

93369 - Women in a house next to the mosque following the imam of the mosque in prayer

the question

I read fatwa no. [45611](#). What do you say since in most of our mosques the women's prayer place is put upstairs in the mosque. Does this mean that the rows are interrupted?

My question is: There is a mosque in our neighbourhood where the women's prayer place is upstairs. In Taraweeh prayers, the women's section becomes very crowded. One day the imam quoted to them a fatwa saying that it was permissible for them to pray in their houses behind the imam of the mosque, so long as they hear can the imam and know the movements of his prayer, etc. As a result of that, the owner of one of the neighbouring houses provided a spacious place for the women in his house so that they could pray behind the imam. Now after the shaykh's fatwa, one of the women is asking whether it is valid for her to pray in her room behind the Shaykh.

Detailed answer

Firstly:

If the women's prayer-space is upstairs in the mosque or downstairs, then their prayer is valid, because those who are inside the mosque do not have to be in uninterrupted rows, and there is no difference of opinion among the scholars. Rather that is stipulated for the rows of people outside the mosque. See al-Insaaf (2/293).

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) was asked: What is the ruling on women who pray in the mosque and cannot see the imam or the men praying behind him, and can only hear his voice?

He replied: It is permissible for women – and men too – to pray with the congregation in the mosque, even if they cannot see the imam or the worshippers praying behind him, if it is

possible to follow the imam. If the sound of his voice can reach the women where they are in the mosque and they can follow the imam's movements, then it is valid for them to pray in congregation with the imam, because it is all one place and it is possible to follow the imam even by means of loudspeakers or by hearing the imam's voice directly or by hearing the sound of one who conveys the takbeers etc from him. It does not matter if they cannot see the imam or the people praying behind him. Rather some scholars stipulated that the imam or the people behind him should be seen if the one who is praying is outside the mosque. The fuqaha' say that it is valid for one who is praying outside the mosque to follow the imam if he can see the imam or the worshippers behind him. **** But the correct view in my opinion is that it is not valid for a person to follow the imam outside the mosque even if he can see the imam, if there is a place inside the mosque where he could pray. That is because the point of jamaa'ah (congregation) is being in the same place and doing the same actions. But if the mosque is full and those who are outside the mosque are praying with the imam and can follow him, then the correct view is that it is permissible for them to follow the imam whether they can see the imam or not, if the rows are uninterrupted.

To explain the matter further I say:

Firstly: If the person is inside the mosque then his following the imam is valid in all cases, whether he can see the imam or not, and whether he can see the worshippers behind the imam or not, because it is all one place.

For example, if the worshipper is praying on an upper floor, or on a lower floor, and the imam is upstairs, or there is a barrier between them such as a wall or curtain.

Secondly: If the worshipper is outside the mosque, and there is space inside the mosque, his following the imam is not valid, whether or not he can see the imam or people praying behind him, because what is required is that the congregation be in the same place.

Thirdly: if he cannot find space in the mosque and he is outside the mosque, then if the rows are uninterrupted, it is valid for him to follow the imam even if he cannot see him, because the

uninterrupted rows means it is as if they are inside the mosque. End quote from Majmoo' Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (15/213).

Secondly:

If women pray in a house next to the mosque, where they cannot see the imam or the worshippers behind him, and the rows are interrupted, and they can only hear the imam's voice, the scholars differed concerning this issue. Some said it is not allowed and some said that it is valid.

From the words of Shaykh ibn 'Uthaymeen quoted above it may be understood that if the rows are uninterrupted in the house where the women are praying, their prayer in that house is valid and there is nothing wrong with them praying in that house. But if the rows do not reach the house (and are interrupted before they reach the house), then it is not valid for them to pray in the house with the imam of the mosque.

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: If he prays in his house etc with the imam in the mosque, and there is a barrier between them, it is not valid in our opinion. This was also the opinion of Ahmad.

Maalik said: It is valid apart from Jumu'ah. Abu Haneefah said: It is valid in all cases. End quote from al-Majmoo' (4/200).

Ibn Qudaamah said: If there is a barrier between the imam and the person praying behind him, which prevents him from seeing the imam or the people behind him, Ibn Haamid said: there are two reports concerning this:

One is that his following the imam is not valid.

The second is that it is valid.

Al-Qaadi favoured the view that it is valid if they are both in the mosque, otherwise it is not valid. End quote from al-Mughni (3/45).

The view of the Hanbalis is that it is not valid to follow the imam (in this case). See al-Insaaf (2/296) and Kashshaaf al-Qinaa' (1/491).

From this it may be concluded that the scholars differed as to whether following the imam in this case is valid. Hence in order to be on the safe side, these women should pray in another mosque where there is enough room for them, or they should appoint one of their own number to lead them in prayer, even if she reads from the Mus-haf. This is better for them than doing an act of worship concerning which there is a difference of scholarly opinion as to whether it is valid.

The Standing Committee issued a fatwa stating that it is not valid to follow the imam in such cases, unless the rows are uninterrupted. They were asked: What is the ruling on one who prays in congregation in his house, listening to the loudspeakers of the mosque, and there is no continuity of rows between the imam and him, as is the situation in Makkah and Madeenah during Hajj season?

They replied:

The prayer is not valid. That is the view of al-Shaaf'i and was also the view of Imam Ahmad, unless the rows are uninterrupted until they reach his house and he is able to follow the imam by seeing him or hearing his voice, in which case it is valid. But if the condition mentioned is not met, it is not valid, because what is required of the Muslim is to offer the prayer in congregation in the houses of Allaah with his fellow Muslim, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever hears the call and does not come, there is no prayer for him, except for the one who has an excuse." Narrated by Ibn Maajah, al-Daaraqutni and al-Haakim. Al-Haafiz said: Its isnaad meets the conditions of Muslim. And because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said to the blind man who asked him whether he could pray in his house: "Can you hear the call to prayer?" He said: Yes. He said: "Then answer it." Narrated by Muslim in his Saheeh.

End quote from Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah (8/31).

And Allaah knows best.