59925 - Is Qunut Compulsory in Fajr?

the question

We are an Islamic state in South Asia, where the government tells the Imams to follow the Shafi`i Madhhab in their prayers. Can we pray behind these blind-followers? Please note that they recite Qunut in Fajr because they believe that doing so is Sunnah and they do the prostration of forgetfulness if they forget to recite Qunut in Fajr.

Summary of answer

It is not Sunnah to recite Qunut in Fajr prayer all the time. Your prayer behind an Imam who recites Qunut in Fajr is valid, but if there is someone who does not always recite Qunut in Fajr, it is better to pray behind him, so as to follow the Sunnah.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Is Qunut compulsory in Fajr?

It is not Sunnah to recite Qunut in Fajr prayer all the time. We have explained that in the answers to question no. and 5459 .

Can they pray behind someone who recites Qunut in Fajr?

Your prayer behind an Imam who recites Qunut in Fajr is valid, but if there is someone who does not always recite Qunut in Fajr, it is better to pray behind him, so as to follow the Sunnah.

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said concerning some matters of Ijtihad in which the scholars differed, such as Qunut in Fajr and Witr :

“The scholars agreed that if a person does both, his worship is valid and there is no sin on him, but they had different views concerning which is better and what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used to do. With regard to the issue of reciting Qunut in Fajr and Witr , the issue of whether the Basmalah should be spoken out loud, and the issue of the words used to seek refuge with Allah and so on ... They are agreed that if a person says the Basmalah out loud, his prayer is valid, and if a person says it silently his prayer is also valid; and that if a person recites Qunut in Fajr his prayer is valid and if he does not recite it his prayer is valid, and the same applies to Witr.”

He also said (23/115):

“From what we have mentioned it is clear that Qunut is to be recited at times of calamity… whoever says that it is an essential part of prayer which may be made up for with the prostration of forgetfulness is basing that on the idea that it is a Sunnah which is to be done all the time, like the first Tashahhud and so on. But it is clear that this is not the case; it is not a Sunnah that is to be done regularly, and no prostration of forgetfulness is required if it is omitted. If some believe that it is a regular Sunnah based on their own Ijtihaad this is fine, as in the case of all other issues of Ijtihad.

Hence the person who is praying behind an Imam should follow his Imam in issues where there is room for Ijtihaad. So if he recites Qunut he should recite it with him, and if he does not recite Qunut he should not recite it. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The Imam has been appointed to be followed.” And he said: “Do not differ from your Imams.” And it is proven in As-Sahih that he said: “They lead you in prayer; if they get it right (the reward) is for you and for them, and if they get it wrong, (the reward) is for you and (the sin) is on them.”

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: We have an Imam who recites Qunut in Fajr prayer all the time; should we follow him? Should we say Ameen to his Du`a’?

He replied:

“Whoever prays behind an Imam who recites Qunut in Fajr prayer, let him follow the Imam in

Qunut in Fajr prayer, and say Ameen to his supplication. This was stated by Imam Ahmad (may Allah have mercy on him).” (Majmu` Fatawa Ibn `Uthaymin, 14/177)

The Standing Committee was asked: Is it permissible to pray behind an Imam who holds his arms at his sides in his prayer and always recites Qunut in the last Rak`ah of Fajr prayer?

They replied:

“Putting the right hand over the left when praying is Sunnah, and holding the arms at the sides is contrary to the Sunnah. Always reciting Qunut in the last Rak’ah of Fajr prayer, as some of the Malikis and Shafi`is do, is contrary to the Sunnah because there is no proof that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did that. Rather he used to recite Qunut at times of calamity , and he used to recite Qunut in Witr prayer. If the Imam holds his arms at his side when praying and always recites Qunut in Fajr prayer, as mentioned in the question, then knowledgeable people should advise him and remind him to follow the Sunnah. If he responds, then praise be to Allah, but if he refuses and it is possible to offer prayers in congregation behind someone else, you should pray behind someone else so as to adhere to the Sunnah. But if that is not possible then you should pray behind him so as to keep the congregation together. The prayer in valid in either case.” (Fatawa Al-Lajnah Al-Da’imah, 7/366)

And Allah knows best.