

Shaykh Mashhūr Hasan Āl Salmān
(hafīdhahullāh)
WHEN SHOULD ONE SAY “ĀMEEN”
WHEN PRAYING BEHIND THE IMĀM?¹

A brother from al-’Irāq, from Mosul, asks:

“When should the congregation say “Āmeen” when praying behind the Imām? With the Imām saying it or after the Imām has said it? Jazak Allāhu khayran!”

Answer:

The Prophet (*sallallāhu ’alayhi wassallam*) said “*’idba amminu’l-Imām*” (“when the Imāms says Āmeen”) you should do what? “*Āmmīnū*” (“you all say Āmeen”).² Imām al-Khattābī says in *Ma’ālim us-Sunan*:

His saying (sallallāhu ’alayhi wassallam): “When the Imām says Āmeen, you all say Āmeen” is like his saying (sallallāhu ’alayhi wassallam) “If the leader travels then you all travel.”

What does this mean? Firstly, no one goes before him, he begins. Secondly, it should not be done at the same time as him. Thirdly, not to delay too much. When he begins, then we begin after him. But today, in all of the masājīd of the dunya, the Imām remains as the Imām until the time comes to say “Āmeen”? When it comes to the time to say “Āmeen” the congregation will all say it before

¹ From Shaykh Mashhūr’s question and answer session at Masjid Ibrāheem Hajj Hasan, ’Ammān, Jordan. Dated: 7th April 2007 CE, refer to the second audio of the session here:

<http://www.mashhoor.net/inside/lectures.htm>

² Reported by Bukhārī, Muslim, an-Nasā’ī and ad-Dārimī report it with the additional wording of “...then say Āmeen, for Allāh will answer you.” These *ahādeeth* also refute the claim attributed to Imām Mālik that the Imām does not have to say “Āmeen.” Ibn Hajar said in *Fath ul-Bārī*: “It clearly shows that the Imām does say Āmeen.” Ibn ’AbdulBarr stated in *at-Tamheed*, vol.7, p.13:

It is the view of the majority of Muslims, including Mālik as the people of Madeenah report it from him, for it is authentic from Allāh’s Messenger (sallallāhu ’alayhi wassallam) via the hadeeth of Abū Hurayrah and that of Wā’il ibn Hijr.

the Imām does. When the Imām makes the *madd* (elongation) at “*dālin*” at the end of *al-Fātibah* it is almost as if the people cut the Imām’s breath when he says,

وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

Before the Imām has even finished, the people are already saying “*Āmeen*”!?? In Saheeh ul-Bukhārī in the chapter of *Jabr* (reciting loudly) the Imām says “*Āmeen*” loudly first and the Prophet (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) said: “*Idha amminu’l-Imām, Amminū*” (when the Imām says *Āmeen*, then you all say *Āmeen*). So has the Imām actually said “*Āmeen*” (before you have said it)? He has said, but now can you as the congregation hear the Imām say *Āmeen*? No, you can’t hear him say it in any *Masjid*, except if you’re in a *Masjid* and the microphone is very loud. Do you know who cause this to happen to the Imāms? You! Do you know why? Because you have caused the Imām to no longer be the Imām and to thus become one of the congregation! By saying “*Āmeen*” (before the Imām has said it) you (the congregation) have become the Imāms! So it is not permissible for you, O you the congregation, to become the Imām at all! It is obligatory for you to wait until the Imām has actually pronounced “*Āmeen*” and begins with it. As for you then:

Firstly, do not say it before the Imām does as most of the people do today.

Secondly, do not say the “*Āmeen*” at the same time the Imām does (i.e. in unison with the Imām), do not say “*Ā...*” with the Imām. The Imām goes first and says “*Ā...*” and when you hear this then you can say “*Āmeen.*” This *Sunnah* is blessed for the Prophet (*sallallāhu ‘alayhi wassallam*) said: “*Whoever’s saying of Āmeen agrees with when the Imām has said it, his previous sins will be forgiven.*” All sins will be forgiven! This is if your saying of “*Āmeen*” agrees with when the angels say it and the angels carry the rewards. The congregation do not say it before the Imām has, they have to hear the Imām say “*Ā...*” and they hear him pronounce “*Āmeen*” then they follow. This is the correct answer in the issue of the time of the “*Āmeen*” and Allāh knows best.