

For a Person to be an Imaam when he is Blind or has poor sight

Q: Salaah-394: A Haafidh who is also a Qaari from Randher is the Imaam of a Misjid in Surat for approximately six months, He has also led the Taraaweesh salaah here for several years. He was appointed as Imaam with the consent of all the people of the locality. However, some people have now lodged an objection and signed a petition with the demand that the Imaam be relieved of his duty on the grounds that because of his weak eyesight, it is Makrooh for him to be the Imaam.

The Imaam is a Haafidh and a qualified Qaari and his eyesight is not so bad that he needs assistance to move about. He qualified as a Haafidh from Jaami'ah Husayniyyah in Randher, where he also taught Tajweed for many years. The leader of the people who are demanding his dismissal is not an Aalim and they have started this campaign against him because he refuses to do as they tell him. They have also started to accuse him of other things.

We wish to know the following:

1. Is weak eyesight an obstacle to someone being an Imaam?
2. Can the imaam be dismissed on the surmises of others?

Answer: The Fuqahaa have declared it Makrooh Tanzeehi to appoint as Imaam a person who is blind or whose vision is so weak that he depends on others to lead him, and who does not guard against impurities. This however applies only to such people who are not cautious about aspects of purity. As for such a person who is cautious and particular about his cleanliness, it will not even be Makrooh for him to be an Imaam.

Hadhrat Aa'isha RADI. reports that when Rasulullaah SAW. left for the expedition to Tabook, he appointed Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Ummu Maktoom RADI. to lead the salaahs in Masjidun Nabawi. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Ummu Maktoom RADI. was blind.

Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umayr RADI. narrates that Rasulullaah SAW. appointed him as Imaam of the Banu Hatma tribe even though he was blind.

The Imaam from Randher is not dependent on people to move about and since the people of the locality have consented all these years to have him lead the Taraaweesh salaah, it is wrong and unjust for them to demand his dismissal on personal grounds. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

Fatawa Rahimiyyah vol.2