



Counting the Rak`ah (unit of Prayer) when joining the Imam during Ruku` (bowing)

The first and second questions of Fatwa no. 36

Q 1: Many Muslims enter the Masjid (mosque) while the Imam is in the position of Ruku`. As they pronounce Takbirat-ul-Ihram (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]" upon starting Prayer), the Imam rises up from Ruku` saying: 'Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah (Allah hears him who praises Him). In this case they may not be able to recite a single Tasbeih (saying: "Subhan Allah [Glory be to Allah]") while in Ruku`, will they be considered as having caught a full Rak`ah or do they have to stand up to offer another Rak`ah after the Imam makes Taslim (salutation of peace ending the Prayer).

A: A person who pronounces Takbirat-ul-Ihram the moment when the Imam rises up from Ruku` will not be considered as having caught a full Rak`ah with the Imam. The same applies to a person who pronounces Takbirat-ul-Ihram and then pronounces Takbir (saying: "Allahu Akbar [Allah is the Greatest]") for Ruku` and bows down the moment the Imam rises up from Ruku`. The reason is that he did not bow with the Imam for a period long enough to make it a Rak`ah. Thus he has to stand up to offer another Rak`ah after the Imam makes Taslim.

However, if a person pronounces Takbirat-ul-Ihram then joins the Imam while in Ruku` for a period long enough for his back to assume the normal bowing position, he, according to the majority of scholars, is considered as having caught a full Rak`ah with the Imam.

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This is based on the Hadith in which the Prophet states, ([When you come to prayer while we are prostrating ourselves, prostrate yourselves and do not count it one Rak`ah. He who catches a Rak`ah of the Prayer, he in fact catches the Prayer.](#)) Narrated by Abu Dawud, Ibn Khuzaymah and Al-Hakim in Al-Mustadrak. Another Hadith also states, ([whoever attends one Rak`ah \(in congregation\) is considered to have attended the whole prayer \(in congregation\).](#)) Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim.

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