Does catching up with Ruku’ mean catching up with the Rak’ah?

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All praise be to Allah and peace and blessings be upon the Prophet ﷺ.

There is a difference of opinion amongst some scholars as to whether or not the one who catches up with the Imaam while he is in ruku’ catches up with that unit of prayer. There are some narrations from the Prophet ﷺ regarding this; though, according to the correct opinion, they are all weak. There are, however, some Sahih narrations from the companions in this regard. Here I have tried my best to collect all the evidence in this regard, both Sahih and Da’if. I have mentioned any weakness that a narration has. I have not included any narrations that may not be used as explicit evidence.

Evidence for those who say that one must recite the Surah al-Faatihah in order to catch up with the rak’ah

1. The one who catches up with the Imaam in ruku’ misses two pillars of the prayer: the Faatihah and the Qiyaam. So how could his rak’ah be valid?

2. Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه
   a) Al-A’raj narrated that Abu Hurayrah said: “It is not sufficient for you unless you catch up with the Imaam, while standing, before he goes into ruku’. “[1]

   b) Abu Hurayrah said: “Whoever finds the people have bowed, should not count that rak’ah.”[2]

3. This view is proven from Imaam Bukhari, and is attributed to Imaam Ali ibn al-Madeeni and Imaam ibn Khuzaymah.

Evidence for those who say that one must only catch up with Ruku’ in order to catch up with the rak’ah

1. The above narration of Abu Hurayrah[^1] does not prove anything regarding reciting al-Faatihah, it simply proves regarding catching up with the Imaam during Qiyaam. Imaam ibn Rajab said in his Fath al-Baari: “This (narration of Abu Hurayrah) necessitates that one who catches up with the Imaam (just) before he bows, and does not recite anything, and then he bows; he catches up with prayer. However, this is not what they (the ones who also view al-Faatihah as necessary) say. This makes it evident that their saying is newly fabricated, and they have no predecessor with them.”[^3]

Secondly, even if we consider that Abu Hurayrah did in fact mean what they say, it is proven from other companions that they opposed this saying.

2. The Prophet ﷺ
   a) It is narrated from Abu Bakrah that he came in the masjid while the Prophet ﷺ was in ruku’. The Prophet ﷺ heard him making haste while trying to catch the rak’ah. So after the prayer he asked, “Who was the one who made haste?” Abu Bakrah replied, “It was me”. The Prophet ﷺ replied, “May Allaah increase your love for good, but do not do so again.”[^4]

b) ‘Abd al-‘Aziz bin Rafi’ narrated from a man that the Prophet ﷺ said, “If you arrive and the Imaam is in ruku’, then go in ruku; and if he is in prostration, then prostrate; and do not count the prostration if it is not accompanied by ruku’.”[^5]

[^1]: Musnad Ahmad 5/42/20435. Da’if. Bashaar al-Khayaat is unknown. He has been corroborated it al-Istidhkaar 2/317 by Bakkaar bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz, but he is weak (Tahdhib 1/478). Something similar has been narrated in Juzz al-Qiraa’ p. 48. It is also weak. Abu Khalaf ‘Abdullah bin ‘Isa al-Khazzaar is weak (Mizaan al-I’tidaal 2/470).

[^2]: It has been narrated without the part about catching up with the rak’ah (al-Bukhari 1/156/783).

[^3]: Sunan al-Kubraa 2/128/2576. Da’if. The man that ‘Abd al-Aziz bin Rafi’ is narrating it from is unknown, and there is no proof that he is a companion. There are, however, a few odd narrations that name some companions: ‘Abd al-Rahman bin Amr bin Jablah (he is matrook – lissaan al-mizaan 3/424) has narrated it as being from ‘Abd al-Aziz from ibn Abi Layla from Mu’azz (‘Ilal al-Daaraqutni 6/58).

[^4]: It is also in al-Muttafiq wal-Muftariq 1/367 from ‘Abd al-Aziz from Abu Salamah from ‘Abd al-Rahmaan bin ‘Afw, but it is weak. Ismaa’i’il bin Ziyaad is unknown; Mansoor bin Dinaar has been weakened by the majority; Abu Yusuf al-Qaadi is sudooq, but used to make mistakes (al-Jarh wal-Ta’deel 9/201).

[^5]: Shaykh Albaani has also narrated it from a manuscript of Masaa’il Ahmad and Ishaaq bin Mansoor al-Marwazi (Silsilah al-Ahaadith al-Sahihah 3/185/1188) as being from ‘Abd al-Aziz from ibn Mughaffal al-Mazani. However, it is unlikely that ‘Abd al-Aziz (d. 130) heard from ‘Abdullah bin Mughaffal al-Mazani (d. 57). Al-Haafiz Zubair ‘Ali Zai has said that it is not known that ‘Abd al-Aziz has heard anything from him (Monthly al-Hadith 30/17). In any case these narrations are shaa; al-Thawri, Jarir, Shareek, Shu’bah, and Abu Bakr bin ‘Ayyaash have all narrated it from ‘Abd al-Aziz from the unknown person. Imaam Daaraqutni has also concluded that this narration is mursal (‘Ilal al-Daaraqutni 6/58)
c) It is narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet ﷺ said: “If you come to the prayer and we are prostrating, then prostrate; but do not count it as anything.”[6]

d) It is narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever caught up with a rak’ah has also caught up with the prostration.”[7]

e) It is narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever has caught a rak’ah of prayer has caught it before the imaam straightens his back.”[8]

f) It is narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever catches up with the last rak’ah of the Jummu’ah prayer should add another to it; and whoever is not able to catch up with the ruku’ of the last rak’ah should instead pray four raka’aat of Dhuhr.”[9]

g) It has been narrated from ‘Abd al-Rahmaan bin al-Azhar that the Prophet ﷺ said: “If you come to the prayer and we are prostrating, then prostrate but do not count it as anything; and whoever catches up with a rak’ah, catches up with the prayer.”[10]

h) It is narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the Prophet ﷺ said: “Whoever catches up with the imaam while he is bowing should bow with him and consider it as part of his prayer.”[11]


[7] al-Mu’jam al-Awsat 4/252/4119. Da’if. Yazid bin ’Iyaad is matrook (al-Tahdhib 11/352). Something similar has been narrated as a saying of Abu Hurayrah (see footnote [13])

[8] Sahih ibn Khuzaymah 3/45/1595. Da’if. Yahya bin Humayd is weak (Lisaa al-Mizaan 6/250), and he has contradicted others who have narrated it without the words “…has caught it before the imaam straightens his back” (al-Du’afa’ al-Kabir of al-Uqayli 4/398).

[9] Sunan al-Daarqutni 2/320/1603. Munkar. Sulaymaan bin Abi Dawood al-Harraani is munkar al-hadith (Lisaa al-Mizaan 3/90). He has been corroborated by a few others (all of whom are weak), and none of them have mentioned the part about the ruku’.

[10] Ma’rifah al-Sahaabah of ibn Mandah 2/16/2, as mentioned by Shaykh Albaani (Silsilah al-Ahaadith al-Sahihah 3/186/1188). Da’if. ‘Abdullah bin ‘Abd al-Rahmaan bin al-Saa’ib and ‘Abd al-Hameed bin ‘Abd al-Rahmaan bin al-Azhar are both unknown. Shaykh Albaani has said: “I say, it’s isnaad is weak” (ibid).

3. **Abu Hurayrah**

   a) Imaam Bukhari said that it is narrated from Ibraahim from 'Abd al-Rahmaan bin Ishaaq from al-Maqburi from Abu Hurayrah the opposite of what was narrated by al-A'raj from Abu Hurayrah. Imaam Bukhari did not mention the wording, nor could it be found.

   b) Imaam Maalik said that it reached him that Abu Hurayrah used to say: “Whoever caught up with a rak'ah has also caught up with the prostration, and whoever missed the recitation of al-Faatiha has missed a great good.”

4. **Abdullah bin ‘Umar**

   a) Abdullah bin ‘Umar said “If you find the Imaam bowing, then if you bow with him before he raises his head, then you have caught up; but if he raises his head before you bow, then you have missed it.”

   b) Saalim narrated from Abdullah bin ‘Umar and Zayd bin Thaabit that they said: “If you see that the people have raised their heads from ruku’, then say the takbeer and prostrate but do not count [that rak'ah].”

   c) Abdullah bin ‘Umar said “If you missed your rak'ah, you have missed your prostration as well.”

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[12] Juzz al-Qira’ah p. 37. It is mu’allaq. ‘Abd al-Rahmaan is sudooq, but Imaam Bukhari has elaborated on why his narration is not comparable to that of al-A’raj.


Imaam Bayhaqi narrates this (Sunan al-Kubraa 2/128/2580) and mentions Imaam Maalik along with Ibn Jurayj, from Naaﬁ’, from ibn ‘Umar. However, what is correct that he intended to narrate from Imaam Maalik in mursal form (from Ibn ‘Umar directly), as he narrates separately as well (ibid 2/128/2582). This mursal narration is in Muwatta’ Maalik as well (1/10/18). Furthermore, in this narration is Walid bin Muslim, who used to do Tadlis Taswiyyah. So, only the narration from Ibn Jurayj is Sahih.


It is also in Muwatta Maalik 1/10/18, but it is mursal. Also see footnote [23]

5. **Abdullah bin Mas’oood** 
   a) Ibn Wahb said: “I went with Ibn Mas’oood said to the masjid, and when we were in the middle, the Imaam bowed. So Ibn Mas’oood said the takbeer and bowed, so I bowed with him. Then we walked, while bowing, till we reached the rows and the people had raised their heads. So when the Imaam finished (his prayer), I got up because I thought I had not caught the rak’ah. So Ibn Mas’oood took hold of my hand and sat me down and said: “You had caught it”.” [17]

   b) Abdullah bin Mas’oood said: “Whoever caught up with ruku’, has caught up [with the rak’ah].” [18]

   c) Hubayrah said that ‘Ali bin Abi Taalib and ‘Abdullah bin Mas’oood said: “Whoever did not catch up with the first rak’ah should not count the prostrations [either].” [19]

   d) Abdullah bin Mas’oood said: “If anyone of you does ruku (outside of the row) and walks over to the row before the people have raised their heads then he should count that rak’ah; but if they raise their heads before he reaches the row, then he should not count it.” [20]

6. ‘Ali bin Abi Taalib

   Hubayrah said that ‘Ali bin Abi Taalib and ‘Abdullah bin Mas’oood said: “Whoever did not catch up with the first ruku’ should not count the prostrations [either].” [21]

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[20] Mu’jam al-Kabir 9/271/9357. Da’if. Yazid bin Ahmar is unknown, and Hajjaaj bin Arta’h is mudallis, and has not ascertained his hearing.

7. **Zayd bin Thaabit**
   a) Khaarijah said: “Zayd bin Thaabit used to do ruku’ in the entrance of the masjid, facing the qiblah. Then he walked horizontally towards his right (and joined the row). Then he used to consider the rak‘ah as caught up whether he reached the row or not.”[22]

   b) Saalim narrated from Abdullah bin ‘Umar and Zayd bin Thaabit that they said: “If you see that the people have raised their heads from ruku’, then say the takbeer and prostrate but do not count [that rak‘ah].”[23]

8. **Abu Bakrah**
   Al-Qaasim bin Rabii‘ah said: “Abu Bakrah used to leave his home (for salah) and find the people in ruku’, so he used to bow and walk over to the row; and he used to count the rak‘ah.”[24]

9. This opinion is held by majority of the fuqahaa’. Among others:
   a) Imaam Ahmad[25]
   b) Imaam Shaafi’i[26]
   c) Imaam ibn Hibbaan[27]
   d) Imaam Bayhaqi[28]
   e) Imaam ibn Qudaamah[29]
   f) Imaam ibn Taymiyyah[30]
   g) Imaam ibn Rajab[31]
   h) Imaam Ishaq bin Rahawayh has mentioned a consensus on this matter[32]

[22] Sharh Mushkil al-Aathaar 14/207 and Shaykh Arna’oot graded it Hasan. Shaykh Albaani also graded it Jayyid (Irwa’ al-Ghalil 2/264).

Shaykh Yaasir Fathi said that it is shaadh because no other narrator has mentioned the part about counting the rak‘ah; there is a risk that Ibn Abi al-Zinaad may have narrated this in Baghdad, when his memory had weakened. However, Imaam Ali ibn al-Madeeni attested to the fact that this matter, in general, is proven from the companion Zayd bin Thaabit (Juzz al-Qiraa’ah p. 36), and we know of no other chain that proves it from him, other than this. So perhaps this is proof that this chain was Sahih according to Imaam ibn al-Madeeni, and he was an Imaam in the ‘Ilal (defects) of Hadith. Allah knows best.


[24] Hadith ‘Ali bin Hijr ‘an Isma‘il bin Ja‘far 123. Shaykh Yaasir Fathi said: “It’s narrators are trustworthy; and it is not known from Al-Qaasim bin Rabii‘ah bin Joshan al-Ghatfaani that he heard from Abu Bakrah, and he has few narrations.”


[27] Sahih ibn Hibbaan 5/570.


[29] Al-Mughni 2/35.


[31] See footnote [2]