

Did Imām A‘zam Abū Ḥanīfah use to perform his Salāh in Persian?

Darulifta Ahlesunnat (Dawateislami)

Question

What do the noble scholars and jurists of Islamic law say about the following: I have heard that Imām A‘zam Abū Ḥanīfah رحمة الله تعالى عليه would perform his salah in the Persian language. Is this true?

Answer

You heard incorrectly. The reality is: there was a narration that Imām A‘zam Abū Ḥanīfah رحمة الله تعالى عليه permitted qirā‘ah in the Persian language during salāh. The detail of this was that Imām A‘zam’s رحمة الله تعالى عليه stance was that qirā‘ah in the Persian language is permitted in salah, regardless of whether one knows how to recite in Arabic. On the other hand, both of his students, Imam Abū Yūsuf and Imām Muḥammad رحمة الله تعالى عليهما, had the stance that if one is unable to recite in Arabic, only then are they permitted to recite in Persian, otherwise not. This is the Muftā Bih opinion (opinion according to which the fatwa is issued). But later, Imām A‘zam Abū Ḥanīfah رحمة الله تعالى عليه himself retracted his earlier stance and adopted the stance of Saḥibayn رحمة الله عليهما.

It is stated in Tabyīn al-Ḥaqā‘iq Sharh Kanz al-Daqā‘iq:

وأما القراءة بالفارسية فجائزة في قول أبي حنيفة وقال أبو يوسف ومحمد لا تجوز إذا كان يحسن العربية؛ -- ويروى رجوعه إلى قولهما وعليه الاعتماد

(Tabyīn al-Ḥaqā‘iq, Vol. 01, p. 110-111, Publ. Cairo)

It is stated in Tanwīr al-Absār Ma‘a al-Durr al-Mukhtār:

(قراءتها عاجزا) فجائز اجماعاً، قيد القراءة بالعجز لان الأصح رجوعه إلى قولهما وعليه الفتوى

(Tanwīr al-Absār Ma‘a al-Durr al-Mukhtār, Vol. 02, p. 224, Publ. Dār al-Ma‘rifah, Beirut)

According to the Muftā Bih opinion of Saḥibayn, it is necessary to recite in Arabic during salāh. If there is no inability, the salāh will not be valid if qirā‘ah is done in other than Arabic. Thus, A‘lā Ḥazrat Imām Aḥmad Razā Khān رحمة الله الرحمن states in Fatāwā Razawiyah:

قراءت قرآن فرض ہے اور وہ خاص عربی ہے غیر عربی میں ادا نہ ہوگی اور نماز نادرست ہوگی اور اس کے ماورا (یعنی تلاوت کے علاوہ تکبیر تحریمہ و دیگر اذکار نماز غیر عربی میں پڑھنے کی صورت) میں گنہگاری ہے، ہاں جو عاجز محض ہو، تو مجبوری کی بات جدا ہے۔

Translation: Recitation of the Qur‘ān is fard, and it is specifically in Arabic. It will not be fulfilled by reciting in other than Arabic. And other than this (i.e., recitation, such as saying Takbīr Taḥrīmah and other azkār of salāh in other than Arabic), one will be

sinful. However, the one who is totally incapable is a separate case. (Fatawā Razawiyah, Vol. 06, p. 323, Publ. Razā Foundation, Lahore)

وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ عَزَّوَجَلَّ وَرَسُوْلُهُ اَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّمَ

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

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