

The Masnoon Quantity of Qiraa'ah

Q: Salaah-578: How much Qiraa'ah should an Imaam recite. Whether the salaah is Maghrib, Isha or Fajr, our Imaam recites short Qiraa'ah very speedily. He recites Surahs such as Surah Nasr, Surah Takaathur, Surah Feel, Surah Kowthar, Surah Naas, etc. He also performs the Ruku and Sajdah very fast and when it is brought to his notice, he says that the Ahadeeth advocate performing brief salaahs.

Please furnish a detailed reply in the light of the Qur'aan and Ahadeeth. If any, please also inform us whether there is any proof in the Ahadeeth for the Tiwaale Muf'assal. Awsaate Mufassaland Qisaare Mufassal.

Answer: There is certainly a narration from Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. stating that tire Inlaam should make the salaah brief because there are weak, and old people following him.

However, these Ahadeeth do not mean that the Masnoon Qiraa'ah should be omitted during times when there is no danger. Furthermore, the Ahadeeth emphasise calm and composure when performing Ruku and Sajdah. There is a Hadith relating that Hadhrat Mu'aadh bin Jabal RADI. used to lead the people of his locality in salaah. When he once recited Surah Baqara in the Isha salaah, a Sahabi RADI. left the Jamaa'ah and performed his salaah by himself . "Have you become a Munaafiq?" Hadhrat Mu'aadh RADI. asked him. The Sahabi RADI. then complained to Rasulullaah SAW. that he was a labourer who worked hard all day and could not bear to follow Hadhrat Mu'aadh RADI. for such a lengthy salaah. Turning to Hadhrat Mu'aadh RADI. Rasulullaah SAW. said, "Are you a troublemaker. O Mu'aadh? Recite Surah Shams, Surah Layl and Surah A'la.

If one contemplates over this Hadith, one would gauge that the minimum quantity of Qiraa'ah that one should recite in the Isha salaah is Surahs such as Surah Shams, Surah Layl and Surah A'la.

In another narration, Hadhrat Sulaymaan bin Yasaar RAH. reports that Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. said. "I have never performed salaah behind anyone whose salaah was closer to that of Rasulullaah SAW. (He was referring to the salaah of Hadhrat Ali RADI. or one of the governors of Makkah). Hadhrat Sulaymaan RAH. says that he then performed salaah behind the same person and observed that the person lengthened the first two Rakaahs of the Zuhr salaah and made the second two short. He also made the Asr salaah brief, recited Qisaare Mufassal in the Maghrib salaah. Awsaate Mut'assal in the Isha salaah and Tiwaale Mufassalir the Fajr salaah.

Fuqahaa have the following to say:

Umdatul Fiqh summarises the text of Fataawaa Aalamgeeri (Vol. 1 Pg.48) as follows: When not travelling and out of danger, it is Sunnah in the Fajr salaah to recite 40 to 50 verses in both Rakaahs apart from the Surah Faatiha. Some narrations state that 60 to 100 verses should be recited. The Qiraa'ah of the Zuhr salaah ought to be as long or a bit shorter than the Fajr salaah, while 15 to 20 verses are to be recited in both the Rakaahs of the Asr and Isha salaahs. In the Maghrib salaah, 5 verses or a short Surah is to be recited in both Rakaahs. The best is to

recite from the Tiwaale Mufassal in the Fajr and Zuhr salaah (from and including Surah Hujuraat up to and including Surah Burooj). In the Isha and Asr salaah, recite from Qisaare Mufassal (from and including Surah Taariq up to and including Surah Bayyinah) and in the Maghrib salaah, recite from Awsaate Mufassal (from and including Surah Zilzaal up to and including Surah Naas). Reciting from these Mufasalaat is a Sunnah practice in its own right and reciting the prescribed quantity of Qiraa'ah (specified number of verses) is a separate matter altogether. It is however best to recite from the Mufassalaat.

If one is not a traveller, but there is a need to hasten the salaah (such as when time is limited or life or property is at risk), then it will be permissible to recite that quantity of Qiraa'ah by which time will not elapse or danger will be averted.

The details of the Mufassalaat are derived from a letter that Hadhrat Umar RADI. wrote to Hadhrat Abu Moosa Ash'ari RADI. as stated in Shaami.

Allaama Shaami RAH. makes it clear that it is incorrect to deduce from the Hadith of Hadhrat Mu'aadh bin Jabal RADI. that when people are indisposed towards reciting the Sunnah Qiraa'ah, it will be alright to read less. Rather, the Hadith teaches us that we should not recite more than the Sunnah Qiraa'ah. The Imaam may however recite less than the Masnoon Qiraa'ah when there is a need to do so. This is established from a Hadith in which Rasulullaah SAW. recited only Surah Falaq and Surah Naas in the Fajr salaah. When asked why he did so, Rasulullaah SAW. replied that he heard a child cry and did not want the child's mother to panic.

An Imaam should therefore adhere to the Sunnah Qiraa'ah and he would be guilty of contradicting the Sunnah if he habitually recites short Surahs in every salaah, as your Imaam seems to be doing. This is tantamount to laziness in salaah, which the Qur'aan describes as a trait of the Munaafiqeen when it says: "When they (the Munaafiqeen) stand up for salaah, they stand up lazily, to show people and they remember Allaah only a little.

Such Surahs may however be recited in the Maghrib salaah or when there is a special need to do so.

The Ahadeeth also greatly emphasise the need to be calm and composed when performing Ruku, Sajdah, Qaumah and Jalsah. Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. was once in the Masjid when a person entered. He performed salaah and then greeted Rasulullaah SAW. Rasulullaah SAW. replied to his greeting and then said to him:

{TRANSLATION: "Go (return) and repeat your salaah for you have not performed salaah." }

He then repeated his salaah and when he returned to greet Rasulullaah SAW. for the second time, Rasulullaah SAW. repeated the instruction. When this occurred for the third time, he said to Rasulullaah SAW., "By the Being Who sent you with the truth! I cannot perform a salaah better than this. Please teach me." There upon Rasulullaah SAW. said, "When you stand up to perform salaah say 'Allahu Akbar' and then recite whichever portion of the Qur'aan is easy for you. Then make Ruku and exercise composure while in Ruku." Rasulullaah SAW. continued: "Then raise your head (from Ruku) until you have straightened in the standing posture

(Qaumah). Then perform Sajdah until you are composed in Sajdah. Then raise your head until you are composed in the sitting posture (Jalsa). Then perform Sajdah again until you are composed in Sajdah. Thereafter you should do the same throughout your salaah.

In another narration, Hadhrat Abu Qataadah RADI. reports that Rasulullaah SAW. said, "The worst of thieves is the person who steals from his salaah. "O Rasulullaah SAW. the Sahabah RADI. asked, "How does one steal from his salaah?" Rasulullaah SAW. replied, "By not performing the Ruku and Sajdah properly.

For more details, refer to a previous Fatwa of Fataawaa Raheemiyyah discussing exercising composure during Qaumah and Jalsa. And Allaah knows best what is most correct.

Fatawa Rahimiyyah vol.2