

Evidence for Raising the Hands Solely at the Start of Salah

Muaz Billoo

Summary:

Raising the hands solely at the start of the salah is authentically established from ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib رضي الله عنه, ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud رضي الله عنه, and other companions. Imam al-Tirmidhi رحمته الله says, “This was the view held by a number of scholars from the companions of the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم as well as the followers (*Tabi’een*).” Note that all of these companions are from the earliest of Muslims (*Sabiqun Awwalun*), from the jurists (*fuqaha*) and two of them were from the Rightly Guided Successors (*Khulafa Rashidun*).

Note: Raising the hands before and after the ruku’ is also authentically established from the likes of ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه and a number of other companions. This issue is from those in which there is a valid scope for difference of opinion and should not become a source of infighting and dissociation. Both sides view the other practice as being valid and is a discussion on which method is more preferable (*Afdal* vs. *Ma’fdul*). This brief analysis will merely serve to present the authenticity and academic rigor of not raising the hands before and coming up from ruku’.

Scholarly Views on the Matter

The early Muslim scholars differed on whether it is preferable to raise the hands before and after the ruku’, or not. I have come across some who argue that the majority of scholars preferred raising their hands before and after the ruku’, but this seems to stand contrary to historical records.

For example, Imam al-Tahawi (d. 321) رحمته الله states¹ that **not** raising the hands before and after the ruku is not just the view of the Hanafis, but it was also the view of other mujtahid Imams such as Ibn Abi Layla (d. 148) رحمته الله, Sufyan al-Thawri (d. 161) رحمته الله, and al-Hasan ibn Hayy (d. 169) رحمته الله. He states that Imam al-Shafi’ رحمته الله held the opposing view.

He also transmits a number of different views of Imam Malik (d. 179) رحمته الله, but the most reliable position of his is that which has been transmitted in the *Mudawwanah* through the recension of ‘Abdur Rahman ibn al-Qasim (d. 191) رحمته الله. Hafiz ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalani (d. 852) رحمته الله writes, “Their (the Malikis) reliance in rulings and verdicts (*fatwa*) is based on what Ibn al-Qasim narrated from Malik, regardless if it coincides with the *Muwatta* or not.”² This has led some, such as Shaykh al-Albani رحمته الله,³ into misrepresenting Imam Malik’s view as he quotes the Hadith of ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar رضي الله عنه on raising the hands before and after the ruku in his *Muwatta*. However, Imam Malik states in the *Mudawannah*, “I do not recognize the act of raising the

¹ *Mukhtasar Ikhtilaf al-Ulama* 1/199

² *Ta’jeel al-Manfa’ah* p. 18

³ See: *al-Imam ibn Majah wa Kitabuhu al-Sunan* pg. 295

hands in any *takbeer* of salah; neither when going down nor coming up except in the opening of the salah.”⁴

Imam Ibn Rushd (d. 595) رحمته adds Imams Ahmad (d. 241) رحمته, Abu ‘Ubaid (d. 224) رحمته, Abu Thawr (d. 240) رحمته, as well as most Hadith scholars and literalists as among those who held the same view as Imam al-Shafi رحمته.⁵ The aforementioned quotations demonstrate that this issue has been heavily contested for over a thousand years, and that without rigorous quantitative and historical analysis, such a claim to a “majority” position will be taken as nothing more than a shallow slogan. Hafiz Badr al-Din al-‘Ayni (d. 855) رحمته adds a number of scholars to both sides. Those interested can refer back to his *Nukhab al-Afkar*.⁶

What should become clear by Imam Malik’s position is the erroneous nature of the claim that it was only the scholars of Kufah who took the view of not raising the hands before and after the ruku’. For example, Hafiz al-Marwazi (d. 294) رحمته claims, “The scholars of the world are unanimous on its legal status (i.e. raising the hands before and after the ruku’) except for the scholars of Kufah,”⁷ and Imam al-Awzai (d. 157) رحمته claims, “The scholars of Hijaz (Arab Peninsula), Sham, and Basrah are unanimous on this.”⁸ Imam Malik’s position, as delineated in the *Mudawwanah*, is sufficient to debunk this claim.

Evidences

There are a number of authentic narrations that demonstrate the position of Imams Abu Hanifah (d. 150) رحمته and Malik رحمته. Among them:

1. Aswad (d. 72) رحمته said that he saw ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab (d. 23) رحمته raising his hands in the beginning of the salah, and he didn’t do it again.
 - a. *Musannaf ibn Abi Shaibah* #2469, *Sharh Ma’ani al-Athar* #1431; authenticated by Imams al-Tahawi رحمته, al-Nimawi رحمته,⁹ and Anwar Shah al-Kashmiri (d. 1352) رحمته.¹⁰ Hafiz ibn Hajar رحمته said in *al-Dirayah*, “The narrators are reliable (*Thiqat*).”
2. ‘Asim ibn Kulaib رحمته narrates from his father that ‘Ali رحمته used to raise his hands in the first takbir of the salah and wouldn’t do it again.
 - a. *Muwatta Muhammad* #105, *Musannaf ibn Abi Shaibah* #2457; authenticated by Hafiz Badr al-Din al-‘Ayni رحمته in accordance with the condition of Imam Muslim¹¹ as well as Hafiz al-Nimawi رحمته.¹² Hafiz ibn al-Hajar رحمته says in *al-Dirayah*, “The narrators are reliable.”

⁴ *Al-Mudawwanah al-Kubra* 1/118

⁵ *Bidayah al-Mujtahid* p. 110 - 111

⁶ 4/152 and 4/154

⁷ *Fath al-Bari* 3/295

⁸ See: Ibn al-Mundhir’s *al-Awsat* 3/303

⁹ *Athar al-Sunan* #403

¹⁰ See: *Nayl al-Farqadayn* p. 117 – 121 in volume one of *Majmu’ah Rasail al-Kashmiri*

¹¹ *Umdah al-Qari* 5/274

¹² *Athar al-Sunan* #404

3. Abu Ishaq al-Sabi'i رضي الله عنه said that the students of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه and 'Ali ibn Abi Talib رضي الله عنه would only raise their hands in the beginning of salah and would not do it again.
 - a. *Musannaf ibn Abi Shaibah* #2461; authenticated by Hafiz al-Nimawi.¹³

4. 'Alqamah (d. 62) رضي الله عنه narrates that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه once said, "Shall I not lead you in salah in accordance with the salah of the messenger of Allah ﷺ? Then he prayed and did not raise his hands except the first time."
 - a. *Sunan Abu Dawud* #746, *Jami' al-Tirmidhi* #256, *Sunan al-Nasai* #1059; declared *Hasan* by Imam al-Tirmidhi, and was authenticated by Imam ibn Hazm (d. 456) رضي الله عنه,¹⁴ Hafiz ibn Daqiq al-'Eid (d. 702) رضي الله عنه, Hafiz al-Zaylai (d. 762) رضي الله عنه,¹⁵ Hafiz ibn al-Diri (d. 827) رضي الله عنه,¹⁶ Hafiz al-Suyuti (d. 911) رضي الله عنه,¹⁷ 'Allamah Anwar Shah al-Kashmiri رضي الله عنه.¹⁸ and others.

5. Ibrahim al-Nakhai (d. 96) رضي الله عنه said that Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه would only raise his hands in the beginning of salah.
 - a. *Musannaf ibn Abi Shaibah* #2458, *Sharh Ma'ani al-Athar* #1363; authenticated by Hafiz Badr al-Din al-'Ayni رضي الله عنه¹⁹ as well as Hafiz ibn al-Turkmani (d. 750) رضي الله عنه.²⁰

6. 'Alqamah رضي الله عنه narrates that 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud رضي الله عنه said, "I prayed with the messenger of Allah ﷺ, as well as with Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه and 'Umar رضي الله عنه, and they did not raise their hands except in the first takbeer at the start of the salah."
 - a. *Sunan al-Baihaqi* #2534; authenticated by ibn al-Turkmani رضي الله عنه.²¹

7. Barra ibn 'Azib رضي الله عنه narrates that the Prophet ﷺ would start the salah by raising his hands and would not do it again for the remainder of the salah.
 - a. *Musannaf ibn Abi Shaibah* #2455, *Sharh Ma'ani al-Athar* #1347; authenticated by Shaykh 'Awwamah (may Allah preserve him) in his annotations on *Musannaf ibn Abi Shaibah*.

Comments

Narrations #1 and #6 demonstrate that Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه and 'Umar ibn al-Khattab رضي الله عنه, two of the *Khulafa Rashidun*, have been observed not raising their hands before and after the ruku'. Imam

¹³ *Athar al-Sunan* #407

¹⁴ *Al-Muhalla* 2/265

¹⁵ See: *Nasb al-Rayah* 1/473-475 which also quotes from Hafiz ibn Daqiq al-'Eid's *al-Imam*

¹⁶ *Al-Masail al-Sharifah* 1/437

¹⁷ *Hashiyah Sunan al-Nasai* 2/182

¹⁸ *Al-Amali 'Ala Sunan Abi Dawud* 1/614

¹⁹ *Nukhab al-Afkar* 4/185

²⁰ *Al-Jawhar al-Naqi* 2/79

²¹ *Al-Jawhar al-Naqi* 2/78

al-Tahawi رحمته writes, “Do you think that ‘Umar رضي الله عنه would not have known that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would raise his hands in Ruku’ and Sujud, and those lower in rank than him would know? Or do you think that those who were with him saw him praying in a way other than the way of the messenger of Allah صلى الله عليه وسلم, and then they didn’t rebuke him for that? This is unimaginable for us.”²² The same can also be said for Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه. Furthermore, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, “You must adhere to my Sunnah, and the Sunnah of my rightly guided successors after me; bite down onto it (the Sunnah) with the molar teeth.”²³

Narration #2 demonstrates that the fourth Khalifah, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib رضي الله عنه, was also observed not raising his hands before and after the ruku’. If it is said that ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib رضي الله عنه also narrates a Hadith from the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم wherein he says that the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم would raise his hands before and after the ruku, we say that the aforementioned narration also mentions the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم raising his hands between the two sajdahs, yet not even Imam Shafi practiced this. This shows that there is already an issue with the narration in terms of application. The fact that ‘Ali رضي الله عنه was observed by a Tabi’ee tells us that perhaps he felt that this narration is abrogated (*Mansukh*). This is why Imam al-Tahawi رحمته writes, “It is unimaginable for ‘Ali رضي الله عنه to see the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم raising his hands before and after the ruku’, and thereafter leave this practice afterwards unless he was convinced of its abrogation.” There exists an important principle within the Hanafi framework when assessing if a narration is meant to be practiced or not: if the companion narrating the Hadith doesn’t implement the Hadith, then this is indicative of the companion being aware of some legal issue with the Hadith such as abrogation.

Narration #3 further cements the fact that ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib رضي الله عنه’s final practice was to not raise the hands before and after the ruku’. If he did, then he certainly would have instructed his students to do so, but they did not. The same is true for ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud (d. 33) رضي الله عنه and his students, which is coming next.

Narrations #4 and #5 show that ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud رضي الله عنه would not raise his hands before and after the ruku’.

Who was ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud رضي الله عنه?

‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud was from among the earliest Muslims (*Sabiqun Awwalun*), whom Allah عز وجل explicitly praises in the Qur’an, “As for the first and foremost (*sabiqun awwlaun*) of the Emigrants (Muhājirīn) and the Supporters (Ansār) and those who followed them in goodness, Allah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Allah, and He has prepared for them gardens beneath which rivers flow, where they will live forever. That is the supreme achievement.”²⁴ His being with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم from the earliest stage of Islam tells us that he prayed with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم throughout his life. Furthermore, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and other

²² *Sharh Ma’ani al-Athar* under Hadith #1431

²³ *Musnad Ahmad* 17145; authenticated by Imam al-Tirmidhi.

²⁴ 9:100

companions uttered high words of praise for ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud ؓ, especially in terms of his knowledge. For example,

- The Prophet ﷺ said, “I am pleased for my nation whatever ibn Umm ‘Abd (i.e., ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud) is pleased with.”²⁵
- The Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever wishes to recite the Qur’an exactly as it was revealed, then let him recite according to the recitation of ibn Umm ‘Abd.”²⁶
- The Prophet ﷺ said, “Learn the Qur’an from four: ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud, Salim the freed slave of Abu Huzaifah, Mu’az ibn Jabal, and Ubayy ibn Ka’b.”²⁷
- Sa’d ibn Abi Waqqas ؓ conquered ‘Iraq in the year 17 AH under the khilfah of ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab ؓ. ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab sent ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud ؓ to teach Islam to the people saying, “I have preferred Abdullah to teach you over myself.”²⁸
- ‘Umar ؓ said, “He is a vessel filled with deep knowledge.”²⁹
- Huzaifah ibn al-Yaman ؓ said, “The closest person to the Prophet g in terms of character, guidance and behavior was ibn Mas’ud.”³⁰
- When ‘Ali ؓ transferred the capital of the Muslim world from Medina to Kufah in the year 35 AH, he remarked, “May Allah have mercy on ibn Umm ‘Abd; he filled this city with knowledge.”³¹
- Imam al-Muhaddithin ‘Ali ibn al-Madini ؓ (d. 234) said, “The judges among the companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ were six: ‘Umar, ‘Ali, ‘Abdullah (ibn Mas’ud), Zaid ibn Thabit, Abu Musa, and Ubayy ibn Ka’b.”³²
- Imam al-Muhaddithin ‘Ali ibn al-Madini ؓ (d. 234) also said, “There were none from among the companions of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who had students that would follow their methodology, passing fatwa in accordance with their fatawa, and treading their path except for three: ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud, Zaid ibn Thabit, and ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Abbas.”³³

The aforementioned quotations demonstrate that ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud ؓ was not any ordinary companion, but he was from the scholarly class of companions. His judgments, rulings, and

²⁵ *Musannaf ibn Abi Shaibah* 32896, *al-Bahr al-Zakhar* 1986

²⁶ *Kitab al-Athar Riwayah Abu Yusuf* 453

²⁷ *Sahih al-Bukhari* 3808

²⁸ *Musannaf ibn Abi Shaibah* 32901

²⁹ *Musannaf ibn Abi Shaibah* 32902

³⁰ *Jami’ al-Tirmidhi* 3807

³¹ See: *Fiqh Ahl al-‘Iraq wa Hadithuhum* pgs. 37 – 41

³² *‘Ilal al-Hadith wa Ma’rifah al-Rijal wa al-Tarikh* pg. 97

³³ *‘Ilal al-Hadith wa Ma’rifah al-Rijal wa al-Tarikh* pg. 107

teachings bear heavily in legal deductions. Thus, his method of performing and teaching the salah is a mirror representation of the Prophetic method of salah.

Objections Against the Authenticity of Narration #4 and Rebuttal

Some have levied questions and objections against narration #4, but these objections have been debunked throughout the ages. Shaikh Ahmad Shakir rahimahullah writes, “This narration was deemed authentic by ibn Hazm and other Hadith scholars, and it is an authentic (*Sahih*) Hadith. That which they have attempted to demonstrate as “defects” (in the narration) are not defects.”³⁴ As mentioned previously, Imam al-Tirmidhi rahimahullah, a close student of Imam al-Bukhari rahimahullah, declared the narration as *Hasan*, and it was further authenticated by Imam ibn Hazm, Hafiz ibn Daqiq al-‘Eid, Hafiz al-Zaylai, Hafiz ibn al-Diri, Hafiz al-Suyuti, and ‘Allamah Anwar Shah al-Kashmiri.

The objections can be summarized into the following three:

1. Imam al-Tirmidhi rahimahullah states that Imam ‘Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak rahimahullah did not consider the narration authentic.
 - a. **Response:** The views of Imam ‘Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak rahimahullah are not considered binding proofs. His statement does not mean that we withhold from checking the veracity of his claim. The authenticity of a narration is based on the narrators in the chain and the absence of any missing link. All the narrators of the chain are reliable and there is no missing link.
2. Hafiz al-Mundhiri (d. 656) rahimahullah said that others beside ‘Abdullah ibn al-Mubarak have said that Abdur Rahman ibn al-Aswad in the chain did not hear from ‘Alqamah, thus the chain has a missing link.³⁵
 - a. **Response:** Who is it that said this? Hafiz ibn Daqiq al-‘Eid (d. 702) said in his *al-Imam* that he searched extensively and could not find who Hafiz al-Mundhiri was alluding to.³⁶ The statement of an unknown person is not a binding proof. On the contrary, we find that Hafiz ibn Abi Hatim (d. 321) stating that Abdur Rahman ibn al-Aswad narrated from ‘Alqamah without mentioning it being a broken link.³⁷ Furthermore, Khatib al-Baghdad (d. 463) rahimahullah has explicitly stated that Abdur Rahman ibn al-Aswad did hear from his father **and** ‘Alqamah.³⁸ Thus, there is no break in the chain.

³⁴ See: Shaikh Ahmad Shakir’s annotations on *Sunan al-Tirmidhi* 2/40

³⁵ *Mukhtasar Sunan Abu Dawud* 1/223

³⁶ See: *Nasb al-Rayah* 1/473

³⁷ *Al-Jarh wa al-Ta’dil* 5/260

³⁸ *Al-Muttafiq wa al-Muftariq* 3/1487

3. There is a narrator in the chain named ‘Asim ibn Kulaib who is unreliable. Imam al-Baihaqi (d. 458) ﷺ narrates that his teacher, Imam al-Hakim (d. 405) ﷺ said that his narrations are not found in the *Sahih* collection.
- a. **Response:** ‘Asim ibn Kulaib ﷺ was praised by the likes of Imams Yahya ibn Ma’een (d. 233) ﷺ, Ahmad ibn Hanbal ﷺ, Abu Hatim al-Razi (d. 277) ﷺ, Nasai (d. 303) ﷺ, ibn Sa’d (d. 230) ﷺ, al-Ijli (d. 261) ﷺ, Ya’qub ibn Sufyan (d. 277) ﷺ, ibn Shahin (d. 385) ﷺ, and Ahmad ibn Salih (d. 248) ﷺ. Furthermore, Imam Muslim (d. 261) ﷺ narrates from him, so he is found in the *Sahih* collection.³⁹ Thus, there is no issue with the authenticity.

Even if a person remains unsure about the authenticity of this narration, narrations #3 and #5 provide enough supporting evidence to show that ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud ﷺ would not raise his hands before and after ruku’.

Some might argue that narration #5 contains a missing link because Ibrahim al-Nakhai ﷺ never met ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud ﷺ. That is true, however the case of Ibrahim Nakhai’s *Mursal* narrations are exceptions to the normal rule, as his *mursal* narrations are stronger than his *musnad* narrations. Imam al-A’mash ﷺ once asked Imam Ibrahim al-Nakhai ﷺ, “When you narrate to us (directly from Abdullah ibn Mas’ud) then mention the full chain,” to which al-Nakhai replied, “When I say, ‘Abdullah said,’ then I would not have said that unless a group (of his students) narrated that from ‘Abdullah. If I say, ‘so-and-so informed me from ‘Abdullah’, then that is the (only) one who informed me.”⁴⁰ It should be noted that Ibrahim al-Nakhai ﷺ met sixty prominent students of ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud ﷺ in his lifetime.⁴¹

It is for this reason that Hafiz Abu Sa’eed al-‘Alai ﷺ said, “A group of Imams (of Hadith) deemed his *mursal* narrations authentic.”⁴² Hafiz ibn Rajab al-Hanbali (d. 795) ﷺ said that the *mursal* narrations of Ibrahim al-Nakhai are stronger than his *musnad* narrations. Imam Ahmad ﷺ saw no issue with his *mursal* narrations. Imam Yahya ibn Ma’een ﷺ deemed the *mursal* narrations of Ibrahim al-Nakhai as authentic (*sahih*).⁴³

Thus, it is rigorously established that ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud ﷺ would not raise his hands before and after the ruku’. Some have attempted to argue that ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud ﷺ merely forgot, but this is inconceivable of such a companion who was highly regarded for his knowledge by the Prophet ﷺ and was with the Prophet ﷺ through thick and thin from the earliest days of Islam. If his method of prayer was so problematic and contrary to the sunnah, why did ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab ﷺ assign him to teach the Sunnah to the people of ‘Iraq? Surely, ‘Umar ibn al-

³⁹ See: *Tahdhib al-Kamal* 4/19

⁴⁰ *Sharh Ma’ani al-Athar* under Hadith #1428

⁴¹ *Kitab al-‘Ilal wa Ma’rifah al-Rijal* 3/452 #5938

⁴² *Tahdhib al-Tahdhib* 1/93

⁴³ *Sharh ‘Ilal al-Tirmidhi* 1/294

Khattab ﷺ of all people would have rebuked him for not praying as the Prophet ﷺ prayed. The fact is that he didn't, which shows that even 'Umar ibn al-Khattab ﷺ had no issue with his method of prayer. We have already mentioned previously (narrations #1 and #6) that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab ﷺ wouldn't raise his hands before and after the ruku'. My question to the reader is: if the likes of 'Umar ibn al-Khattab ﷺ didn't take issue with 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud's ﷺ method of prayer, then who are you to take an issue with him? What about the hundreds (if not thousands) of companions who settled in Kufah? We don't find a single narration from any one of them (not even when Ali ibn Abi Talib ﷺ moved the capital to Kufah) having any issue with the way 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud ﷺ taught the method of the Prophetic prayer. Why is it that some who came hundreds of years later decided to take issue with it, yet the very people who lived alongside him took no issue with it?

A Matter of Preference

We acknowledge that the narrations indicating that the Prophet ﷺ would raise his hands before and after the ruku' are authentic via a number of companions such as 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar ﷺ, Wa'il ibn Hujur ﷺ, Abu Humaid al-Sa'idi ﷺ, etc. However, the number of companions narrating this cannot be a means of ignoring the fact that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab ﷺ, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib ﷺ, and 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud ﷺ did not raise their hands. Since both methods are authentically established from the Sunnah, the issue becomes a matter of preference for the mujtahid Imams. Which narrations do we prefer (although both methods are permissible)?

Once, al-Mughirah mentioned the Hadith of Wa'il ibn Hujur ﷺ, which states that he prayed with the Prophet ﷺ and saw him raising his hands before and after going into ruku'. Ibrahim al-Nakhai responded, "Perhaps Wa'il only saw him do this once, for indeed 'Abdullah (ibn Mas'ud) saw him fifty times not doing that."⁴⁴

We see from the aforementioned narration that the early Kufan scholars such as Ibrahim al-Nakhai were well aware of counter evidence, and they gave preference to the narration of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud ﷺ over that of other companions due to his seniority in age and knowledge. Some try to argue that the statement of Ibrahim al-Nakhai cannot stand as evidence in light of the Hadith of Wa'il ibn Hujur ﷺ, but this is a shallow misrepresentation of what's happening in this narration. We are not giving preference to the statement of Ibrahim al-Nakhai over the Hadith of Wa'il ibn Hujur ﷺ, rather we are giving preference to the Hadith of 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud over that of Wa'il ibn Hujur ﷺ.

Imam Abu Hanifah once gathered with Imam al-Awza'i in Makkah. Imam al-Awza'i said to Imam Abu Hanifah, "Why don't you (in Kufah) raise your hands in salah when going into ruku and when coming up? ... Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri narrated to me from Salim from his father

⁴⁴ *Sharh Ma'ani al-Athar* #1417

(‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar) that the messenger of Allah ﷺ used to raise his hands at the start of the salah, when going into ruku, and when coming up from it.” Abu Hanifah responded, “Hammad narrated to us from Ibrahim from ‘Alqamah and Aswad from Ibn Mas’ud: that the messenger of Allah ﷺ would not raise his hands except at the start of the salah and would not do it again.” Al-Awzai objected, “I narrate to you from al-Zuhri from Salim from his father, and you’re narrating to me from Hammad from Ibrahim?!” Abu Hanifah responded, “Hammad had more *faqahah* (a better understanding of the deen) than al-Zuhri, and Ibrahim had more *faqahah* than Salim, and ‘Alqamah was not less than ibn ‘Umar in fiqh, even though ibn ‘Umar was a companion. As for Aswad, he had great virtue. And ‘Abdullah [ibn Mas’ud] is ‘Abdullah,” so al-Awzai remained silent.⁴⁵

In this incident, we see that Imam Abu Hanifah preferred one Hadith over another (although both are authentic) by prioritizing the *faqahah* of the narrators, which plays a major role in transmitting the narration accurately with respect to its meaning, thus showing another angle through which we can prefer the narration of ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud ﷺ. Imam Abu Hanifah gave preference to the fiqh of narrators over those who lacked fiqh, although Imam Awzai had a shorter chain. Ijtihad deals heavily with giving preference when there are conflicting narrations. Imam Abu Hanifah’s methodology represents that of the fuqaha, whereas Imam Awzai’s methodology represents that of the Muhaddithin.

Conclusion

Thus, it is well documented and established that ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab ﷺ, ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib ﷺ, ‘Abdullah ibn Mas’ud ﷺ, and other companions would not raise their hands before and after the ruku’. The position of Imams Abu Hanifah and Malik remains substantiated by the Sunnah. The position of Imams Shafi and Ahmad is also substantiated by the Sunnah. This is not an issue that should be a source of infighting and division. Instead, we should appreciate the fact that Allah ﷻ, out of His infinite grace, has preserved all the actions of the Prophet ﷺ until this day. May Allah accept our actions and forgive us for our shortcomings.

⁴⁵ *Tarteeb Musnad al-Imam al-A’zam* #97