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IN THE ATTITUDES OF HANAFI HADITH SCHOLARS TOWARD THE HADITHS ON “RAF’UL-YADAYN” IN PRAYER

Abstract. *This article examines the approach and evidentiary arguments of Hanafi hadith scholars regarding the hadiths transmitted on the issue of “raf’ul-yadayn” (raising the hands) in prayer. By examining the various hadiths concerning this practice, the evidentiary bases advanced by scholars of the Hanafi school on this issue, as well as the extent of their probative strength, have been analyzed. In addition, a comparative analysis has been conducted with the approaches of other juristic schools to this issue, thereby elucidating the distinctive characteristics of the Hanafi school. The responses of Hanafi jurists to the evidences advanced by scholars of other schools have also been examined in brief.*

Keywords: *raf’ul-yadayn, hadith, school of law (madhhab), mujtahid, Companion (sahabi), juristic disagreement (ikhtilaf), legal reasoning/evidentiary argumentation (istidlal), abrogation (naskh), preference (afdaliyyah), optionality (ikhtiyari).*

INTRODUCTION

Prayer, one of the fundamental obligatory acts of worship in Islam, holds a central place in the lives of Muslims. The correct performance of each pillar and action of the prayer is of great importance. The issue of raf’ul-yadayn, that is raising the hands during prayer has been interpreted differently across various schools of Islamic jurisprudence. This matter has been a subject of scholarly debate among Muslim scholars since the earliest periods of Islamic history. Some hadiths report that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) raised his hands during prayer, while other narrations indicate that he did not. This issue has even led to the composition of independent treatises and books. Among the earliest of these are “Juz’u raf’il yadayn” by Imam al-Bukhari and

“Kitabu raf’ul yadayn” by Muhammad ibn Nasr al-Marwazi (al-Ma’rufi, n.d., 3:488). The scholars of the Hanafi school have a distinctive approach to the issue of raf’ul-yadayn. They carefully examined the various narrations on this matter and derived conclusions based on their established methodological principles.

MAIN PART

All scholars are in agreement that raising the hands during the opening takbir al-tahrimah is a recommended (mustahabb) act.

They also agree that raising the hands is not recommended (not mustahabb) in other positions – such as between the two prostrations, after them, or in any position other than rising and bowing – even though some narrations have been reported regarding these instances.

However, they have differed concerning the ruling on performing raf’ul-yadayn before going into bowing (ruku’), upon rising from it, and when standing up for the third rak’ah (al-Ma’rufi, n.d., 3:489).

Abu Hanifa and his students held that raf’ul-yadayn should not be performed in any of these three positions.

A similar narration is reported by Ibn al-Qasim from Imam Malik, and this is the position preferred by Maliki jurists.

Al-Shafi’i and Ahmad ibn Hanbal maintained that raf’ul-yadayn should be performed when going into bowing (ruku’) and upon rising from it. This view is also reported in one narration from Imam Malik.

The majority of Shafi’i scholars also consider it recommended (mustahabb) to perform raf’ul-yadayn after rising from the first sitting (qa’dah) (al-Ma’rufi, n.d., 3:489). Al-Zurqani, in his commentary on the Muwaṭṭa’i Malik from Ibn Abd al-Barr narrates as follows: “There is disagreement regarding whether it (raf’ul-yadayn) is among the acts to be performed in prayer. Ibn al-Qasim narrated from his teacher Malik that the hands are not to be raised except during the opening takbir al-tahrimah. Abu Hanifah and other jurists of Kufa held the same view. Abu Mus’ab, Ibn Wahb, Ashhab, and others narrated from Imam Malik – in accordance with the hadith reported from Ibn Umar – that he performed raf’ul-yadayn when going into bowing (ruku’) and when rising from it. Awza’i, Al-Shafi’i, Ahmad, Is’haq, Tabari, and a number of scholars of hadith also held this view. For every Companion from whom the omission of raf’ul-yadayn has been

reported, there are also narrations indicating that he practiced it. However, no such report of actual practice has been transmitted from ibn Mas‘ud” (al-Zurqani, 2015, 1:223).

As for the evidences, both performing and not performing raf’ul-yadayn have been transmitted through mutawatir chains. There is no doubt that both positions have been reported through reliable narrations. Based on these evidences, some scholars acted upon the practice of raf’ul-yadayn, while others ruled that those hadiths had been abrogated (mansukh) and therefore abandoned it. A third group held that the matter relates to preference (afdaliyyah), meaning that both performing and omitting it are permissible and optional. They are as follows: Regarding the practice of raf’ul-yadayn, the following evidences are reported:

- It is narrated from ibn Umar (may Allah be pleased with him): “I saw the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) beginning the prayer, and when he went into bowing (ruku‘) and when he rose from it, he would raise his hands to the level of his shoulders.” Ibn Abu Umar adds in his narration: “He would not raise his hands between the two prostrations” (al-Tirmidhi, 2017:299).

- It is narrated from Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him): “When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) stood for the obligatory prayer, he would say takbir and raise both hands up to the level of his shoulders. When he completed his recitation and intended to go into bowing (ruku‘), he would do the same. When he finished and raised his head from bowing, he would also do the same. However, he would not raise his hands while in a seated position at any point in his prayer. When he stood up from the two prostrations, he would raise his hands and say takbir” (Abu Dawud, 2022:219).

- It is narrated from Wa’il ibn Hujr (may Allah be pleased with him): “I saw the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) when he said takbir and raised his head from bowing (ruku‘), he would raise both hands up to the level of his ears” (al-Nasa’i, 2019:307).

- It is narrated from Malik ibn Huwayrith (may Allah be pleased with him): “I saw the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) when he bowed and raised his head from bowing, raising his hands up to the upper level of his ears” (Muslim, 2022:200).

- It is narrated from Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him): “When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) began the prayer, went into

bowing (ruku'), and proceeded to prostration (sujud), he would raise both of his hands" (Ibn Majah, 2019:189).

Regarding the evidence for abandoning raf'ul-yadayn, the following narrations are reported:

- It is narrated from Jabir ibn Samurah (may Allah be pleased with him): "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) came out to us and said: 'Why do I see you raising your hands like the tails of restless horses? Be calm in prayer'" (Muslim, 2022:216).

- It is narrated from Asim ibn Kulayb from his father, and he from Alqamah: "Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him) said: 'Shall I show you the prayer of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him)?' Then he performed the prayer, and he did not raise his hands except the first time (at the opening takbir)" (al-Tirmidhi, 2017:300).

- It is narrated from Barah ibn Azib (may Allah be pleased with him): "When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) began the prayer with takbir, he would raise both hands up to the soft parts of his ears, and then he would not raise them again" (Abu Dawud, 2017:220).

- It is narrated from Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (may Allah be pleased with him): "The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) would raise his hands during the initial takbir, and thereafter he would not raise them again" (al-Tahawi, 2018:290).

- It is reported that Abdullah ibn Zubayr saw a man raising his hands when going into bowing (ruku') and rising from it. He said to him: "Do not do this, for this is something which the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) used to do initially and then later abandoned."

- It is narrated from Aswad (may Allah's blessings be upon him): "I saw Umar ibn al-Khattab raising his hands during the opening takbir, and thereafter he did not repeat it" (al-Tahawi, 2018:294).

- It is narrated from Mujahid (may Allah be pleased with him): "I prayed behind Ibn Umar, and he did not raise his hands except at the initial takbir" (al-Tahawi, 2018:292).

- Although Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) narrated the hadith concerning raising both hands, in practice he did not perform it himself (Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf, 2018:314).

- Mughirah said: “I mentioned to Ibrahim al-Nakha‘i the hadith of Wa‘il ibn Hujr in which he saw the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) raising his hands when beginning the prayer, when going into bowing (ruku‘), and when rising from it. He replied: ‘If Wa‘il saw the Prophet doing it once, then Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud saw him not doing it (i.e., not raising the hands when going into and coming out of bowing) fifty times’” (al-Tahawi, 2018:290).

Imam Tahawi also presents a rational (analytical and analogical) argument on this issue as follows:

“As for the theoretical and analogical response to this matter: the opening takbir (takbir al-tahrimah) is an obligation (fard), and there is consensus (ijma‘) regarding raising the hands in it. The takbir between the two prostrations is a Sunnah, and there is no raising of the hands in it. As for the takbir performed when going into bowing (ruku‘) and rising from it, there is disagreement (ikhtilaf) over whether the hands should be raised. Therefore, since both of these are Sunnah acts, their ruling is the same as the ruling of the takbir between the two prostrations” (al-Tahawi, 2018:295).

It is important to note in this context that the key point of this issue is that it relates to preference (afdaliyyah). That is, in essence, performing or omitting raf‘ul-yadayn is optional.

Nevertheless, some of our jurists considered this act to be makruh tahrimi, while others resolved the conflicting narrations through the principle of abrogation (naskh). Below, we will examine their views:

- It has been transmitted from some Hanafi jurists, including the author of Sharh al-Kabir on Minyat al-Musalli and the author of Bada‘i‘ al-Sana‘i‘, Alauddin Kasani, that they considered performing raf‘ul-yadayn to be a makruh (disliked) act. However, this view has been objected to. If they have transmitted textual evidence from the imams of their school, then their statement is accepted. But if there is no such transmitted proof, then declaring an act established through mutawatir transmission as makruh is a serious matter (al-Ma‘rifi, n.d., 3:492).

- Among later Hanafi jurists, the view that this issue is resolved through abrogation (naskh) became widespread. They adopted this position from Ibn Humam, who in turn followed Imam Tahawi in this understanding. It is known that the concept of naskh according to Imam Tahawi is broader than the definition found in works of usul al-fiqh. In his view, in matters of preference (afdaliyyah), what is less preferable is considered

“abrogated” in relation to what is more preferable, and likewise a weaker evidence is considered abrogated in relation to a stronger one. Anyone who carefully studies his works will recognize this clearly (al-Ma‘rufi, n.d., 3:492–493). In any case, when there exists a statement from an earlier Hanafi scholar such as Imam Jassas affirming the permissibility (jawaz) of raf’ul-yadayn, and when the hadith evidence also supports it, then there is no option but to accept its permissibility.

Abu Bakr Jassas, in his work Ahkamu’l-Qur’an, under the surah al-Baqarah, 183 states: “If in a given issue authentic hadiths have been transmitted from both sides, then the disagreement in that matter is only in terms of choice (ikhtiyar), especially when it is a frequently occurring issue” (al-Jassas, 2013, 1:253). He then lists among such matters calling the adhan with tarji‘, reciting the iqamah in an odd manner, reciting the basmalah aloud, and performing raf’ul-yadayn.

Imam al-Jassas was one of the jurists of the 4th century Hijri, and in terms of scholarly rank, he is considered higher than the author of Kabiri as well as the author of Bada’i‘-Sana’i‘ Alauddin Kasani (al-Ma‘rufi, n.d., 3:492). Therefore, in determining the ruling of this issue, it is more appropriate to rely on the view of Imam Jassas.

On this matter, our Hanafi jurists have provided the following response:

It is known that if two Sunnah practices appear to be in conflict, then the statements and actions of the Companions are given precedence. If their statements and actions themselves are found to be in disagreement, then analogy (qiyas) is given priority. In this issue, analogy indicates the omission of raising the hands, because in prayer the bodily limbs should remain calm and in a state of humility (khushu‘). Regarding this, Allah the Almighty says in Surah al-Mu‘minun:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ (١) الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ (٢)

“Certainly will the believers have succeeded. They who are during their prayer humbly submissive” (Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf, 2008, 4:58).

Around fifty Companions narrated that the hands are raised at the beginning of the prayer, i.e., during the opening takbir (takbir al-tahrimah). However, they did not report raising the hands when going into bowing (ruku‘) or rising from it. In the hadith of Abdullah ibn Abbas, it is stated: “The hands are only raised in seven places,” and among these is the raising of the hands at the beginning of the prayer (Kholiqnazar, 2024:105). From this, it is understood that the hands are not raised in other positions.

CONCLUSION

Within the Hanafi school, the ruling on raf'ul-yadayn is considered to have been abrogated (mansukh). This represents the final position of Hanafi jurists on the matter. Accordingly, those who follow the Hanafi school are expected to adhere to this fatwah in order to maintain unity, prevent discord, and perform acts of worship with tranquility, without engaging in opposition on this issue. At the same time, it is necessary for each person to act according to their own school of jurisprudence, to respect the followers of other schools, and to uphold unity, which is among the essential requirements of the religion.

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