

## 3471 - What should a non-Arab do for the adhkaar in salaah?

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### the question

I have become Muslim, al-hamdu-Lillaah, but I do not know Arabic. What should I do with regard to the adhkaar (phrases praising Allaah) in the prayer and reading Qur'aan in Arabic?

### Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The majority of fuqaha' say that if the non-Arab can speak Arabic, he should not recite Takbeer (saying "Allaahu akbar (Allaah is Most Great)") in any other language. The evidence for this is that the texts instruct this particular wording, which is Arabic, and that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not do it any other way.

But if a non-Arab cannot speak Arabic and is unable to pronounce it, then according to the majority of fuqaha' it is OK for him to say the Takbeer in his own language after it has been translated from Arabic, according to the statements of the Shaafa'is and Hanbalis, no matter what the language is. The Takbeer is remembrance or mentioning of Allaah, and Allaah can be remembered or mentioned in every language, so a language other than Arabic is an alternative, and the person has to learn how to say it in the other language. There is some controversy as to whether all of the adhkaar of the prayer, such as tashahhud, qunoot, du'aa', and the tasbeehaat in rukoo' and sujood may be said in languages other than Arabic.

With regard to reading Qur'aan, the majority say that it is not permissible to read it in any language other than Arabic. The evidence for this is the aayah (interpretation of the meaning):

"Verily, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'aan..." [Yoosuf 12:2]

# Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:  
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Moreover, the Qur'aan is a miracle in its wording and its meaning; if it is changed, this is no longer the case, and it is no longer Qur'aan but an interpretation (tafseer).

(al-Mawsoo'ah al-Fiqhiyyah, part 5: A'jami).

Ibn Qudaamah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said:

“Section: It is not right to read it in any language other than Arabic, or to substitute other words in Arabic, whether the person can read it well in Arabic or not, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “...an Arabic Qur'aan ...’ [Yoosuf 12:2] and ‘In the plain Arabic language’ [al-Shu'ara' 26:195]. The Qur'aan is a miracle in both its wording and its meaning, but if it is changed this is no longer the case, it is not Qur'aan or anything like it. It is only an interpretation (tafseer), and if the interpretation were like the Qur'aan itself, they would not be unable to meet the challenge of producing a soorah like it.

If a person cannot read well in Arabic, he has to learn. If he does not learn when he is able to, his prayers are not valid. If he is not able, or he fears that he does not have time to learn before the time for the next prayer is over, and he knows one aayah of al-Faatihah, he should repeat it seven times... If he can recite more than that, he should repeat it as much as he needs to make his recitation equivalent to the length of Soorat al-Fatihah, or he could make it up by reciting other aayaat. If he knows some aayaat he does not have to repeat, he could recite another aayah instead, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) commanded the one who could not recite Qur'aan well to say ‘Al-Hamdu Lillaah (Praise be to Allaah)’ and other phrases, which is part of an aayah, but he did not command him to repeat it. If he cannot do anything, but he knows some of the Qur'aan by heart, he should recite whatever he can, and nothing else will do, because of the report narrated by Abu Dawood from Riffaa'ah ibn Raafi', who said that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “When you get up to pray, if you know some Qur'aan, recite it, otherwise say al-hamdu Lillaah (praise be to Allaah), and La ilaaha ill-

# Islam Question & Answer

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Allaah (there is no god but Allaah), and Allaahu akbar (Allaah is Most Great).” This is more like Qur’aan, and is more appropriate (than any other words). He should also recite as much as he needs to make it equivalent in length to Soorat al-Faatihah. If he cannot recite anything of the Qur’aan, and cannot learn before it is too late to pray the current prayer, he should say Subhaan Allaah wa’l-hamdu Lillaah wa Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah wa Allaahu akbar wa Laa hawla wa laa quwwata illa Billaah (Glory be to Allaah; praise be to Allaah; there is no god but Allaah; Allaah is Most Great; and there is no strength and no power except with Allaah). Abu Dawood reported that a man came to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said: “I cannot learn anything of the Qur’aan. Teach me something that will suffice me.” He said, “Say Subhaan Allaah wa’l-hamdu Lillaah wa Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah wa Allaahu akbar wa Laa hawla wa laa quwwata illa Billaah.”

And Allaah knows best.