

234769 - Is it permissible for the imam and the person who is praying behind him to say Aameen out loud in the prayer?

the question

When the imam recites al-Faatihah in the prayer, should he say Aameen? Should the imam say it out loud and those who are praying with him say it out loud too, or should they say it quietly?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

The meaning of the word “Aameen” is “O Allah, answer.” So whoever says it after a supplication, it is as if he has offered the supplication to which he said Aameen, and if he is the one who said the supplication, then he has offered supplication twice.

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Saying Aameen is like summing up what has been asked for in detail. So the one who offered supplication explained what he sought in detail by saying “ihdina as-siraat al-mustaqeem (Guide us to the straight path)...”, and the one who says Aameen says a single word that includes everything. So if the imam says it, it is as if he offered supplication twice, in detail and then in summary.

End quote from Fath al-Baari (2/307)

Secondly:

The scholars are unanimously agreed that it is Sunnah for the one who is praying on his own and the one who is praying behind an imam to say Aameen. One who is praying on his own should say Aameen after reciting al-Faatihah, and the one who is praying behind the imam should say it after the imam finishes his recitation.

See: al-Mawsoo‘ah al-Fiqhiyyah (1/11-12).

With regard to the imam, the majority of scholars are of the view that it is Sunnah for him to say Aameen too. This is the view of Imam Abu Haneefah, Imam ash-Shaafa'i and Imam Ahmad, and it is one of the two views narrated from Imam Maalik.

The saheeh hadiths support this view, and the view that the imam should say Aameen out loud.

For example, the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "When the imam says 'Aameen' then say 'Aameen.'" Ibn Shahaab said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to say, 'Aameen.'

Narrated by al-Bukhaari (738) and Muslim ((618).

Ibn Rushd al-Maaliki said in Bidaayat al-Mujtahid ((1/119): This is evidence that the imam should say Aameen. End quote.

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr al-Maaliki said:

This hadith also indicates that the imam should say Aameen, because the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "When the imam says 'Aameen' then say 'Aameen.'" It is proven from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that he used to say Aameen when he finished reciting the Opening of the Book (i.e., al-Faatihah). This is evidence that solves the matter and puts an end to dispute, and it is the view of the majority of Muslim scholars. Among those who said that was Maalik, according to the report of the Madanis from him. It is also the view of ash-Shafaa'i and Abu Haneefah, and their companions, and the view of Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Daawood az-Zaahiri, because it is soundly narrated from the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in the hadith of Abu Hurayrah and Waa'il ibn Hujr.

End quote from at-Tamheed (7/11-115).

Thirdly:

With regard to the one who is praying behind an imam, Imam Abu Haneefah was of the view that he should say Aameen quietly.

Imam ash-Shaafa'i and Imam Ahmad, and some of the Maalikis, were of the view that he should say Aameen out loud. This is the correct view, and is proven by the saheeh hadiths and reports narrated from the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them).

Abu Dawood (799) narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: The people have given up saying Aameen, but when the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said, "Ghayr il-maghdoobi 'alayhim wa laa'd-daalleen (not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray) [al-Faatihah 1:7], he would raise his voice and say Aameen. Ad-Daraqutni said: Its isnaad is hasan. Al-Bayhaqi said: Hasan saheeh. It was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani, who said: Its meaning is sound, and there is corroborating evidence in the hadith of Waa'il ibn Hujr, with a saheeh isnaad.

End quote from Silsilat al-Ahaadith ad-Da'eefah (2/368).

Ibn Maajah (843) added in his narration of the hadith: "until the people in the first row could hear it, and the mosque would shake with it." But this addition is weak (da'eef), not sound (saheeh). See: Talkhees al-Habeer (1/238); al-Ahaadeeth ad-Da'eefah (951, 952).

At-Tirmidhi narrated from Sufyaan ath-Thawri, from Waa'il ibn Hujr, who said: I heard the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) recite "Ghayr il-maghdoobi 'alayhim wa laa'd-daalleen (not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray) [al-Faatihah 1:7]," then he said, "Aameen," elongating the word. An-Nawawi said in al-Majmoo' (3/328): Its isnaad is hasan; it was classed as saheeh by al-Albaani.

At-Tirmidhi said: The hadith of Waa'il ibn Hujr is a hasan hadith. This was stated by more than one of the scholars among the Companions of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), the Taabi'een and those who came after them. They thought that a man should raise his voice when saying Aameen, and not say it quietly. This is also the view of ash-Shaafa'i, Ahmad and Ishaq.

Shu'bah narrated it as follows: "And he said Aameen, in a low voice." At-Tirmidhi said: I heard Muhammad (i.e., Imam al-Bukhaari) say: The hadith of Sufyaan is more sound than the hadith of Shu'bah concerning this matter. Shu'bah made mistakes in several places in this hadith...

At-Tirmidhi said: I asked Abu Zur'ah about this hadith and he said: The hadith of Sufyaan concerning this matter is more sound than the hadith of Shu'bah. End quote.

Ash-Shaafa'i narrated in al-Umm that 'Ataa' said: I used to hear the imams, Ibn az-Zubayr and those who came after him, say Aameen, and those who were praying behind them would say Aameen, until the mosque was filled with the sound.

This report was narrated by al-Bukhaari in his Saheeh in a mu'allaq report, and he confirmed that it was soundly narrated from 'Ataa'. He said: Chapter: Imam saying Aameen out loud. 'Ataa' said: "Aameen" is a du'aa'; Ibn az-Zubayr said Aameen and those who were praying behind him said Aameen, until the mosque was filled with the sound. End quote.

Al-Bayhaqi (2/59) said: We narrated from Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) that he used to raise his voice when saying Aameen, whether he was leading the prayer or praying behind an imam.

This report was narrated by al-Bukhaari from Ibn 'Umar in a mu'allaq report, and he confirmed its soundness. The wording is as follows: Naafi' said: Ibn 'Umar never omitted to do that, and he would encourage them to do it, and I heard good things from him concerning that.

Al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him) said (2/307):

"encourage them to do it" i.e., to say Aameen

"good things" i.e., virtue and reward.

The proof in the report of Ibn 'Umar is that he used to say Aameen whenever he finished reciting al-Faatihah, and that is more general than reports which speak of the imam or the

people praying behind an imam saying Aameen. End quote.

It was narrated by al-Bayhaqi (2/59) and Ibn Hibbaan in ath-Thiqaat that 'Ataa' said: I met two hundred of the Sahaabah. When the imam said, 'wa laa'd-daalleen (or of those who are astray)' [al-Faatihah 1:7], they would raise their voices and say Aameen.

Imam al-Bukhaari (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Chapter: Imam saying Aameen out loud, in which he narrated the words of the Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): "When the imam says 'Ghayr il-maghdoobi 'alayhim wa laa'd-daalleen (not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray) [al-Faatihah 1:7], then say 'Aameen.'"

Al-Haajfiz Ibn Hajar said:

Az-Zayn ibn al-Muneer said: The proof in this hadith is in the fact that it contains the instruction to say Aameen, and because the instruction to say Aameen does not specify further, it is to be understood as referring to saying it out loud. If what was meant was saying it quietly or to oneself, that would have been stated specifically.

Ibn Rushayd said: A number of things may be understood from this hadith, one of which is that he said "When the imam says..., then say...". So one thing is to be said in response to another, and the imam only says that out loud, so what appears to be the case is that both should match.

End quote from Fath al-Baari (2/311).

An-Nawawi said in al-Adhkaar (p. 51). One who is leading the prayer and one who is praying on his own should say Aameen out loud in prayers in which the recitation is done out loud. The correct view is that the one who is praying behind an imam should also say it out loud, whether the congregation is composed of few or many. End quote.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The proven saheeh Sunnah is that Aameen should be said out loud in the prayer, because the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said, according to as-Saheehayn: "When the imam says Aameen, then say Aameen, for if a person's saying Ameen coincides with that of the angels, his previous sins will be forgiven." Were it not for his saying Aameen out loud, the people praying behind him would not be able to say Aameen with him and coincide with him. Even clearer than that is the hadith of Waa'il ibn Hujr and the hadith of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with them)...

Then he quoted the two hadiths mentioned above, then he said:

Ash-Shaafa'i was asked whether the imam should raise his voice when he says Aameen. He said: Yes, and those who are praying behind him should also raise their voices. It was said to him: What is the proof? He said: The words of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): "When the imam says Aameen..." This indicates that the imam is enjoined to say Aameen out loud, because those who are praying behind him cannot know when he says Aameen unless he makes it so that it can be heard.

End quote from I'laam al-Muwaqqi'een (2/396-398).

Ibn 'Abd al-Barr al-Maaliki (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

The Kufans [Hanafis] and some of the Madinans [some of the companions of Imam Maalik] said: The imam should not say it out loud.

Ash-Shaafa'i and his companions, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and ahl al-hadith, said: He should say it out loud.

Then he quoted the hadiths which speak of saying it out loud, then he said:

Ahmad ibn Hanbal used to sternly rebuke those who regarded it as makrooh to say it out loud, and he said: The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "The Jews do not envy us for anything as much as they envy us for 'Aameen'."

End quote from at-Tamheed (7/15).

The scholars of the Permanent Committee for Iftaa' were asked: Islam is based on four madhhabs, and the people of Najraan do not say Aameen when the imam finishes reciting al-Faatihah in the prayer, on the grounds that they are following the Hanafi madhhab.

They replied: Firstly, the religion with Allah is Islam, and its rulings are based on the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and the evidence that stems from them.

With regard to the imams of the four well-known madhhabs, and other mujtahid scholars of Islam, they derive their rulings from this evidence on the basis of what Allah has given them of knowledge and understanding of the religion. From each of them, we may take what he got right, and reject what he got wrong with regard to rulings. The factor that decides concerning that, and differentiates what is wrong from what is right is the Qur'an and Sunnah, and the sound evidence that is derived from them.

Secondly: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) enjoined – in his words and actions – saying Aameen after reciting al-Faatihah in the prayer. That is seen in the report narrated by al-Bukhaari and Muslim from Abu Hurayrah, according to which the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “When the imam says ‘Aameen’ then say ‘Aameen,’ for if a person’s saying Aameen coincides with that of the angels, his previous sins will be forgiven.” And it is seen in the report narrated by Abu Daawood and at-Tirmidhi from Waa'il ibn Hujr (may Allah be pleased with him), that When the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) recited ‘Ghayr il-maghdoobi ‘alayhim wa laa'd-daalleen (not of those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray) [al-Faatihah 1:7], he would say “Aameen,” raising his voice. The majority of scholars, including the Hanafis, did that, except that the Hanafis do not say Aameen out loud. The hadith is proof against them with regard to saying Aameen out loud in a prayer in which recitation is done out loud. End quote.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azeez ibn 'Abdullah ibn Baaz, Shaykh 'Abd ar-Razzaaq 'Afeefi, Shaykh 'Abdullah ibn Ghadyaan, Shaykh 'Abdullah ibn Qa'ood (6/420-421).

Shaykh al-Albaani (may Allah have mercy on him) originally thought it most likely that the imam – but not the people praying behind him – should say Aameen out loud; the people praying behind him should say it quietly.

Then he classed as saheeh the report from Ibn az-Zubayr and Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with them) which mentions saying it out loud, then he said: If there is no proven report to the contrary from any other Sahaabah, then one would be content to accept the report from Abu Hurayrah and Ibn az-Zubayr, and at present I do not know of any report contrary to that. And Allah knows best.

End quote from Silsilat al-Ahaadeeth ad-Da'eefah (2/369).

But we should point out that it is not permissible for this action, which is one of the Sunnah actions of the prayer, to become a cause of division and dissent among the Muslims.

Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the ruling on saying Aameen out loud, and whether it is proven from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that he said Aameen quietly in a prayer in which the recitation is done out loud?

He replied: Saying Aameen out loud in a prayer in which the recitation is done out loud is Sunnah, because it is connected to the recitation, and concerning that there are hadiths from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) which say that he used to say it so loud that the mosque was filled with the voices of the congregation saying it out loud. And because the one who is praying behind the imam says Aameen to his imam's recitation which he did out loud. The supplication is said out loud, so it is appropriate for the Aameen to be said out loud too. This is from a theoretical point of view.

However, this issue should not be a cause of stirring up argument and resentment among the Muslims, for that is not the way of our righteous predecessors (as-salaf as-saalih). The salaf differed concerning such matters, but they did not regard one another as misguided because of that. So if a person raises his voice when saying Aameen in a prayer in which recitation is done out loud, that is good and is preferable.

End quote from Majmoo' Fataawa ash-Shaykh Ibn 'Uthaymeen (13/140).

Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked: Is it permissible not to say Aameen out loud and not to raise the hands?

He replied:

Yes, if he is among people who do not raise their hands and do not say Aameen out loud. In that case it is better not to do that, so as to soften their hearts, and so that he will be able to call them to goodness, and to teach them and guide them, and so that it will be possible to reconcile between them. If he differs from them, they will be put off by that, because they think that this is the teaching of the religion; they think that one should not raise the hands except at the takbeerat al-ihraam [the takbeer at the beginning of the prayer]. They think that this is the teaching of the religion, and that is how they were taught by their scholars.

The same applies to not saying Aameen out loud, which is a well-known difference of opinion among the scholars; some of them say that it should be said out loud, and some say that it should not be said out loud. In the hadiths it says that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) raised his voice when saying that, and in other hadiths it says that he kept his voice low.

Even though the correct view is that it is mustahabb to say Aameen out loud, and that it is something that is recommended, not doing so is no more than omitting something recommended (mustahabb). So a believer may refrain from doing something that is recommended if doing it will lead to division, disputes and trouble. In fact [in that case] the believer should refrain from doing the thing that is recommended. With regard to one who seeks to call people to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, if his refraining from doing it will serve a greater purpose then he should refrain from doing it. An example of that is when the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) chose not to demolish the Ka'bah and rebuild it on the foundations of Ibraaheem; he said: "...because Quraysh have only recently left disbelief behind." Hence he left it as it was, and did not change it, because that served the public interest. End quote.

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And Allah knows best.