

Using the Loudspeaker when Performing Salaah

Q: Ilm-21: What does your research reveal about using the loudspeaker (microphone) when performing salaah? The voice of the Imaam that reaches the followers is his original voice and not an artificial one. Since this has been established, I feel that there is no problem in it. The deputy Mufti of Daarul Uloom Deoband has just issued a fresh Fatwa stating that the salaah performed with the loudspeaker is valid and Hadhrat Sheikhul Islaam has signed the Fatwa. This was published in the second column of Sheikhul Islaam's Al Jam'iyyah number 5-6. The gist of the Fatwa is that the salaah performed using the loudspeaker is valid and the following of the people in the near and distant rows is also valid.

Answer: When the research and experience of scientists revealed that the voice of the Imaam that reaches the followers is an artificial voice and not an original one, the Ulema issued the Fatwa that salaah using the loudspeaker was invalid and it was also invalid to follow an Imaam using a loudspeaker. However, when the scientists changed their opinion and said that the voice of the Imaam that reaches the followers is his original voice and not an artificial one, the Ulema also changed their Fatwa and stated that the salaah performed using the loudspeaker is valid and the following of the people is also valid.

However, the fact that the salaah is valid does not remove the undesirability of the act, which still remains intact. It is for this reason that blanket permission to use the loudspeaker is not given. The reasons for the undesirability are:

1. If the loudspeaker malfunctions during the salaah, people in the back rows are left confused and bewildered. The ruling stated in the books of jurisprudence state that staying away from harm is better than attaining some benefit. Therefore, although it is Sunnah to gargle the mouth when performing wudhu and when bathing, it will be forbidden to do so if there is fear of it going down the throat while fasting. Similarly, although it is Sunnah to pass the fingers through the hair when making wudhu, it is Makrooh when in the state of Ihraam because of the fear of hairs breaking off.
2. The Qiraa'ah and Takbeeraat said over the loudspeaker is louder than necessary and can be neither controlled nor moderated whereas moderation in the voice when reciting the Qiraa'ah and when calling out the Takbeeraat of Ruku and Sajdah. It is Makrooh to call them out louder than is necessary.
3. Because of the loudness of the loudspeaker, the humility and concentration required in salaah (which is the soul of the salaah) is hampered. Allaah says: "Do not recite (the Qur'aan) too loudly in your salaah, nor too softly, but seek a path in between these (two extremes).
4. Usage of the loudspeaker is an act of pretentiousness, whereas this must be avoided in salaah and simplicity adopted. Shah Wali'ullaah Muhaddith Dehlawi RAH. said. "Being pretentious and rigid in matters of Ibaadah is one of the factors leading to altering the Deen and was a disease of the Jewish and Christian monks."

5. When use of the loudspeaker becomes common, it will be used even when the Imaam's voice is loud enough, because of which it will certainly become impermissible and a Bid'ah. The jurists state that according to all four schools of jurisprudence, it is Makrooh and a Bid'ah to arrange for a Mukabbir (someone to relay the Takbeers) when the Imaam's voice can be heard by all the followers.

This Fatwa has been published in the Peghaam dated 5 August 1953 and it was two months later in October 1953 that a booklet detailing the status of the loudspeaker in the Shari'ah was published in Pakistan (titled "Aala Mukabbirus Sowt ke Shar'i Ahkaam"). In the booklet, the grand Mufti of Pakistan Hadhrat Moulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi DAAMAT BARKAATUHU. has discussed the issue at length. With the grace of Allaah, Hadhrat Mufti Sahib's Fatwa concurs with mine and he has also accepted the opinion of the scientists who say that the voice of the Imaam that reaches the followers is his original voice and not an artificial one, because of which the salaah performed using the loudspeaker is valid and the following of the people is also valid.

After enumerating the cons of using the loudspeaker, he states that looking at the singular benefit in opposition to the many cons, no thinking person will ever sanction it in the use for salaah. He adds that it does not behove an intelligent person to overlook the objectives of something merely to focus on the superficial benefits.

He later summarises by saying that the principles of the Shari'ah and the demands of logic require that using the loudspeaker in salaah is inappropriate and should be avoided. Using a Mukabbir to relay the Takbeers to the last rows is best, most blessed and free of all the harms of using the loudspeaker. It is therefore best to employ the use of the Mukabbireen (plural of Mukabbir). Another drawback of using the loudspeaker that Hadhrat Mufti Sahib pointed out is that when Masjids are close together, the voices of the Imaams will clash when using the loudspeaker. This will naturally cause tremendous confusion for the followers and he says, it has happened in Karachi.

This booklet was endorsed by leading Ulema of Deoband and the note of endorsement read: "In the light of our present times, present conditions, the statements and discussions of the present-day Ulema and from the opinions and research of scientists, the reasonable and sensible decision reached is that this instrument should be avoided because its use is not free of undesirable elements. (Signed by:)"

- > Hadhrat Moulana Mufti Mahdi Hasan, Chief Mufti of Daarul Uloom Deoband RAH.
- > Hadhrat Sheikhul Islaam Moulana Madani RAH.
- > Hadhrat Moulana Qaari Muhammad Tayyab Sahib RAH.
- > Hadhrat Moulana Sayyid Mubaarak Ali RAH.
- > Hadhrat Moulana Muhammad Ibraheem RAH.
- > Hadhrat Moulana I'zaaz Ali RAH.

> ... other Ulema .. .

The following is a note of endorsement from the Ulem a of Mazaahirul Uloom Sharanpur: "If the opinion of most men of this (scientific) field are of the opinion that the voice is the original, the salaah will be valid. The use of the instrument for salaah however still remains impermissible because of the factors that have been mentioned. (Signed by:)

> Hadhrat Moulana Sa'eed Ahmad RAH. the Chief Mufti

> Hadhrat Moulana Abdul Lateef RAH.

> Hadhrat Sheikhul Hadith Muhammad Zakariyyah RAH.

> Hadhrat Moulana Asadullaah RAH.

The following is a note of endorsement from ten Ulema from Khayrul Madaaris and Qaasimul Uloom in Multan: "The opinion that the Grand Mufti Hadhrat Moulana Muhammad Shafee has presented concerning the use of the loudspeaker in salaah is correct and most sensible. He has issued the Fatwa that the use of the loudspeaker in salaah is forbidden because of the numerous nullifying factors present. These factors are such that there is no doubt about their occurrence."

The gist is that according to the majority of Ulema, it is permissible to follow the voice amplified by a loudspeaker in salaah. The salaah will therefore be valid and will not have to be repeated. However, because the cons of using the loudspeaker for salaah outweigh the pros, the situation is decided by the verse: "The sin is greater than the benefit". It will therefore not be advised to forsake the ways of the pious predecessors to adopt this doubtful practice. Using it for the Khutbah does not behave the significance of the Khutbah. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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