

# Prerequisites for validity of Imam-following

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Following an Imam is valid if the following prerequisites are met:

1. The Muqtadi should intend to follow the Imam at the time of his first Takbeer of Salah.
2. The Imam should stand a little ahead of his follower. At least his heels should be ahead of those of the Muqtadis.
3. The Imam's Salah should not be of a lower category than that of the Muqtadi. Following the Imam will not be valid if the Imam is performing a supererogatory Salah and the Imamfollower an obligatory Salah. Following him will be valid in the reverse case, i.e. if the Imam is performing an obligatory Salah and the Muqtadi a supererogatory one.
4. The Imam and the Muqtadi, if both are performing obligatory Salah, should be offering the obligatory Salah of the same time. If the Imam is performing Zuhr and the Muqtadi Asr, then Imam-following will be invalid. In the reverse case also, Imam-following will be invalid.
5. There should not be a row of women between the Imam and male Muqtadis.
6. There should not be a river wide enough for a boat to sail in it between the Imam and his followers.
7. There should not be a road wide enough for a car or cart to pass through it between Imam and his followers.
8. There should not be a barrier between the Imam and his followers which hides the Imam's posture-changes from the

followers. However, if there is no confusion for the Muqtadis regarding the Imam's posture-changes on account of the followers' ability to listen to or view the changes, then following the Imam is valid.

- It is valid for an Muqtadi with Ablutional purity to follow an Imam with Tayammum-purity.
- It is valid for a person who has washed his feet in Ablution to follow an Imam who has wiped his feet with wet hands during Ablution.
- It is valid for a person performing Salah standing to follow an Imam performing Salah in sitting.
- It is valid for a straight-backed Muqtadi to follow a hunchback.
- It is a valid for a person performing Salah by gesture to follow an Imam performing Salah likewise by gesture.
- If the Imam's Salah gets invalid due to any reason, the Salahs of Muqtadis too get invalid. It will be compulsory for the Imam to repeat the Salah. He should announce that his Salah was invalid so that the Muqtadis may also repeat their Salahs.

## When the Muqtadi should follow his Imam and when he should not

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- If the Imam stands up for the third Salah-unit before the Muqtadi completes his Tashahhud, then he should not follow

his Imam in standing. Instead he should complete the Tashahhud, then stand up. When the Imam performs the ending Salam before the Muqtadi has completed his Tashahhud, the Muqtadi should not follow his Imam. Instead he should complete his Tashahhud, and then perform the ending Salam.

- If the Imam performs an extra prostration, the Muqtadi should not follow him in the extra prostration.
- If the Imam stands up forgetfully after the last sitting, the Muqtadi should not follow him in standing up.
- If the Imam continues with the extra Salah-unit and performs its prostration, the Muqtadi will then perform the ending Salam alone.
- If the Imam stands up after the last Salah-unit without performing the last sitting, the Muqtadi should not follow him. He should say Subhanallah to draw the Imam's attention towards the error and wait for his return to the last sitting.
- If the Imam performs a prostration of the extra Salah-unit, the Muqtadi should perform the ending Salam alone.
- If the Muqtadi performs the ending Salam before the Imam performs the a prostration of the extra Salah-unit, the Muqtadi's obligatory Salah will become invalid.
- If the Imam raises his head from bowing or prostration before the Muqtadi is able to complete Subhana Rabi'al Adheem or Subhana Rabi'al A'laa thrice, the Muqtadi should follow his Imam leaving his remembrance incomplete.
- It is Detestable for an Muqtadi to perform the ending Salam before his Imam.

- If the Muqtadi performs the ending Salam before the Imam completes his Tashahhud, his Salah will be invalid.

## Sutra

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- When one of you performs Salah, he should perform it towards a Sutra and he should stand close to it.
- Sutra is an object like wood piece, etc. which a Musalli keeps in front of him so that a passerby passing in front of him does not disturb his concentration in Salah.
- It is Desirable for an Imam to keep a Sutra in front of him if the Salah is being performed in a place where people frequently pass by.
- An Imam-follower does not need a Sutra specifically for himself because Imam's Sutra will serve as a Sutra for him too.
- It is Desirable for a Musalli to stand close to the Sutra.
- It is Desirable that the Musalli shift slightly towards right or left of the Sutra instead of directly facing it.
- It is necessary that the Sutra be at least a cubit in length.
- It is also necessary that the thickness of the Sutra be at least that of a finger.

## Rulings of passing by in front of a Musalli

- In a large mosque 160, passing by in front of a Musalli between his feet and place of prostration on the ground is not permissible.
- In an open ground too, passing by in front of a Musalli between his feet and place of prostration on the ground is not permissible.
- In a small mosque or a small house, passing by in front of a Musalli between his feet and the wall facing him in the Salah-direction is not permissible.
- Similarly, it is not permissible for a Musalli to perform it in a place where people are likely to pass by in front of him, like performing Salah without a Sutraḥ in a place where people frequently pass by.
- If a person passes by in front of a Musalli, then it is permissible for the Musalli to move him away through gesture or by saying aloud a remembrance formula.
- Similarly, it is permissible for the Musalli to move the passer-by away by raising his voice during recitation.
- The Musalli should not push away the passer-by with his hand.
- A woman should move away the passer-by through gesture or by clapping, i.e. beating aloud her right palm over the back of her left.
- She should not raise her voice during recitation to move away the passer-by.

## **When breaking a Salah is compulsory and when it is permissible**

- It is not permissible for a Musalli to break his Salah after starting it without an excuse valid in the eyes of the Shari'ah.
- It is not permissible for a Musalli to break his Salah when his father or mother calls him.
- It is compulsory for a Musalli to break his Salah when he sees a blind person getting close to a well or a pit and he fears that if he does not warn the blind person, he might fall into it.
- It is compulsory for a Musalli to break his Salah when an oppressed person appeals to him for help provided that he is capable of freeing him from the oppression.
- It is permissible for a Musalli to break his Salah when he sees a thief stealing a property which is equal to a dirham or more no matter whether the property belongs to him or to someone else.
- It is permissible for a traveler to postpone his Salah if he is fearful of thieves.