upon the Imam in Jamat or the one who reads Salah alone. It is proven from the Holy Qur'an (Al A'raf s7, v204) and many other Saheeh Ahadith that the Muqtadi should remain silent in Salah, Imam Tirmidhi رحمه الله has related this very Sahih Hadith above from Sayyidina Jabir رضي الله عنه: 'There is no Salah for the one who does not recite Fatiha, except if he is behind an Imam.' (Jami Tirmidhi# 313)

On one occasion, upon completing Salah, The Prophet ﷺ said: 'What is the matter, why are you competing with me in Salah?' The narrator says that after this the people stopped reciting behind the Prophet ﷺ in Salah. (Sunan Abu Dawood, p127/ Jami Tirmidhi, p71)

Sayyidina Jabir رضي الله عنه narrated: the Prophet ﷺ stated: 'Whoever prays behind an Imam, then the recitation of the Imam is likened to their recitation.' (Sunan Ibn Majah #850)

Recitation of the Muqtadi in the Sir'ri (low voice recitation) Salah is Not Permissible:

Imran bin Huseen رضي الله عنه narrated: the Prophet ﷺ prayed the Dhuhr Salah and an individual began reciting Surah A'la (s87) behind him, when the Prophet ﷺ completed his prayer, he ﷺ asked: 'Which one amongst you recited?' an individual replied: 'I did'. The Prophet ﷺ said: 'I had the thought that one of you is competing with me (trying to steal the right of reciting from the Imam)' (Sahih Muslim, #398, p172)

Sayyidina Anas bin Malik رضي الله عنه narrated: The Prophet ﷺ prayed a Salah and turned towards us (the congregation). The Prophet ﷺ asked: 'Do you recite during the recitation of the Imam?' The Companions رضي الله عنهم remained silent, the Prophet ﷺ asked the same question three times, after which a Companion رضي الله عنه said: 'Yes I do.' The Prophet ﷺ replied: 'Do not do this again.' (Sunan Tahawi, vol 1, p107)

It is clear from the above Hadith that it was the habit of Sahaba رضي الله عنهم not to recite behind the Prophet ﷺ, after the Prophet ﷺ asked: 'Do you recite during the recitation of the Imam?' three times, only ONE Companion رضي الله عنه replied in the affirmative, to which he was told by the Prophet ﷺ not to recite behind the Imam again.

Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Masood رضي الله عنه stated: 'Do not recite behind the Imam, remain silent, verily, in Salah there is another task (to ponder over the verses of the Holy Qur'an, to also contemplate that one is standing before Allah the Almighty), and for your recitation, the recitation of the Imam is sufficient.' (Sunan Tahawi, p107/ Muwatta Imam Muhammad, p45/ Musnad ibn Abi Shaibah, p376)

Sayyidina Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه narrated: The Prophet ﷺ stated: 'Whoever performs his Ruku before the Imam straightens his back (from Ruku) has attained the Rakat.' (Dare Qutani, vol 1, p348/ Sunan Tahawi, vol 1, p197/ Sunan Kubra Baihaqi, vol 3, p81)

It is clear the individual who joins the Imam in Ruku, has joined after the Imam has recited Surah Fatiha, the Muqtadi in this case does not even have the opportunity to recite Surah Fatiha, however, the Muqtadi joining behind the Imam in Ruku still attains the Rakah. If it was compulsory for the Muqtadi to recite Surah Fatiha, how would it be possible for the Muqtadi to attain this Rakat?

The Action of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ:

It is proven in a Sahih Hadith (sound chain of narration) from Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه relates a lengthy Hadith that when the Prophet ﷺ was in his final illness. The responsibility of leading the prayer was given to Sayyidina Abu Bakr Siddique رضي الله عنه. A few days before the passing away of the Prophet ﷺ, his health improved slightly, the Prophet ﷺ took the support of two Sahaba رضي الله عنهم and came into the Masjid, before the Prophet ﷺ could enter the Masjid, Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه had started praying Salah, the Prophet ﷺ passed through the rows and reached beside Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه moved back and the Prophet ﷺ took his place and sat whilst leading the prayer, the Prophet ﷺ continued his recitation from the very place that Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه had reached. (Sunan Ibn Majah, p88/ Sunan Kubra. Baihaqi, vol 3, p81/ Sunan Thawai, vol 1, p197)

The point to bring to light in this Hadith is that in the time it took the Prophet ﷺ to reach Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, he (Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه) had recited Surah Fatiha and some more verses of the Qur'an, when the Prophet ﷺ took over the responsibility of Imam from Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, He ﷺ did not recite Surah Fatiha again, the Hadith clearly states the Prophet ﷺ continued his recitation from the very place that Sayyidina Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه had reached. If it was compulsory for every person to recite Surah Fatiha in every Salah, the Prophet ﷺ would have started from this.

The Sayings of the Companions of the Prophet ﷺ and the Pious Predecessors:

There are sayings from the great Companions of the Prophet ﷺ in the matter of recitation in the Jah'ri or Sir'ri Salah. Sayings are found upon the verse of the Qur'an mentioned and in conformity to the Sahih Ahadith. They have not only prevented people from reciting behind the Imam, but also expressed displeasure at those that do recite behind the Imam.

Musa bin Uqba رضي الله عنه narrated: 'The Prophet ﷺ, Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه, Umar رضي الله عنه and Uthman رضي الله عنه would warn against the Muqtadi reciting behind the Imam.' (Musnad Abdur Razaq, vol 2, p139)

Sayyidina Ali رضي الله عنه stated: 'The person who recites behind the Imam, he is not upon his natural disposition (the Sunnah).' (Dare Qutani, vol 1, p121/ Sunan Tahawi, p107/ Musnad Abdur Razaq, vol 2, p137)

Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Masood رضي الله عنه stated: 'The individual who recites behind the Imam, I wish that his mouth is filled with Earth.' (Sunan Tahawi, p107)

Ikrama رضي الله عنه asked Sayyidina Abdullah ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه: 'Certain people recite behind the Imam in Dhuhr and Asr.' Abdullah رضي الله عنه replied: 'If it was in my hands, I would pull out their tongues.' (Sunan Tahawi, p121)

The Sayings of the Four Imams of the Ummah Aima Alba (Mujtahideen رَحْمَهُمُ اللهُ):

Imam Abu Hanifa, Imam Muhammad Shaybani, Hammad, Ibrahim Nakai, Alqamah bin Qays رَحْمَهُمُ اللهُ etc do not regard it permissible to recite anything for the Muqtadi (Surah Fatiha or another Surah) in the Jah'ri (audible voice recitation) or Sir'ri (low voice recitation) Salah. (The proofs being the Holy Qur'an and Saheeh Ahadith as mentioned above). (Muwatta Imam Muhammad, p43/ Kitabul Athaar, p187)

Imam Malik رَحْمَهُمُ اللهُ also regards it impermissible to recite anything (Surah Fatiha or another Surah) in the Jah'ri Salah. In the Sir'ri Salah it is permissible but is not made compulsory. (Muwatta Imam Malik, p29)

There are many differing opinions on Imam Shafi رَحْمَهُمُ اللهُ regarding this matter, however, if we take the last written works by Imam Shafi, Kitabul Umm, it is written: 'I (Imam Shafi) say that every Jah'ri Salah that is performed behind an Imam, it is not permissible to recite behind him, and in the Sir'ri Salah it can be done (recitation).' (Kitabul Umm, vol 7, p153)

From this it is seen that in the opinion of Imam Shafi رَحْمَهُمُ اللهُ, it is not permissible to recite anything in the Jah'ri Salah nor is it required in the Sir'ri Salah.

Allamah ibn Qadama رَحْمَهُمُ اللهُ, a very great Hanbali Imam, writes about the way of Imam Ahmed bin Hanbal رَحْمَهُمُ اللهُ : 'The conclusion is that the recitation of Surah Fatiha behind the Imam is not compulsory in the Jah'ri or Sir'ri Salah.' (Al Mughni, vol 1, p608)

It can be seen then that in the view of the Four Great Imams, it is not regarded as permissible for the Muqtadi to recite Surah Fatiha or any other Surah behind the Imam in the Jah'ri Salah. It is also not regarded as compulsory by any of the Imams, for the Muqtadi to recite Surah Fatiha or any other Surah in the Sir'ri Salah either.

In this age, there are those who are Ghair Muqalideen, calling themselves Salafi or Ahle Hadith, they claim that the recitation of Surah Fatiha in all the Salahs, audible or low voice behind the Imam is Fard, there are many opinions and rulings of theirs that are against the majority of the Scholars of the Ummah, even on the opinion of the non-recitation by the Muqtadi, they are going against the clear verse of the Holy Qur'an, the Sahih Ahadith, the rulings of the great Companions of the Prophet ﷺ and the sayings of the Pious predecessors.

There is no way that a person can go against the verses of the Holy Qur'an or the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ in Sahih Ahadith, however, there is a way that opinions can be derived, through one's own 'Qiyas', for which there is no proof in the Qur'an and Sunnah, there is no clear Sahih Hadith that the Prophet ﷺ has stated for the Muqtadi to recite Surah Fatiha in Jamat, however, the Ghair Muqalideen vehemently uphold their stance of it being compulsory to do so.

May Allah ﷻ grant us all the guidance to follow the Qur'an and Sunnah in the manner shown by the Salaf-us-Saliheen.

والله وحده هو المسؤول والمستعان وهو الهادي إلى سبيل الخير والسلام .

محمد يوسف دنكا

مفتى محمد يوسف دنكا (عفا الله عنه)

Mufti Muhammad Yusuf Danka

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