103429 - Ruling on one who says We seek the help of Allaah when the verse “and You (Alone) we ask for help” is recited

the question

During the prayer, when the person praying behind the imam hears the words “You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything)” [al-Faatihah 1:5], can he say We seek the help of Allaah?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

What the person praying behind the imam must do is to be quiet and listen attentively to the recitation of his imam, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): “So, when the Qur’aan is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive mercy” [al-A’raaf 7:204].

It is not permissible for him to be distracted from listening attentively to his imam’s recitation, except by reciting al-Faatihah himself, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “There is no prayer for the one who does not recite the Opening of the Book (al-Faatihah).” Narrated by al-Bukhaari (714) and Muslim (595).

As for the members of the congregation saying “We seek the help of Allaah” or repeating the phrase “Iyyaaka na’budu wa iyyaaka nasta’een (You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything))” [al-Faatihah 1:5], the scholars both in the past and in modern times have pointed out that these are innovations which must be stopped.

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Majmoo’ (4/14):

Many of the common people have the habit, when they hear the imam say “Iyyaaka na’budu wa iyyaaka nasta’een (You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything))”, of saying “Iyyaaka na’budu wa iyyaaka nasta’een (You (Alone) we worship, and You

(Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything))". But this is an innovation which is not allowed. End quote.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn Baaz (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, when he was asked about that:

He should listen to him only, and not say "We seek the help of Allaah" or anything else; rather he should listen attentively, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "So, when the Qur'aan is recited, listen to it, and be silent that you may receive mercy" [al-A'raaf 7:204].

Majmoo' Fataawa al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz (29/274).

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: There is no basis for the person praying behind the imam to say "We seek the help of Allaah" when the imam says "Iyyaaka na'budu wa iyyaaka nasta'een (You (Alone) we worship, and You (Alone) we ask for help (for each and everything))", and this is not allowed, because when the imam finishes reciting al-Faatihah, the person praying behind him should say Ameen and this is sufficient, and there is no need for him to say "we seek the help of Allaah." End quote.