253598 - Reasons for the difference of opinion among the fuqaha’ about reciting behind the imam

the question

I have read your answer to the question "reciting surah fatiha behind the imam" but i have a confusion in it.
What Ive heard is that imam Maalik lived his life in madinah and learnt religion from there, then why does he suggest that surah fatiha should not be recited when imam recites out loud?
He was born in 93 AH and was the closest in all the imam such as imam Shafi and imam Hunbal to the time of Prophet (peace and mercy be upon him). Then why is there a difference in his teachings and the teachings of the others?
A similar difference is on keeping the hands by ones sides while qiyaam.
Please explain and if possible please give references from mauta imam malik as well.
I understand that imam abu hanifa was the closest to the time of Prophet (peace and mercy be upon him) but since he was in iraq his teachings are different in many matters. But is this true that his students corrected many hhadees when they came to madinah? Like I've heard that one of his students Abu Abdullah corrected nearly 3000 ahadees he learnt from imam abu hanifa when he came to Madinah.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Reciting al-Faatihah behind the imam in a prayer in which recitation is done out loud is a matter that is subject to ijtihad. What each imam said concerning it is the conclusion to which his ijtihad led him. We mentioned the evidence supporting the view that it is obligatory to recite it, and the evidence quoted by those scholars who disallowed that. Please see the answers to questions no.

66742 and 10995.

You may also refer to the books of the Maalikis for more information concerning that.

Secondly:

The matter has nothing to do with Imam Maalik (may Allah have mercy on him) having lived in Madinah or having lived close to the time of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him). This could be relevant with regard to the issue of whether the hadith reached him or not, but the deciding factor in this issue mostly has to do with the scholars examining and understanding the relevant text. In al-Muwatta' (193), Imam Maalik quoted as evidence the hadith of Abu Hurayrah, according to which the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) completed a prayer in which he recited out loud, then he said: "Was one of you reciting with me just now?" A man said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah. He said: "I was saying to myself, what is wrong with me that someone is fighting to wrest the Qur'an from me?" So the people stopped reciting with the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in prayers in which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) recited out loud, when they heard that from the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him).

This indicates that he thought that reciting (behind the imam in a prayer in which recitation is done out loud) was initially allowed, then it was prohibited.

Among contemporary scholars, a similar view was held by Shaykh al-Albaani (may Allah have mercy on him), who thought that reciting behind the imam in a prayer in which recitation is done out loud was abrogated. We responded to the claims that it was abrogated and explained that the words "So the people stopped reciting…" were not the words of Abu Hurayrah; rather they are the words of Ibn Shihaab az-Zuhri, so they cannot be quoted as evidence. Please see the answer to question no. 231217.

Maalik (may Allah have mercy on him) quoted as evidence the command (in the Qur'an) to listen attentively when the Quran is recited, this hadith, and the practice of the people of Medina.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said: How could anyone suggest anything that is different from the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), the clear meaning of the Book of Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, and the practice of the people of Medina? Do you not see what Ibn Shihaab said: So the people stopped reciting with the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in prayers in which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) recited out loud, when they heard him say, “what is wrong with me that someone is fighting to wrest the Qur’an from me”?

Maalik said: In our view, no one should recite with the imam in a prayer in which recitation is done out loud. So this indicates that this was an inherited practice in Medina.

End quote from at-Tamheed, 11/34

Al-Baaji said: The words “So the people stopped reciting with the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in prayers in which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) recited out loud, when they heard that” mean: They responded to his objection to their reciting the Quran in prayers in which the imam recites out loud by giving up what he told them not to do and by refraining from what he objected to them doing. This hadith is the foundation of the view of Maalik (may Allah have mercy on him), that the one who is praying behind an imam should not recite behind him in a prayer in which recitation is done out loud, because of the reason explained in the hadith for which the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) told people behind him not to recite when he was reciting out loud. So it seems that reciting out loud was the reason for that ruling.

The evidence for the soundness of Maalik’s view is the verse in which Allah, may He be exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning):

“So, when the Quran is recited, listen to it, and be silent”

[al-A‘raaf 7:204].

This implies that all types of recitation and all types of talk are disallowed (when Quran is recited),

and everyone should listen attentively when any reciter is reciting, unless there is any evidence for some exception.

Our evidence from the Sunnah is the report narrated by Abu Saalih from Abu Hurayrah, who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “The imam is only appointed to be followed. So when he says takbeer, then say takbeer, and when he recites then listen attentively.” This is a command, and a command implies that something is obligatory.

Our evidence on the basis of analogy is that this is a case where others are following the imam, therefore the recitation is waived in the case of one who is following the imam.

End quote from al-Muntaqa Sharh al-Muwatta’ (1/161)

Our aim here is not to discuss all the views on this issue; rather our aim is to explain that Maalik and other leading scholars reached their conclusions after examining the religious texts; thus it became clear to them that a specific view was the correct view, while other scholars thought that another view was the correct view.

Ash-Shaafa‘i was of the view that it is obligatory for the one who is praying behind an imam to recite in all cases. Think about it. The hadith of Abu Hurayrah tells us that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “what is wrong with me that someone is fighting to wrest the Qur’an from me?” And in the hadith of ‘Ubaadah ibn as-Saamit, it says: We were behind the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in Fajr prayer, and the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) recited Qur’an and stumbled in his recitation. When he finished he said, “Perhaps you recite behind your imam?” We said, Yes. He said, “Do not do that, except for the Opening of the Book (al-Faaithah), for there is no prayer for the one who does not recite it.” Narrated by Abu Dawood (823).

This clearly indicates that it is not allowed to recite behind the imam in a prayer in which recitation is done out loud, except for al-Faatihah; it is excluded from the general instruction to listen attentively, because of the general meaning of the Prophet’s words: ““Whoever offers a prayer in which he does not recite the Essence of the Qur’an (al-Faatihah), it is deficient,” three times, “not

complete.” Narrated by Muslim (395).

As for the practice of the people of Medina, that is subject to further discussion. Many of the Sahaabah in Madinah narrated that they recited behind the imam. An-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) said: The practice of the majority of the Muslims is to recite behind the imam in prayers in which recitation is done silently and those in which recitation is done out loud. Al-Bayhaqi said: This is the most sound and prudent view. Then he narrated the hadiths about that, then he narrated that with numerous isnaads from ‘Umar ibn al-Khattaab, ‘Ali ibn Abi Taalib, ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ood, Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, Mu‘aadh ibn Jabal, Ibn ‘Umar, Ibn ‘Abbaas, Abu’d-Darda’, Anas ibn Maalik, Jaabir ibn ‘Abdillah, Abu Sa‘eed al-Khudri, ‘Ubaadah ibn as-Saamit, Abu Hurayrah, Hishaam ibn ‘Aamir, ‘Imraan, ‘Abdullah ibn Mughaffil, and ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with them all). He said: We narrated it from a number of the Taabi‘een. And he narrated it from ‘Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, Mak-hool, ash-Shu‘bi, Sa‘eed ibn Jubayr and al-Hasan al-Basri (may Allah have mercy on them).

End quote from al-Majmoo‘ (3/365)

Thirdly:

What was said about this issue may be said about other controversial issues, such as holding the hands (on the chest) when standing in prayer. Indeed there is a report from Maalik which suggests that his view is the same as that of the majority.

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar said: Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr said: There is no report from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) contrary to that, and it is the view of the majority of the Sahaabah and Taabi‘een. This is what Maalik narrated in al- Muwatta’, and Ibn al-Mundhir and others never narrated anything other than that from Maalik.

Ibn al-Qaasim narrated from Maalik that he used to hold his arms by his sides (when praying), and most of his followers adopted that view.

And it was narrated from Maalik that he differentiated between obligatory and naafil prayers

(regarding the position of the hands when praying).

Some of them regarded it as disliked to hold the hands on the chest (when praying). Ibn al-Haajib narrated that this refers to when the worshipper holds his hands and leans on them in order to rest.

End quote from Fath al-Baari, 2/224

Fourthly:

Imam Abu Haneefah (may Allah have mercy on him) was one of the foremost scholars, and in terms of fiqh the scholars depend on his knowledge, as ash-Shaafa'i (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

He had the utmost respect for the Qur'an and Sunnah, and did not say anything except on the basis of the conclusion he reached after examining the religious texts. So he will receive either a double or single reward (depending on whether his ijtihad was correct or not – the scholar is rewarded for his effort even if his conclusion is mistaken), in sha Allah. Perhaps he missed out on some reports of the Sunnah because he lived far away from Madinah; hence his two companions and his students may have differed from him regarding some issues, if they found out about some report of the Sunnah that did not reach him, and they may have differed from him when their examining of the religious texts led them to a conclusion different to his. We have not come across what you mentioned about one of his students regarding as saheeh the number of hadiths mentioned, etc.

For more information, please see the answers to questions no. 128658 and 219303.

Our advice to you is to seek knowledge, and do not be distracted by differences of opinion among the leading scholars, for all of them are mujtahids who will be rewarded. Examining differences of opinion and the evidence on which views are based can only come after one has become well-versed in knowledge and attained a great deal of knowledge and prominence in many fields, such as Arabic language and usool al-fiqh.

We ask Allah to bless and guide us and you.

And Allah knows best.