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Al-Qunut

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Al-Qunut in the Obligatory Prayers

Fatwa no. 902

Q: Many Imams (the ones who lead congregational Prayer) in Masjids (mosques) located in the city of Al-Qunfudah perform Qunut (supplication after bowing while standing in Prayer in the Fajr (Dawn) Prayer). They do so according to the reports showing that the Prophet (peace be upon him) observed Qunut until he died. Is performing Qunut permissible? Should we follow these Imams? Or is it impermissible but only allowed in case of public calamities that may befall the Muslims and should be in every prescribed Salah?

A: It was authentically reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) used to perform Qunut when calamities befall the Muslims. He invoked Allah against the disbelieving transgressors and invoked for the weak and helpless believers that Allah would save them from deceit and captivity. The Prophet (peace be upon him) then abandoned this act and did not single out any obligatory Salah for Qunut. This is proven through the report narrated by Anas that the Prophet (peace be upon him) (recited Qunut for one month invoking a curse upon some Arabic tribes (those who were responsible for the murders in Bi'r Ma'una and Raji'), but then abandoned it.) This was narrated by Ahmad, Muslim, Al-Nisai', and ibn Majah. According to another wording: (When the preachers were killed, he recited Qunut for a month. I have never seen him sadder than he was then.) Narrated by Al-Bukhari. Moreover, Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) (used to observe Qunut in the Fajr (Dawn) and Maghrib (Sunset) Prayers.) Narrated by Ahmad, Muslim, and Al-Tirmidhy who classified it as Sahih (a Hadith that has been transmitted by people known for their uprightness and exactitude; free from eccentricity and blemish).

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Additionally, Ahmad and Al-Bukhari reported on the authority of Ibn 'Umar that (he heard the Prophet (peace be upon him), after raising his head from Ruku` (bowing) in the last Raka`ah of Fajr Prayer after saying 'Allah listened to him who praised Him, o Allah, our Lord! All the praises are for you': "O Allah! Curse so-and-so and so-and-so." Allah then revealed: (Not for you (O Muhammad peace be upon him, but for Allâh) is the decision...) until His saying (Verily, they are the Zâlimûn (polytheists, disobedients, and wrong-doers).) Al-Bukhari also narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah who

said (While the Prophet (peace be upon him) was performing 'Isha' Prayer, he said 'Allah listened to him who praised Him'. Before he prostrated, he said: "O Allah! Save 'Ayyash ibn Rabi`ah O Allah! Save Salamah ibn Hisham O Allah! Save Al-Walid ibn Al-Walid O Allah! Save the weak faithful believers. O Allah! Be hard on the tribes of Mudar and send (famine) years on them like the famine years of (Prophet) Yusuf.) Moreover, Al-Bukhari and Muslim narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayrah who said that (I would perform Salah with you just like the one performed by the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). Abu Hurayrah recited Qunut, in the last Rak`ah of Al-Zuhr, 'Isha' and Fajr Prayers after saying 'Allah listens to him who praises Him', and invoked blessing of Allah upon Muslims and curse upon the disbelievers.) the same report was narrated by Ahmad with a slight difference as Al-'Asr Prayer was mentioned instead of

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'Ishaa'. Ahmad and Abu Dawud reported on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas (may Allah be pleased with them) that he said: (The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) observed Qunut for one month in Al-Zuhr, Al-'Asr, Maghrib, 'Ishaa', and Fajr Prayers. He recited it in the last Rak`ah of every Prayer after saying, "Allah listens to him who praises Him." He was invoking curse upon the tribes of Banu Sulaym; Ra`l, Dhakwan and 'Usayya. People being led by him in Salah said 'Amin'.)

According to Malik, Qunut is Mandub (commendable) to be performed in the last Rak`ah of Fajr Prayer before Ruku', while Al-Shafi`y is of the view that Qunut is Sunnah (a commendable act) that should be performed in the last Rak`ah of Fajr Prayer after Ruku'. This view is held by a group of the Salaf (Righteous Predecessors) and the Khalaf (those who came after the Salaf and followed their way) using the said Hadith narrated by Al-Bara' and the like as evidence. However, it is argued that the Prophet (peace be upon him) observed Qunut only when calamities befell the Muslims and then he abandoned it. This Hadith did not single out Fajr for Qunut, it shows that it is permissible to recite it in Fajr and Maghrib Prayers at the times of calamities. On the other hand, there are other Hadith indicating the general application of Qunut in the rest of the obligatory prayers. But they maintain that the Prophet singled out Fajr Prayer for Qunut and did not abandon this. They based their view on the reports narrated from the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he observed Qunut in Fajr Prayer until he died. (This view was refuted by showing that these reports were weak because they were narrated on the authority of Abu Ja`fr Al-Razy, `Abdullah ibn Ahmad

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said, 'he is not dependable.' Moreover, 'Aly ibn Al-Madiny said, 'He mixes i.e. reports'. 'Amr ibn 'Ali Al-Fallas said, 'He is reliable but for his poor memory. The scholars who approved his narration depended on the validation of some scholars of Jarh (criticism of Hadith narrators) and Ta`dil (validating the uprightness of Hadith narrators) of Abu Ja`fr Al-Razy. Moreover, there are some Hadiths that affirm it, but 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd Al-Qadary who is not an authoritative source was among the narrators of this proof. To conclude, singling out Fajr Prayer for Qunut is a disputable matter that requires Ijtihad (juristic effort to infer expert legal rulings). Whoever is led by an Imam who recites Qunut especially in Fajr Prayer after or before Ruku' should follow the Imam. However, the preponderant view is that reciting Qunut in the obligatory prayers should be limited to the times of calamities only.

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

Member `Abdullah ibn Mani'	Member `Abdullah ibn Ghudayyan	Committee Deputy Chairman `Abdul-Razzaq `Afify
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