

Why don't Hanafis raise their hands before and after ruku'?

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In the name of Allah, Most Gracious Most Merciful

The correct position in the Hanafi school is to only lift the hands at the opening takbir and then not to lift them again. [Haskafi/Ibn `Abidin, Radd al-Muhtar `ala al-Durr al-Mukhtar, 1.340, Bulaq ed.]

This is well established through the hadiths of great Companions of the Prophet (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) like 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud, 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar and many others (radiallahu anhum). Likewise this is also the position of the Maliki school.

Raising The Hands For Ruku': The Differences Found in the Narrations

The hadiths regarding raising the hands are of three types:

(1) There are those which clearly mention that the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) raised his hands at the time of bowing [ruku'.

(2) Secondly, there are those which mention that the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) never raised his hands except when uttering the opening takbir [tahrima].

(3) And thirdly, there are those hadiths which describe the complete prayer of the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), but do not mention whether or not he raised his hands after the opening takbir.

The hadiths of the first category stand as evidence for group one, those whose opinion is of raising the hands; whereas the second category of hadiths stand as evidence for those whose opinion is not to raise the hands. Although the hadiths of the first category seem to outnumber those of the second, this does not mean anything, because the hadiths of the third category could also be used in conjunction with the second as evidence for not raising the hands. The reason for this is that not mentioning something only proves that it was not a popular practise. It is also very difficult to accept that while demonstrating the prayer of the Messenger e, a narrator could have failed to mention something as significant as raising the hands, had it been an important aspect of the prayer. Hence, by utilizing the hadiths of the third category as complimentary evidence for the second category, the hadiths in support of not raising the hands would actually outnumber those in support of it.

To elaborate further, it must be understood that the Messenger of Allah's not raising his hands (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) is a nonexistent action, and people do not mention nonexistent actions in their conversations. For instance, if an individual returning home from the masjid, happened to fall down and hurt himself, the report would most certainly state, "**He fell down,**" since his falling down became an existent action (something that actually took place). On the other hand, if this

same person arrived home without any accident, nobody would unduly remark, **“He did not fall,”** since this is a nonexistent action. It is just another one of several hundred other such actions that did not occur.

The case of these hadiths is similar because, since the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) did not raise his hands at all, the narrators did not report it. If it had been a regular practise of the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), which he had failed to observe at times, the narrator would certainly have mentioned it. This can be likened to the example of a person who has a fixed time for eating. If for some reason he failed to eat at that time, someone could remark that he did not eat, since eating at that time should have been an existent action for him, which did not occur. Nobody would comment on his not eating at any other time, since eating at other times is normally nonexistent for this person, and nonexistent actions are normally not mentioned. Now, the hadith of the third category do not mention anything about the raising of the hands being a habitual action of the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam). As a result these hadiths can also be used as evidence with those of the second category for the Hanafi point of view. This would significantly increase the number of hadiths in favour of the Hanafi opinion, and outnumber the hadiths of the first category.

The Hadith on Raising the Hands

Group one normally presents the narrations of Ibn 'Umar and Malik ibn al-Huwayrith (radiallahu anhum) as their primary source of evidence, since both of these Companions have reported the raising of the hands at the time of bowing [ruku']. However, both of these Companions have also reported the raising of the hands regarding all the seven instances mentioned above. Group one has only accepted those narrations of the two Companions which mention that the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) raised his hands at the opening takbir and when bowing, and have disregarded the other narrations.

The Hanafi scholars did not based their opinion on this type of narrations, but have rather based it on those reports whose narrators are consistent. Their primary source are the narrations of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (radiallahu anh) who states that the hands were raised at the initial takbir [al-tahrima] only, and not repeated at any other time in the prayer. All reports from him explain the same practise.

Now we come to the issue of the narrations of 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (radiallahu anhuma), which are normally quoted by those who claim that the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) frequently raised his hands in salat. It is well known that Imam Malik (rahmatullahi alaih) received many narrations from 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (radiallahu anhuma). In fact, his famous chain which runs through Nafi' to 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar (radiallahu anhum), and is well known as **“the golden chain”** [silsilat al-dhahab]. However, in this issue, Imam Malik (rahmatullahi alaih) did not base his opinion on these narrations, but rather adopted the narrations of Ibn Mas'ud (radiallahu anh) instead, and gave preference to the practise [ta'amul] of the people of Madina which was to raise the hands at the initial takbir only.

Secondly, Ibn Abi Shayba (rahmatullahi alaih) and Imam Tahawi (rahmatullahi alaih) have narrated

another hadith of Ibn 'Umar (radiallahu anhuma) through Mujahid (rahmatullahi alaih), in which again there is no mention of raising the hands. If this was a constant practise of the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), then why was it not mentioned in this narration?

Furthermore, although there are many hadiths of Ibn 'Umar (Allah be pleased with him and his father) regarding the raising of the hands, there are many inconsistencies found in them. Such confusion in the reports of a narrator, will not allow his narrations to be adopted in the presence of other reports which are more precise and consistent. For example, in one of his narrations, which is mentioned in Imam Tahawi's Mushkil al-Athar, it states that the hands were raised at every movement of the prayer, whereas in his other narrations, this is not mentioned.

The Hadith on Not Raising the Hands

We will now present the narrations of various Companions, including those of Ibn 'Umar (radiallahu anhuma), which state that the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) raised his hands for the opening takbir only.

1) 'Alqama (rahmatullahi alaih) reports that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (radiallahu anh) said: **"Should I not demonstrate the prayer of the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) for you? He performed the prayer, and did not raise his hands except at the initial takbir."** (Sunan al-Tirmidhi 1:59, Sunan al-Nasa'i 1:161, Sunan Abi Dawud 1:116)

Imam Tirmidhi (rahmatullahi alaih) classifies this hadith as sound [hasan]. 'Allama ibn Hazm (rahmatullahi alaih) classifies it as rigorously authenticated [sahih] (al-Muhalla 4:88), and 'Allama Ahmad Muhammad Shakir (rahmatullahi alaih), rejecting the criticism of some scholars, writes in his commentary of Sunan al-Tirmidhi, **"This hadith has been authenticated by Ibn Hazm (rahmatullahi alaih) and other hadith masters [huffaz], and whatever has been stated about it containing defects is incorrect."** It is mentioned in the al-Jawhar al-naqithat **its narrators are those of Sahih Muslim**" (I'la' al-sunan 3:45).

2) 'Alqama (rahmatullahi alaih) reports that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (radiallahu anh) asked: **"Should I not inform you of the Messenger of Allah's (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) prayer?"** He stood up and raised his hands at the outset and did not do so again. (Sunan al-Nasa'i 1:158, I'la' al-sunan 3:48)

3) 'Alqama (rahmatullahi alaih) narrates from 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (radiallahu anh): **"The Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) would raise his hands at the opening takbir, then would not raise them again.** (Sharh Ma'ani 'l-athar 224)

4) 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (radiallahu anh) narrates: **"I performed prayer with the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam), Abu Bakr and 'Umar (radiallahu anhum). They did not raise their hands except at the beginning of prayer."** (Nasb al-riya 1:526, Majma' al-zawa'id 2:101).

Judging from the above hadiths, it can be concluded quite easily that the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) did not raise his hands regularly during the course of prayer. Ibn Mas'ud, 'Ali and other Companions (radiallahu anhum) would never have narrated such reports had they observed

the Messenger of Allah (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) and the Caliphs [khulafa'] regularly raising their hands? It has also been observed that all the narrations of Ibn Mas'ud (radiallahu anh) are consistent in that they relate the hands being raised only at the beginning of prayer and not at any other instance.

Finally 'Urwa ibn Murra (rahmatullahi alaih) states: "**When I entered the masjid [mosque] of Hadramawt, I heard 'Alqama ibn Wa'il (rahmatullahi alaih) narrate from his father that the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) would raise his hands before and after the bowing posture. I mentioned this to Ibrahim al-Nakh'a (rahmatullahi alaih) who responded angrily, "Is Wa'il ibn Hujr the only one to have seen the Messenger (salallahu 'alayhi wa sallam)? Didn't Ibn Mas'ud (radiallahu anh) and his companions also see him?"**" (Muwatta Imam Muhammad 92)

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