Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Portal of the General Presidency
of Scholarly Research and Ifta'

3- Looking around during Salah

First question from Fatwa No. 8092

Q 1: Once I was offering Salah in Al-Haram Al-Makky (The Sacred mosque in Makkah), then there came an African man to pray beside me. After he recited Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer), he looked around then resumed Salah (Prayer) without repeating Takbirat-ul-Ihram. After we finished Salah I told him that he has to repeat Salah as it became invalid by his looking around. He asked for evidence substantiating my view but I told him that I have no evidence. In fact, I called him to ask a Shaykh about it but he said that he was not in doubt in regards to his worship. He added that it is I who should go to ask a Shaykh. What is the ruling on this matter and what is the evidence on it?

A: It is reported in the Sunnah that looking around during Salah is prohibited and it is a way of stealing

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by which Satan takes away (a portion) from the Salah of the person. It is related in Sahih Al-Bukhari with his Sanad (chain of narrators) on the authority of `Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said:⟨ I asked Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) about looking hither and thither in prayer. He replied, "It is a way of stealing by which Satan takes away (a portion) from the prayer of a person." ⟩This Hadith indicates that looking around during Salah is Makruh (reprehensible) and lessens the person's reward. But whoever looks around in Salah does not have to repeat it as it is authentically reported in other Hadiths that it is permissible to look around in case of necessity. This means that looking around does not make the person's Salah invalid in all cases.

May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and Companions!

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