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If one persists in committing sinful acts, should he give up praying in congregation?

Fatwa no. 12714

Q: There is a fellow Muslim who offers the five daily prayers in the Masjid (mosque), but his weak Iman (faith) makes him commit sinful acts. When he asked another fellow Muslim about this, he told him that his prayer is useless and he has to give it up as long as he commits these sinful acts. When he asked me, I told him that he should not give up Salah in congregation, regardless if he continues to commit these sins. I also told him that Allah may forgive his sins if he prays and persists in making Du`a' (supplication) to Allah. The sins he commits include gazing at women. I actually do not know whether my answer is wrong or right. I told him so lest he should give up Salah. So, please give us an answer to this so that he may be convinced!

A: You were right when you advised this fellow Muslim of yours to continue offering Salah in congregation regardless of the sins he may commit. This is because minor sins like gazing at women are forgiven by offering the five daily prayers, attending the Friday Prayer and seeking Allah's forgiveness. As for major sins like theft and adultery, they are forgiven by offering sincere repentance to Allah.

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

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