

How much Higher than the Musallis is the Imaam allowed to stand?

Q: Salaah-41: How much higher than the followers is the Imaam allowed to stand before it is regarded as Makrooh? What is the minimum height?

Answer: The Fuqahaa differ with regard to the actual height because the Ahadeeth on the subject do not specify any height. Rasulullaah SAW. only said that the Imaam should not stand on a raised place, leaving the followers to stand beneath him.

When Hadhrat Ammaar RADI. was about to lead the salaah in Madaa'in while standing on a raised platform, Hadhrat Hudhayfah RADI. pulled him down and after the salaah, said, "Did you not hear Rasulullaah SAW. say something about an Imaam not standing on a platform higher than that of the followers when he leads them in salaah?" Hadhrat Ammaar RADI. replied, "It is because of that that I obeyed you when you pulled me off."

Because these narrations do not specify any height, there will naturally be a difference of opinion. Of the many opinions, the following two are most acceptable:

1. A height equal to or more than an arm's length is Makrooh, while anything less is not. They derive this ruling from the fact that an arm's length is the minimum length of a screen (Sufrah) behind which a person can perform salaah when others are passing in front of him.

2. A height that makes the Imaam stand out from the rest is Makrooh. Ulema saying this base their analogy on the fact that the Hadith makes it clear that what is Makrooh is a height that will clearly distinguish between the Imaam and his followers. The higher this platform is, the more Makrooh it will be. The author of Badaai'us Sanaa'i (Vol.1 P5.216) supports this opinion, as does Sheikh Ibnul Humaam in Fat'hul Qadeer (Vol.1 Pg.360) and the author of Zaadul Faqeer (pg.50).

Bahrur Raa'iq (Vol.2 P5.26) states that this opinion is the most accepted one (Zaahirur Riwaayah) because it corresponds with the apparent wording of the Ahadeeth. Imaams Shaami RAH. and Imaam Tahtaawi RAH. have both preferred this opinion as well.

Fatawa Rahimiyyah vol.2