

21439 - Raising the hands during prayer

the question

This is regarding the sahih mutawaatir hadith of raising of the hands before and after the bowing in the Salaat. This has been authentically reported in Sahih Bukhari, Sahih Muslim, and Sunan Abu Dawud.

My question is, why do the Hanafis not accept this hadith? What's their reasoning for not acting upon this sahih hadith?

A related question is, was this Hadith not available to Abu Haneefah (rahimahullah) at his time? What could be the reasons for this?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allaah.

The hadeeth to which the questioner refers was narrated by al-Bukhaari (735) and Muslim (390) from 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Umar (may Allaah be pleased with them both), who said that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to raise his hands to shoulder level when he started to pray, when he said "Allaahu akbar" before bowing in rukoo', and when he raised his head from rukoo'.

The majority of scholars followed this hadeeth and said that it is mustahabb for the worshipper to raise his hands at the points mentioned in the hadeeth.

Imaam al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him) wrote a separate book on this issue which he called Juz' fi Raf' al-Yadayn (Section on Raising the Hands), in which he proved that the hands should be raised at these two points on the prayer, and he strongly denounced those who go against that. He narrated that al-Hasan said: "The Companions of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to raise their hands during prayer when they bowed and

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when they stood up (from bowing).” Al-Bukhaari said, “Al-Hasan did not exclude any of the Sahaabah from that, and it was not proven that any one among the Sahaabah did not raise his hands.”

See al-Majmoo’ by al-Nawawi, 3/399-406.

We do not know whether the ahaadeeth about raising the hands reached Abu Haneefah (may Allaah have mercy on him) or not, but they did reach his followers. But they did not follow them because they had other ahaadeeth and reports which said that the hands should not be raised except when saying “Allaahu akbar” at the beginning of the prayer.

These ahaadeeth include the following:

The hadeeth narrated by Abu Dawood (749) from al-Baraa’ ibn ‘Aazib, which says that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to raise his hands almost to his ears when he started to pray, then he did not repeat (this action).

The hadeeth narrated by Abu Dawood (748) from ‘Abd-Allaah ibn Mas’ood (may Allaah be pleased with him) who said: “Shall I not lead you in prayer as the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did?” Then he prayed and he only raised his hands once.

See Nasb al-Raayah by al-Zayla’i, 1/393-407.

But these ahaadeeth were classed as da’eef (weak) by the imams of hadeeth.

The hadeeth of al-Baraa’ was classed as da’eef by Sufyaan ibn ‘Uyaynah, al-Shaafa’i, al-Humaydi the shaykh of al-Bukhaari, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Yahya ibn Ma’een, al-Daarimi, al-Bukhaari, and others.

The hadeeth of Ibn Mas’ood was classed as da’eef by ‘Abd-Allaah ibn al-Mubaarak, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, al-Bukhaari, al-Bayhaqi, al-Daaraqutni and others. Similarly, the reports which were

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narrated from some of the Sahaabah about not raising the hands are all da'eef. We have quoted above the words of al-Bukhaari (may Allaah have mercy on him): "...it was not proven that any one among the Sahaabah did not raise his hands."

See Talkhees al-Habeer by al-Haafiz ibn Hajar, 1/221-223.

Once it is proven that these ahaadeeth and reports which say that the hands should not be raised are weak, then the ahaadeeth which say that the hands should be raised remain strong with no opposing reports. Hence the believer should not fail to raise his hands at the points in prayer described in the Sunnah. He should strive to make his prayer like the prayer of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) who said, "Pray as you have seen me praying." (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 631). Hence 'Ali ibn al-Madeeni, the shaykh of al-Bukhaari, said: "It is the duty of the Muslims to raise their hands when they bow in rukoo' and when they stand up from rukoo'." Al-Bukhaari said: " 'Ali was the most knowledgeable of the people of his time."

Once the Sunnah has been explained clearly, no one has the right to ignore it, following whoever among the scholars said that. Imaam al-Shaafa'i (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: "The scholars are agreed that if the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) becomes clear to a person, it is not permissible for him to ignore it in favour of the opinion of anyone."

Madaarij al-Saalikeen, 2/335.

"If a man is following Abu Haneefah or Maalik or al-Shaafa'i or Ahmad, and he sees that the view of another madhhab concerning a given matter is stronger, and he follows that, then he has done well, and that does not detract from his religious commitment or good character. There is no scholarly dispute on this point. Rather this is more in accordance with the truth and is more beloved by Allaah and His Messenger."

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(Said by Shaykh al-Islam – may Allaah have mercy on him – in al-Fataawa, 22/247).

The scholars who said that the hands should not be raised based on their own ijtihaad are to be excused, for they will be rewarded for their ijtihaad and their seeking the truth, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “If a judge passes judgement based on his own ijtihaad and he is correct, he will have two rewards; if he passes judgement based on his own ijtihaad and he makes a mistake, he will have one reward.” (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 7352; Muslim, 1716). See Raf’ al-Malaam ‘an al-A’immah al-A’laam by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah.

Note:

There is a fourth place where it is mustahabb to raise the hands during prayer; that is when standing up after the first Tashahhud for the third rak’ah. See question no. [3267](#).

May Allaah help us all to know the truth and follow it.

And Allaah knows best. May Allaah send blessings and peace upon our Prophet Muhammad.