

What is the Ruling if an Imam says the Takbeer After He Has Already Begun Transitioning to Ruku' or Sujood?

Darulifta Ahlesunnat (Dawateislami)

Question

What do the noble scholars and jurists of Islamic law say about the following: Some imams say the Takbeer-e-Intiqal (the takbeer for transition) after bending halfway into ruku' or sujood, and some say it after reaching the position of ruku' or sujood. They justify this by saying that "doing so will prevent the muqtadis from preceding the imam in going to the next rukn (position). But if we say the takbeer while transitioning, then the muqtadis are often seen going into the next rukn before us."

Is this reasoning of the imam correct? If not, can we go to the next rukn if the actions of the imam are visible to us, such as if we are standing in the first row and we can see the imam going to and standing from ruku' and sujood? Or is it necessary to move to the next rukn only after the imam has said the takbeer? Please provide guidance.

Answer

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
الْجَوَابُ بِعَوْنِ الْمَلِكِ الْوَهَّابِ اللَّهُمَّ هِدَايَةَ الْحَقِّ وَالصَّوَابِ

For the Imam as well, the Sunnah method of saying the Takbeer-e-Intiqal is that he begins saying the Takbeer-e-Intiqal as soon as he begins transitioning to the next rukn, and completes the takbeer as soon as he finishes transitioning. In other words, the beginning and ending of the transition and the Takbeer-e-Intiqal should occur simultaneously. Contrary to this, if the imam begins the takbeer after bending down halfway or only after completely reaching the next rukn, it is against the Sunnah, even if this is done out of fear that the muqtadi may precede the imam. This is because if a muqtadi precedes the imam, the muqtadi is responsible for this, and the blame will not fall on the imam.

However, if the imam acts contrary to the Sunnah and delays the utterance of the takbeer, the muqtadi should move to the next rukn while reciting the takbeer in accordance with the Sunnah by observing the imam and following him, even if the imam has not yet started reciting the takbeer.

The details and evidence are provided below in order:

The Sunnah of saying the Takbeer-e-Intiqal is that one should begin the takbeer as soon as they begin transitioning to the next rukn and complete the takbeer once they complete the transition. It is stated in al-Hindiyah:

فيكون ابتداء تكبيره عند أول الخرو والفرار عند الاستواء للركوع كذا في المحيط

(Al-Fatawa al-Hindiyah, Vol. 1, p. 74, Publ. Dar al-Fikr, Beirut)

It is stated in Hashiyah al-Tahtawi:

وإن خالف ترك السنة

(Hashiyah al-Tahtawi 'ala Maraq al-Falah, p. 351, Publ. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, Beirut)

It is also Sunnah for the Imam to say the Takbeer-e-Intiqal in the same manner that was mentioned. Thus, Shaykh-ul-Islam, Imam Ahmad Raza Khan رحمه الله تعالى writes:

اسے (یعنی امام کو) چاہیے کہ سجدہ کو جاتے یا سجدہ سے اٹھتے وقت اللہ اکبر کی ابتدا کرے اور ختم، انتقال پر ختم کرے مقتدیوں کی رعایت جو وہ کرتا ہے عکس مقصود شرع ہے، حدیث میں فرمایا: انما جعل الامام ليوتم به يا باء كه ايسا نه كرے تو مقتدی اس سے پہلے سجدہ کر لیں گے اس کا لحاظ مقتدیوں پر ضرور ہے جب اسے سجدہ تک پہنچنے میں دیر ہوتی ہو تو یہ انتظار کریں اور ایسے وقت سجدہ کو جھکیں کہ اس کے ساتھ سجدہ میں پہنچیں بذلک امر النبی صلی اللہ تعالیٰ علیہ وسلم اصحابہ رضی اللہ عنہم۔

Translation: When going for sajdah or standing from the sajdah, the imam should begin saying اللہ اکبر, and he should complete it once he completes his transition. For the imam to take the muqtadis into consideration is contrary to the purpose of shari'ah, as it is stated in a hadith: "an imam is appointed so that he can be followed." Now, for the concern that if the imam doesn't do this, the muqtadis will precede him in sajdah. (The answer to this is that) The muqtadis are responsible for this consideration. If it takes the imam longer to reach into sajdah, they should wait and start transitioning to sajdah at such a time that they will reach the sajdah with the imam. The Prophet ﷺ instructed his companions to do this. (Fatawa Razawiyah, Vol. 6, p. 591-592, Publ. Raza Foundation, Lahore)

For a muqtadi to begin transitioning to the next rukn, he must know that the imam transitioned to that rukn. There are multiple methods through which one can get to know this. Just like hearing the takbeer is one method, another method is by observing the actions of the imam. And it is clear that knowledge is necessary for action. Therefore, just like a muqtadi can transition from one rukn to the next by listening to the takbeer, he can also transition by observing the imam. It is stated in al-Durr al-Mukhtar, Radd al-Muhtar, Maraq al-Falah, and its explanation, Hashiyah al-Tahtawi (the words are of al-Tahtawi):

(العلم بانتقالات الإمام لسماع أو رؤية) من الإمام أو المقتدي ومثله الرؤية

(Hashiyah al-Tahtawi 'ala Maraq al-Falah, p. 293, Publ. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyah, Beirut)

It is stated in Fatawa Nooriyah:

ہمارے ائمہ کرام نے بھی یہ نہیں فرمایا کہ براہ راست امام یا مکبر کی آواز ہی سے مقتدی مطلع ہو کر نماز ادا کرے تو جائز ورنہ نہیں، بلکہ یہ فرمایا ہے کہ انتقالات امام کا علم شرط اقتداء ہے۔۔۔ پھر اس مطلق سماع اور رویت کا ذکر بھی باعتبار غالب ہے ورنہ کسی اور ذریعے سے بھی علم ہو جائے تو کافی ہے مثلاً جو شخص نابینا اور بہرہ ہو وہ پاس کے مقتدی کی حرکات انتقالیہ سے بذریعہ قوت لامسہ علم حاصل کرتے ہوئے اقتداء کر سکتا ہے۔

Translation: Our scholars have not mentioned that the salah will only be valid if the muqtadi offers his salah by listening directly to the imam or the mukabbir; otherwise, it will not be valid. Instead, they mentioned that knowing the transitions of the imam is a condition for iqtida' (following)... 'Hearing' and 'seeing' are mentioned only because they are the most common. Otherwise, if they attain knowledge in any other way, it is sufficient. For example, a blind and deaf person can do iqtida' (follow the imam) with the knowledge attained by feeling the movements of the other muqtadis. (Fatawa Nooriyah, Vol. 1, p. 400, Publ. Shu'bah Tasneef wa Ta'leef Dar al-'Uloom Hanafiyah Nooriyah, Basirpur)

Since it is sufficient for the muqtadi to observe the imam to transition, it is baseless to declare it necessary for one to wait for the Takbeer-e-Intiqal of the imam.

However, there is another point of discussion here: It is Sunnah to follow the imam in the Sunnahs, as stated in Bahar-e-Shari'at: سنت میں متابعت سنت ہے۔ Translation: Obeying (the imam) in Sunnahs is a Sunnah. (Vol. 1, pt. 3, p. 520) Therefore, it should also be Sunnah for the muqtadi to follow the imam in his takbeer and begin transitioning while reciting the takbeer only after the imam has recited the takbeer, and if he (the muqtadi) begins transitioning before this, then he will no longer be obeying the imam. The answer to this is that it is Sunnah to follow the imam in the Sunnah acts only when the imam is offering it completely in accordance with the Sunnah method. However, if the imam does anything contrary to the Sunnah, either by completely abandoning the Sunnah or by delaying it from its prescribed time, the muqtadi should still perform it in the proper time and method, given that it doesn't interrupt the wajib obedience. This is because if the imam does anything contrary to the Sunnah, he will either completely abandon it or delay it from its prescribed place. In such a case, the muqtadi will not be required to obey the imam in the Sunnah; instead, he will be independent. This means that the muqtadi is not dependent on the imam in offering the Sunnah, which would mean that if the imam offers it, the muqtadi will offer it, and if the imam abandons it, the muqtadi will abandon it.

This was the detail about carrying out or abandoning the Sunnah itself. But similarly, the muqtadi will not obey the imam if he delays the Sunnah from its prescribed time. This means that if the imam delays a Sunnah from its prescribed time, the muqtadi will not delay it. Instead, he will offer it at the prescribed time. In this case, though the muqtadi is preceding the imam in offering a Sunnah (while the imam will offer it afterwards), this is not against shari'ah; in fact, this is desired by shari'ah and preferred.

It is stated in Fatawa Razawiyah:

ترک سنت میں امام کی پیروی نہیں بلکہ موجب اساءت و کراہت ہے اگر وہ چھوڑے مقتدی بجالائے جبکہ اس کی بجا آوری سے کسی واجب فعل میں امام کی متابعت نہ چھوڑے و لہذا علماء فرماتے ہیں اگر امام وقت تحریم رفع یدین یا تسبیح رکوع و سجود یا تکبیر انتقال یا ذکر قومہ ترک کرے تو مقتدی نہ چھوڑے۔۔۔ اور اگر رکوع و سجود میں ایک ہی تسبیح کہہ کر سر اٹھائے تو مقتدی بھی ناچار سنت تکلیف ترک کرے ورنہ قومہ و جلسہ کی متابعت میں خلل آئے گا۔ ہو الصحیح کما فی الخانیة والخلاصة والخزانة والوجیز والفتح والبحر وغیرہا من الاسفار۔۔۔

اقول: وتحقیق المقام علی ما علمنی الملك العلامة ان السنن لاحظ لمافی المتابعة الا بالتبع ذلك لان معنى متابعتك غيرك جعلك نفسك تابعه والتبعية انما تصور بشيئين احدهما في نفس اتیان شیء بمعنی انه ان فعله فعلت وان تركه تركت والآخري وقته فلا تتقدم عليه ولا تسبقه اليه وان لم يكن فعلك متوقفا على فعله ولا متقيدا بتقدمه بل تفعله وان لم يفعل وتبادر اليه وان لم ياخذ فيه بعد فمما انت تابع له بل انت مستقل بنفسك غير تابع ولا متابع وهذا ظاهر جدا۔

واذ قد علمت ان اتیان الماموم بالسنن غير متقيدا بتیان الامام بل ياتي بها ان تركها كما اسمعناك عليه نصوص الائمة ومن لازم ذلك جواز التقدم عليه مع الندب اليه لجواز ان يرجع الامام بعد الترك الى الفعل كما اذار كع فصوص راسه و طبق اكفه اوضم اصابعه اوبقى صامتا غير مسيح والماموم قد فعل كل ذلك بطلب الشرع ثم عاد الامام فسوى واخذ وخرج وسبح فقد تقدم فعل الماموم وهو فيه غير ملوم بل اليه مندوب وهو منه معتمد محسوب۔

فقد ثبت ان لا مدخل للمتابعة في السنن والمستحبات بل الماموم مستبد فيها غير داخل تحت حكم الامام ولم يتناولها تحكيمه اياه على ذاته، والتزامه ان يصلي بصلاته فيما هو محجور فيه عن التقدم عليه والاستبداد دونه وما هو حقيقة الواجبات الفعلية اذ هي موضوع الاقتداء اصالة۔۔۔ ومنها يسرى الى غيرها وان سرى كوجوب ترك سنة يلزم من فعلها مخالفة الامام في واجب فعلي فليس ذلك للمتابعة في ترك

السنة بل في الواجب المذكور كعدم جواز ان ياتي بسنن الركوع قبل ركوع الامام فانه لا يفعلها الا في الركوع ولا ركوع له قبل ركوعه فعن هذا امتنع تقديمها على ركوعه لا على فعلية السنن كما علمت وهذا معنى قولنا لا حظ لها من المتابعة الا بالتبع -

Translation: The imam will not be followed in abandoning a Sunnah; rather, this is a cause of 'Isa'ah and Karahah. If the imam omits it, the muqtadi should still perform it, given that it does not cause him to miss any act in which following the imam is wajib. Therefore, the scholars state that if the imam omits raising his hands for takbeer-e-tahreemah, omits the tasbeeh of ruku' and sujud, abandons the Takbeer-e-Intiqal, or neglects the zikr of qomah, even then the muqtadi should not omit these... However, if the imam recites the tasbeeh of ruku' and sujud only once and then raises his head, the muqtadi has no choice but to abandon the Sunnah of reciting three times; otherwise, it will interrupt his obedience in qomah and jalsah. This is Sahih as mentioned in al-Khaniyah, al-Khulasah, al-Khizanah, al-Wajeez, al-Fath, al-Bahr, and other works of Fiqh.

I say: With the knowledge granted to me by The All-Knowing Sovereign (Allah), the conclusion in this topic is that there is no aspect of obedience (Ittiba') in Sunnahs, except through subsidiary obedience (tab'iyat). This is because following another person means that you are rendering yourself obedient to him, and obedience can only occur in two ways. First, by following them in the action itself, such that if they do it, you do it, and if they omit it, you omit it. Secondly, by following them in the time of doing the action, such that you do not do the action before the one you are following. However, if your performance of the action does not depend on them performing it, nor is it restricted that they must do the action first, rather, you will perform it even if they do not, and you will begin it even if they haven't, in this case, you are not following them; instead, you are independent in this. This is self-evident. Now that you have understood that the muqtadi's performance of the Sunnahs is not dependent on the imam performing it (and the muqtadi will perform it even if the imam does not, as we have shown you the explicit text of the scholars), this demands that it be permissible, and even Mustahab, for the muqtadi to perform the Sunnah before the imam. This is because it is possible that the imam first omits the Sunnah, then performs it later. For example, the imam lowered his head in ruku' (below the level of his back), closed his fist, joined his fingers, and remained silent without reciting the tasbeeh, while the muqtadis did all of these actions, as they were prescribed by sharī'ah. Then later, the imam aligned his head with his back, grabbed his knees with his palm, spread his fingers, and recited the tasbeeh. In this case, though the muqtadi performed the actions before the imam, he is not blameworthy; rather, doing so is Mustahab and rewardable.

Therefore, it is proven that the element of following is not found in Sunnah and Mustahab acts; the muqtadi is independent in them and not under the leadership of the imam. The muqtadi declaring the imam his leader does not extend to the Sunnah and Mustahab acts. Rather, the muqtadi's commitment to offering the imam's salah only applies where he cannot precede the imam nor act independently; in reality, this only happens in the wajib acts because this is the essence of iqtida' (following the imam)... However, the obligation of obedience extends from the wajibat into Sunnah acts, (such as those acts) the performance of which will lead to opposition in a 'wajib fe'li'. Yet, this opposition is not because of following the imam

in abandoning a Sunnah; instead, it is because of following him in performing the prescribed wajib. For example, it is impermissible (for the muqtadi) to offer the Sunnahs of the ruku' before the imam goes into ruku', because the muqtadi can only perform the Sunnahs of ruku' in the ruku'. But when the imam has not yet performed the ruku', the muqtadi's ruku' is invalid; thus, it is prohibited for the muqtadi to perform ruku' before the imam's ruku'. And as you have understood, this prohibition is not due to preceding the imam in performing a Sunnah.

This is exactly what is meant when we say that "the element of following is not found in Sunnahs, except through subsidiary obedience (tab'iyat)." (Fatawa Razawiyah, Vol. 6, p. 408-415, Publ. Raza Foundation, Lahore)

وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَرَسُولُهُ اَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم

(Allah Almighty knows best and His Messenger صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّم knows best.)

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