

If One Cannot sit in the Tashahhud Position, Can He Lead the Prayer?

Darulifta Ahlesunnat (Dawateislami)

Question

What do the noble scholars and jurists of Islamic law say about the following: I am an Imam in a Masjid. I was involved in an accident recently, due to which a rod was inserted into my leg. Because of this, I am not able to fold my leg completely, nor am I able to sit in the kneeling position in Tashahhud. When sitting, I have to extend my leg out in front. Can I lead salāh in this situation?

Answer

In the situation described, you can lead salah in this manner.

The detail is that the sunnah method of sitting during Tashahhud is by erecting the right foot, laying the left foot, and sitting on it. This is the sunnah, and deliberately abandoning this without a valid reason and sitting in a different position is Makrūh Tanzīhī and disliked. However, if there is a valid reason for it, then there is no dislike because when it is permissible to leave a wājib due to an ‘uzr (excuse), permission is also granted to leave a sunnah. Therefore, in the inquired situation, if you offer salah by sitting in a manner that the leg with the rod is extended in front, your salāh and the salāh of your Muqtadīs will be valid. As for Imāmat (leading the prayer), it is also in itself valid. But if leading the congregation in this manner reduces attendance in the congregation or if it causes hesitation among the people, then another qualified person should lead the Salāh. But if you have the most knowledge about the rulings of salah and purification, then it is wrong for the people to object. The Noble Prophet ﷺ would sit in Tashahhud by erecting the right foot and laying the left foot. Thus, it is stated in a ḥadīth:

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها، قالت: كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يفتتح الصلاة بالتكبير... وكان إذا جلس يفرش رجله اليسرى وينصب رجله اليمنى

Translation: It is narrated that ‘Ā’ishah رضي الله تعالى عنها said: The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ would begin his salah with Takbīr... and when He would sit, he would lay his left foot and erect his right foot. (Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Vol. 01, p. 208, Publ. Al-Maktabah al-‘Asriyah, Beirut)

Sitting in the manner described is sunnah. Malik al-‘Ulamā ‘Allāmah Kasānī Ḥanafī رحمه الله تعالى (d. 587 AH/1191 CE) writes:

السنة أن يفرش رجله اليسرى في القعدتين جميعاً ويقعد عليها وينصب اليمنى نصبا

(Badāi‘ al-Sanāi‘, Book of Salāh, p. 211, Publ. Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah)

However, if there is a valid reason, it is permissible to sit in a position that feels easier, other than the sunnah position, as stated in a ḥadīth:

عن عبد الله بن عبد الله رضي الله تعالى عنه، أنه أخبره: أنه كان يرى عبد الله بن عمر رضي الله عنهما يتربع في الصلاة إذا جلس، ففعلته وأنا يومئذ حديث السن، فنهاني عبد الله بن عمر رضي الله عنهما، وقال: إنما سنة الصلاة أن تنصب رجلك اليمنى، وتثني اليسرى، فقلت: إنك تفعل ذلك؟ فقال: إن رجلي لا تحملاني

Translation: It is narrated that ‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Abdullāh رضي الله تعالى عنه informed that he would see ‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Umar رضي الله تعالى عنهما sit in the crossed legged position while sitting in salāh, so I did the same, and I was young at that time. So, Hazrat ‘Abdullāh Bin ‘Umar رضي الله تعالى عنهما prohibited me and stated: Erecting the right foot and laying the left foot is from the sunnah acts of salāh. So, I said: But you also do this. He replied: My legs cannot carry me. (Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Vol. 01, p. 165, Publ. Dār Tawq al-Najāh, Beirut)

Therefore, if there is a valid excuse, it is permissible to sit by extending the leg with the rod in front, as ‘Allāmah Ibn ‘Ābidīn Shāmī Dimishqī رحمه الله تعالى عليه (d. 1252

AH/1836 CE) states:

أقول: ينبغي أن يقال إن كان جلوسه كما يجلس للتشهد أيسر عليه من غيره أو مساويا لغيره كان أولى وإلا اختار الأيسر في جميع الحالات (Radd al-Muḥtār, Vol. 02, Book of Salāh, p. 683, Publ. Quetta)

Answering a question regarding the Imāmat of a lame person, The Imām of Ahl al-Sunnah, Imam Aḥmad Razā Khān رحمه الله تعالى عليه (d. 1340 AH/ 1921 CE) writes:

صورت مستفسره میں ایسے شخص کی امامت بلاشبہ جائز ہے، پھر اگر وہی عالم ہے، تو وہی زیادہ مستحق ہے، اس کے ہوتے جاہل کی تقدیم ہرگز نہ چاہئے اور اگر دوسرا عالم بھی موجود ہے، جب بھی اس کی امامت میں حرج نہیں، مگر بہتر وہ دوسرا ہے، یہ سب اس صورت میں کہ دونوں شخص شرائط صحت و جواز امامت کے جامع ہوں، صحیح خواں، صحیح الطہارۃ، سنی صحیح العقیدہ، غیر فاسق معین، ورنہ جامع شرائط ہوگا، وہی امام ہوگا۔

Translation: In the inquired situation, the Imāmat of such a person is certainly valid. If he is also a scholar, then he is the most deserving, and a layman should not be put forward in the presence of such a person. Even if there is another scholar present, there is no harm if this person performs Imāmat, but the other (scholar) is preferred. This detail applies in the case when both individuals fulfill the requirements for the validity and permissibility of Imāmat, they can recite accurately, they have proper purification, they are Sunni and hold the correct beliefs, and they are not fāsiq mu‘lin (open sinner). Otherwise, only the one who fulfills all the requirements can become the imām. (Fatāwa Razawiyah, Vol. 06, p. 554, Publ. Razā Foundation, Lahore)

Imāmat is valid despite leaving Sunnah acts. Such as, if one omits the fard of qiyām and is unable to place the toes on the ground which are obligatory for sujūd due to any valid reason, the Imāmat is valid. Thus, Muftī Jalāl-Uddīn Amjadī رحمه الله تعالى عليه (d. 1422 AH/ 2001 CE) writes:

وقت مجبوری جب پورا قیام فرض (کما فی الاحدب) اور استقرار علی الارض (کما فی الاعرج) حاصل نہ ہونے کی صورت میں بھی امامت درست ہے، تو حالت سجدہ میں صرف انگوٹھ یا بعض واجب انگلیوں کا پیٹ زمین پر نہ لگنا صحت امامت کے لئے کب حرج بن سکتا ہے۔ بلاشبہ یہاں بھی امامت صحیح اور درست ہے اقتدا کرنے میں حرج نہیں۔

Translation: In the state of inability, since the Imāmat is valid if one cannot perform a full qiyām (such as a hunchbacked) or they cannot rest firmly on the ground (such as a lame person), then why would it affect the validity of imāmat if one does not place the big toe or the inner part of the other wajib toes on the ground during

sajdah? Undoubtedly, the imāmat is valid here as well, and it does not affect the iqtidā' (following) of the imam. (Fatāwa Faiz-Ul-Rasūl, Vol. 01, p. 281, Publ. Shabīr Brothers, Lahore)

However, if this causes a decrease in the attendance of the congregation or causes dislike among the people, that person should not perform Imāmat. The Imām of Ahl al-Sunnah Imām Aḥmad Razā Khān رحمه الله تعالى عليه (d. 1340 AH/ 1921 CE) writes:

فان من مسائل كراهة الامام مفرعة على هذا الاصل وهوان من كان فيه تنفير الناس وقلة رغبتهم فامامته مكروهة كولد بغى وابرص شاع
برصه وغيرهما. كيونك كراهت امامت ك بعض مسائل اس ضابطه پر بنی ہیں، وہ ضابطہ یہ ہے کہ ہر وہ شخص جس کے ساتھ لوگوں کو نفرت اور قلت
رغبت ہو اس کی امامت مکروہ ہے، مثلاً ولد الزنا اور برص والا ایسا شخص کہ جس کا مرض برص پھیل گیا ہو وغیرہما۔

Translation: Some rulings regarding the Imāmat being Makrūh are based on this principle. The principle is that the Imāmat of such a person is Makrūh, whom people dislike or are not inclined towards, such as a person born out of wedlock or a leper whose leprosy has spread, etc. (Fatāwa Razawiyah, Vol. 06, p. 462, Publ. Razā Foundation, Lahore)

وَاللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَرَسُوْلُهُ اَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ تَعَالٰى عَلَيْهِ وَاٰلِهٖ وَسَلَّمَ

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

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