

Islam Question & Answer

General Supervisor:
Shaykh Muhammad Saalih al-Munajjid

171060 - Reciting a short soorah in the first rak'ah and a longer soorah in the second

the question

What is the ruling on someone who offers a prayer and recites Soorat an-Naas (no. 114) in the first rak'ah, then in the second rak'ah he recites Soorat ad-Duha (no. 93)? In other words, he starts with a short soorah and follows it in the second rak'ah with a longer one. Is that wrong? What is the Islamic ruling concerning that?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The Sunnah is for the worshipper to recite in accordance with the sequence of soorahs in the Qur'an, but if he does not follow that sequence, there is no blame on him and his prayer is still valid, although what he has done is contrary to what is best.

An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Our companions said: The Sunnah is to recite in accordance with the sequence of soorahs in the Qur'an, one after another. So if he recites a soorah in the first rak'ah, he should recite in the second rak'ah the soorah that comes immediately after it. Al-Mutawalli said: Even if he recites "Qul A'oodhu bi Rabb in-Naas" (i.e., Soorat an-Naas, the last soorah in the Qur'an) in the first rak'ah, in the second rak'ah he should recite the opening verses of al-Baqarah. If he recites a soorah then in the second rak'ah he recites the soorah that precedes it, this is contrary to what is best, but there is no blame on him. And Allah knows best.

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End quote from Sharh al-Muhadhdhab, 3/348

For more information, please see the answers to questions no. [121139](#) and [7198](#)

Secondly:

The Sunnah is for the imam or the person who is praying on his own to recite in the first rak'ah a soorah that is longer than what he recites in the second rak'ah, because of the report narrated by Abu Qataadah (may Allah be pleased with him), according to which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to recite in the first two rak'ahs of Zuhr, al-Faatihah and two soorahs, and in the last two rak'ahs he recited al-Faatihah (only), and he would make the first rak'ah lengthy but the second not as long. And he did likewise in 'Asr and Fajr.

Al-Bukhaari (734) and Muslim (685).

Ibn Qudaamah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: It is mustahabb to make the first rak'ah lengthy in all prayers, so that the one who wants to join the prayer may (have time) to do so... because of the hadeeth of Abu Qataadah (may Allah be pleased with him). Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him) said, concerning the imam who makes the second rak'ah longer than the first: He should be told to go and learn. He also said, concerning the imam who makes the first rak'ah short and the second long: This is not appropriate; he should be told to follow the Sunnah.

End quote from al-Mughni, 1/334

The scholars of the Standing Committee (6389) were asked:

Is it permissible when reciting during the prayer to make the first recitation a short soorah or a lengthy soorah? Many people recite a short soorah in the first rak'ah and a longer one in the second.

They replied: The Sunnah is to recite in the first rak'ah after al-Faatihah a longer soorah than in

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the second rak'ah, because of the report narrated by Abu Qataadah (may Allah be pleased with him) ... And they quoted the hadeeth referred to above. But if he makes them of equal length or he recites a longer soorah in the second rak'ah, there is nothing wrong with that, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) did that sometimes, as it is proven that he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to recite in Jumu'ah prayer al-A'la (no. 87) and al-Ghaashiyah (no. 88), and al-Ghaashiyah is slightly longer. End quote.

Al-Lajnah ad-Daa'imah li'l-Buhooth al-'Ilmiyyah wa'l-Ifta'

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baaz, Shaykh 'Abd ar-Razzaaq'Afeefi, Shaykh 'Abdullah ibn Ghadyaan, Shaykh 'Abdullah ibn Qa'ood

Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: What is the ruling if the imam recites in the first rak'ah of the prayer, for example, Soorat al-Ikhlaas (no. 112) then in the second rak'ah he recites ad-Duha (no. 93)?

He replied: There is nothing wrong with the Imam reciting in the first rak'ah less than he recites in the second, because of the general meaning of the words of Allah, may He be glorified:

“So recite as much of the Quran as may be easy (for you)”

[al-Muzzammil 73:20].

And the general meaning of the words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) to the one who prayed badly: “When you get up to pray, do wudoo' properly, then turn to face the qiblah, say takbeer, then recite as much as you are able to of Qur'an.” According to another version: “Then recite al-Faatihah and whatever Allah wills...”

But by doing so, he has omitted to do what is preferable, because the confirmed Sunnah, from the words and deeds of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) indicates that the

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Sunnah, both for the imam and one who is praying on his own, is to recite a longer portion in the first rak'ah than in the second, in all five prayers. As for one who is praying behind an imam, he should follow his imam.

End quote from Majmoo' al-Fataawa, 11/83

And Allah knows best.