

Is it Necessary for the Rows to be Consecutive?

Q: Salaah-372: Our Masjid is planned in a manner that behind the salaah area, there is an area to the east where two rows can be formed. Immediately behind this is a lower lying area that can well be termed a courtyard, save that it does not form part of the salaah area. After this, there is a pond measuring ten by ten, after which there is a platform where travellers have a rest. The platform can accommodate two rows and is very useful on the days of Eid, Jumu'ahs and when ijtimas take place.

Our Imaam says that the pond becomes a barrier when people are following the Imaam and breaks the succession. He says that only when people form their rows to the right and left of the pond, the following of the people on the platform will be valid. However, it is not possible to form rows here when it rains.

There is another Molvi who says that it is not necessary for rows to be formed around the pond because the entire area around the Masjid together with the courtyard forms a single area and a person may follow the Imaam in any of these areas. The pond will therefore not be a barrier. He says that the question of the rows being successive for the following of the Imaam to be valid applies only to areas that are outside the precincts of the Masjid. There is no question therefore with regard to the rows on the platform. There is now a conflict between the Musallis concerning the issue. Please explain in detail.

Answer: For the following of the Muqtadis to be valid, it is necessary for the Imaam and the Muqtadis to be in the same area, whether the area is one in reality or just by definition. The salaah area of the Masjid and the courtyard of the Masjid are regarded as being one area, regardless of whether salaah is performed in the courtyard or whether it is used for other matters related to the Masjid.

It will therefore be possible for people to follow the Imaam in such an area even if there is a distance of two or more rows between any of the rows. It is only the following factors that will pose a barrier:

- > A wall between the Imaam and Musallis by Which the Musalli remain in doubt about the movements of the Imaam.
- > A public road between the Imaam and Musallis and it is so wide that ox-wagons can pass by them, even if there is no traffic during the time of salaah. There will, of course, be no problem if the rows are formed on the road itself.
- > A row of women between the Imaam and Musallis.
- > A river between the Imaam and Musallis and it is so wide that boats can pass by them.

A narration from Hadhrat Umar RADI. states that salaah will not be valid then there comes between the Imaam and followers a river, a road or a row of women. A narration of Abdur Razzaaq adds a wall as well. The ten by ten pond will also fall into the category of the river, even if it falls within the precincts of the Masjid. Hadhrat Moulana Sayyid Zawwaar Husayn RAH. of Pakistan states that a large pond (ten by ten) will be a barrier preventing the succession of rows when there are no rows formed around it to attach the preceding rows to the

latter rows. The rows will all be following the Imaam if there are rows to the right and left of the pond. However, when the pond is a small one (less than ten by ten), it will not prevent people from following the Imaam,s The same is stated in Imaadud Deen (pg.324) The gist of it all is that your Imaam is right and the other Molvi Sahib is wrong. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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