

The Sunnah Method of Raising the Hands for Takbīr Taḥrīmah

Darulifta Ahlesunnat (Dawateislami)

Question

What do the noble scholars and jurists of Islamic law say about the following: What is the sunnah method of raising the hands when uttering takbīr taḥrīmah at the beginning of salāh? Should the utterance of the takbīr and the raising of the hands be done simultaneously, or should the takbīr be uttered first and the hands be raised afterwards?

Answer

The sunnah and rājiḥ (preferred) method of uttering takbīr taḥrīmah and raising the hands at the beginning of salāh is that the hands should be raised to the ears first and then the takbīr taḥrīmah should be uttered. Many jurists have declared this method to be the asaḥ (most accurate). The wisdom behind this is that raising the hands is a gesture signifying the negation of the greatness of all besides Allāh, while the utterance of takbīr is to affirm the greatness of Allāh, and negation precedes affirmation.

It is stated in the famous text of Ḥanafī jurisprudence, Al-Hidāyah:

والاصح انه يرفع يديه اولاً ثم يكبر، لأن فعله نفي الكبرياء عن غير الله، والنفي مقدم على الإثبات

Translation: The asaḥ (most accurate) opinion is that the hands should be raised first then the takbīr should be uttered. This is because the actions (of raising the hands) signifies the negation of greatness from all besides Allāh, and (the principle is that) negation proceeds affirmation. (Al-Hidāyah Sharḥ al-Bidāyah, Vol. 01, p. 307, Publ. Karachi)

The opinion mentioned by the author of al-Hidāyah has been declared rājiḥ (preferred) by many jurists and they have chosen this opinion, as mentioned in Al-Baḥr al-Rā'iq Sharḥ Kanz al-Daqa'iq:

وقته قبل التكبير، ونسبه في المجمع الى ابي حنيفة ومحمد، وفي غاية البيان الى عامة علمائنا، وفي المبسوط الى اكثر مشايخنا وصححه في الهداية ويشهد له ما في الصحيحين عن ابن عمر قال: كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا افتتح الصلاة رفع يديه حتى يكونا حذو منكبيه، ثم كبر

Translation: The preferred time of raising the hands is before uttering the takbīr. In al-Majma', this statement has been attributed to Abu-Ḥanīfah and Muḥammad رحمهما

الله, in Ghāyah al-Bayān this has been attributed to the general scholars, and in al-Mabsūt this has been attributed to majority of our scholars. In al-Hidāyah, this has been declared saḥīḥ. The ḥadīth narrated in the Saḥīḥayn (Bukhārī & Muslim)

supports this opinion, which is that Ibn 'Umar stated: when the Noble Prophet ﷺ would begin his salāh, he would raise his hands until they became parallel to his shoulders, then he would utter the takbīr. (Al-Baḥr al-Rā'iq Sharḥ Kanz al-Daqa'iq, Vol. 01, p. 322, Publ. Dār al-Kutub al-Islāmī, Beirut)

Regarding the wisdom behind the asaḥ (most accurate) opinion, it is stated in Al-Jawharah al-Nayirah:

والاصح انه يرفع اولاً فإذا استقرت افي موضع المحاذاة كبر؛ لأن الرفع بمنزلة النفي كأنه نبذ ما سوى الله تعالى وراء ظهره

Translation: The asaḥ (most accurate) opinion is that he will raise his hands first. Then when they are in the position of being parallel to the shoulders, he will utter takbīr. This is because raising the hands signifies negation; it is as if he has thrown everything other than Allāh behind his back. (Al-Jawharah al-Nayyirah, Vol. 01, p. 59, Publ. Multan)

Mentioning the sunnah acts of salāh, Sadr al-Sharī‘ah, Muftī Muḥammad Amjad ‘Alī A‘zamī رحمه الله تعالى عليه writes:

(5) تکبیر سے پہلے ہاتھ اٹھانا۔

Translation: (5) Raising the hands before takbīr. (Bahār-E-Sharī‘at, Vol. 01, pt. 03, p. 521, Publ. Maktaba-Tul-Madīnah, Karachi)

It should be noted that there are other opinions about the proper method of uttering takbīr and raising the hands, such as: (1) simultaneously uttering takbīr and raising the hands, (2) uttering takbīr first then raising the hands. But the best method is that which has been mentioned above, which is to raise the hands and then recite the takbīr. ‘Allāmah Ibn ‘Ābidīn Shāmī Dimishqī رحمه الله تعالى عليه mentions all of the opinions and then states the following while discussing the most appropriate method:

والكل مروي عنه عليه الصلاة والسلام، وما في الهداية أولى كما في البحر والنهر، ولذا اعتمده الشارح فافهم

Translation: All of these opinions are narrated from The Noble Rasool ﷺ. But that which is mentioned in al-Hidāyah is preferred, as mentioned in al-Baḥr al-Rā‘iq and al-Nahr. It is for this reason that the commentator (author of al-Durr al-Mukhtār) has relied on this. Thus, understand! (Radd al-Muḥtār, Vol. 02, p. 221, Publ. Quetta)

وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَرَسُولُهُ أَعْلَمُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَلَيْهِ وَآلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

(Allah Almighty knows best and His Messenger ﷺ knows best.)

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