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Taking Sutra in Salah

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Placing the Sutra during salah

First question from Fatwa No. 2613

Q 1: I saw some religious leaders placing a half meter long board as a Sutra (barrier placed in front of a person praying). They say that whoever does not place a Sutra in front of them, is wrong. When I asked what if I do not find a Sutra, they confirmed that it is obligatory.

A: Offering prayer behind a Sutra is an act of Sunnah whether while traveling or not, in an obligatory or a supererogatory prayers, in a Masjid (Mosque) or not, for the general meaning of the Hadith: [﴿ When one of you prays, he should face a sutrah and should keep close to it. ﴾](#) Related by [Abu Dawud](#) with a good chain of transmission. It has been recorded by [Al-Bukhari](#) and [Muslim](#) on the authority of [Abu Juhayf](#) (may Allah be pleased with him) that [﴿ The spear was fixed for the Prophet \(peace be upon him\) on the ground. He stepped forward and offered two Rak`ah of Zhuhr, while there passed in front of him a donkey and a dog, and these were not checked. ﴾](#) It is recorded by [Muslim](#) on the authority of [Talhah ibn `Ubaydullah](#) who said that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said, [﴿ When one of you places in front of him something such as the back of a saddle, he should pray without caring who passes on the other side of it. ﴾](#)

Drawing near the Sutra is an act of Sunnah as indicated by the previously mentioned Hadith. The Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) used to hurry to the pillars of the Masjid

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to offer the supererogatory prayers. It has not been proven that they would place boards in front of them as a Sutra while praying in the Masjid. However, they used to pray in front of walls or pillars. There should not be excessiveness regarding this matter as the Shari`ah is flexible, and whoever makes the religion a rigor, it will overpower him. The Sutra is only desirable and not an obligatory act for it has been authentically reported that [﴿ The Prophet \(peace be upon him\) led people in prayer at Mina and there was no wall in front of him. ﴾](#) the Hadith did not mention that he placed a sutrah in front of him. It has been related by Imam Ahmad, [Abu Dawud](#), and [Al-Nasa'iy](#) on the authority of [Ibn `Abbas](#) (may Allah be pleased with them) that [﴿ The Prophet \(peace be upon him\) offered Salah in an open place, having nothing \(i.e. sutrah\) in front of him. ﴾](#)

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

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