43574 - Should You Say Sami`a Allahu Liman Hamidah behind Imam?

the question

I read in a flyer that when finishing bowing, the Imam and the one who is praying behind him should both say “Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah (Allah hears the one who praises Him)” then after that those who are praying behind the Imam should say “Allahumma Rabbana laka’l-hamd (O Allah, our Lord, to You be praise).” This is different from what we grew up with, which is that the Imam only should say “Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah,” and those who are praying behind him should respond: “Allahummah Rabbana laka’l-hamd.”

Please advise us, may Allah reward you.

Summary of answer

The majority of scholars, Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali, are of the view that the person praying behind the Imam should limit himself to saying: “Rabbana wa lakal-hamd” only, and he should not say: “Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah”.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Is Saying Sami`a Allahu Liman Hamidah Obligatory?

Tasmi` (saying Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah) when rising from bowing and Tahmid (praising Allah by saying Allahumma Rabbana wa lakal-Hamd) when standing up straight are Sunnah and are recommended according to the majority of scholars.

The Hanbalis are of the view that they are obligatory, and the correct view is that they are obligatory.

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Ash-Sharh Al-Mumti` (3/433):

The evidence for that (i.e., that it is obligatory) is as follows:

- The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) adhered to that and did not neglect to say Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah in all situations.
- It is the signal for moving from bowing to standing.
- The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “When he says Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah, say Rabbana wa lakal-Hamd .” (End quote)

We have listed Tasmi` and Tahmid as being among the obligatory parts of prayer in question no. 65847.

Scholarly Opinions on the Obligation of Tasmi`

The jurists unanimously agreed that the person who is praying alone should say both Tasmi` and Tahmid. So he should say Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah when he rises from bowing and when he has stood up straight he should say Rabbana wa lakal-hamd.

This unanimous agreement was narrated by At-Tahawi in Sharh Ma`ani Al-Athar (1/240) and Ibn `Abd Al-Barr in Al-Istidhkar (2/178).

But in Al-Mughni (1/548) there is something which indicates that there is a difference of opinion on this matter. But they differed as to what is prescribed for the Imam and for the one praying behind the Imam.

- In the case of the Imam:

The Hanafis and Malikis are of the view that he should say Tasmi` only, and it is not Sunnah for him to say Rabbana lakal-Hamd. The Shafi`is and Hanbalis are of the view that the Imam should say both Tasmi` and Tahmid.

The more correct view is the latter one, because it was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be

pleased with him) said: “When the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah, he would say Allahumma Rabbana wa lakal-hamd.” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari, 795 and Muslim, 392)

Al-Hafidh ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) stated that the fact that it is recommended for the Imam to say Tahmid may be understood from this Hadith and others. (End quote from Fat-h Al-Bari, 2/367)

- In the case of the one who is praying behind the Imam:

The majority of scholars, Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali, are of the view that the person praying behind the Imam should limit himself to the Tahmid only, and he should not say Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah.

The Shafi`is and Dhahiris (literalists) disagreed with them and said that it is recommended for the person praying behind the Imam to say both the Tasmi` and the Tahmid. This is the view favoured by Al-Albani in Sifat As-Salah (135). For more information on their evidence please see the essay by As-Suyuti (may Allah have mercy on him) in Al-Hawi lil-Fatawa (1/35).

The more correct view – and Allah knows best – is that of the majority.

Shaykh Ibn Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said in Liqa’ Al-Bab al-Maftuh (1/320):

When the Imam says Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah, the one who is praying behind him should not say Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The Imam is appointed to be followed, so when he says Takbir, then say Takbir, when he bows, then bow, when he prostrates, then prostrate, and when he says Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah, then say Rabbana wa lakal-Hamd.”

He said, “When he says Takbir, then say Takbir,” and “when he says Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah, then say Rabbana wa lakal-Hamd”. Thus the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) differentiated between the Takbir and the Tasmi`.

With regard to the Takbir, we say what he says, but with regard to the Tasmi` we do not say what he says, because his words “when he says Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah, then say Rabbana wa lakal-Hamd” are tantamount to saying: when he says Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah, do not say Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah, rather say Rabbana wa lakal-Hamd. This is based on the context of the Hadith in which he says, “When he says Takbir, then say Takbir.” As for those scholars who say that he should say Sami`a Allahu liman hamidah and Rabbana wa lakal-Hamd, this is a weak argument. No opinion should be accepted in all cases or rejected in all cases until it is measured against the Qur’an and Sunnah. When we measure it against the Sunnah we see that it is as you heard. (End quote) See: Al-Mughni, 1/548;) Al-Umm, 1/136;, Al-Muhalla, 1/35; Al-Mawsu`ah Al-Fiqhiyyah,(27/93-94)

Thus it will be clear to you that there is a difference of opinion among the scholars concerning this issue, and it is not strange that some flyers will state the view of some of the scholars.

Check these answers for further elaboration: (134329, 240338, 65847)

And Allah knows best.