

For the Better Person to follow one who is not as Good

Q: Salaah-719: We have neither any Aalim or Haafidh to lead the salaah. There is however someone who leads the salaah without any compulsion with the intention of doing so until a suitably qualified Aalim is found. He does it also so that the Masjid does not remain deserted. He takes no wage and there is none else to do the job. People are however backbiting about him and say that because of certain reasons, salaah behind him is not valid. These reasons are:

1. He has no beard
2. He owns a shop that sells books and pictures
3. When he gets up from Sajdah, he lifts his foot from the ground because of some ailment
4. He owns a projector and sometimes screens movies for people

Is it not best for this person to lead the salaah when there are better people available. but who do not want to lead the salaah?

Answer: when there are better people available, it is prohibited to allow someone else to lead the salaah. Rasulullaah SAW. said, "If you wish that your salaah reach the highest levels of acceptance, you should appoint your learned ones as your Imaams so that they could serve as messengers between you and your Rabb." Another Hadith states that the best of you should be appointed as your Imaams because they serve as ambassadors before Allaah.

Rasulullaah SAW. stated that when someone leads people in salaah when there is a person more worthy of the position than him, such people will always remain lowly and degraded.

Rasulullaah SAW. also said that a sinner should never lead a proper Mu'min in salaah unless it is by the force of a tyrant who may use his whip or sword. Kabeeri (PS.a79) states that people will be sinful for appointing an Imaam who is a Faasiq, It will therefore not be permissible to appoint as an Imaam someone who has no beard, who sells pictures and who screens movies for people.

However, as long as a better person is not found, it will be best to follow him rather than to perform salaah individually. While it will not be Makrooh to follow him in the case where one has no option, those who are better qualified but refuse to lead the salaah will be questionable in the court of Allaah. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

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