Joining a Congregational Prayer in the Final Attestation of the Prayer - 7 /Aug/ 2019

Q.| Is it valid to join a congregational prayer when the congregants are in the final attestation (tashahhud)[1] of the prayer?

A.| If the worshipper arrives at a congregational prayer when the imam is reciting the final attestation of the prayer, in order to receive the reward of participating in the congregational prayer, he may say takbīrat al-iḥrām (the utterance of divine glorification that commences a canonic prayer) and then immediately proceed to sit and recite the attestation along with the imam of the congregation, stopping short of uttering the final salutations (taslīm), and when the imam is finished with the salutations, the worshipper may proceed to stand up and, without repeating the intention and commencing takbīr of the prayer, recite Sūrat al-Ḥamd and a second sūrah as constituting the qarā'ah of the first segment (rak'ah) of his prayer, and from there he may continue his prayer in the normal order.

[1] Tashahhud, here translated at "attestation," refers to the formula recited in the second and third or fourth segments of the prayer in which the worshipper attests to the unity of God and the prophecy of Prophet Muhammad and which ends with invoking God's blessings on the Prophet and his holy family.