113064 - Spreading Messages About New Year's Eve Dhikr and Quran Gatherings

the question

This is a message that I have seen a lot on the Internet, but in fact I have not sent it to anyone because I am not sure if it is an innovation (Bid`ah) or not. Is it permissible to spread it and will we be rewarded for doing so, or is this not permissible because it is an innovation?

“In sha’ Allah, at 12 midnight on New Year's Eve we will all pray two Rak`ahs, or read Quran, or remember our Lord, or offer Du`a, because if our Lord looks at the Earth at a time when most of the world is disobeying Him, he will find that the Muslims are still obeying Him. By Allah, you have to send this message to everyone you know, because the more our numbers increase, the more our Lord will be pleased.”

Please advise me, may Allah bless you.

Summary of answer

It is prohibited to spread the messages that urge Muslims to gather to pray two Rak`ahs, or read Quran, or remember Allah, or offer Du`a on New Year's Eve. It is an innovation to adhere to these acts of worship on such occasions.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

You have done very well not to spread this message which is widespread on many websites on which uneducated attitudes and ignorance prevail.

With regard to those who published this message and want the Muslims to pray and recite Dhikr,

we do not doubt that their intentions are good and great, especially if they want acts of obedience and worship to be done at a time when sins are being committed. However, this good and righteous intention does not make the actions legitimate, sound or acceptable in Shari`ah. Rather it is essential that the action be in accordance with Shari`ah in terms of its reason, type, quantity, manner, time and place. For a detailed discussion on these six categories, please see the answer to question number 21519 . In this manner the Muslim may distinguish between legitimate and innovated actions.

We may list the reasons why this message should not be spread by noting a number of points, including the following:

- There have been Jahili special occasions [with practices similar to those in Jahiliyyah (i.e., the pre Islamic era)] and special occasions of the disbelievers and misguided since the time of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) until the present time, but we have not seen any text from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) which encourages us to do acts of worship and obedience at the time when others are committing acts of evil and disobedience, or to do prescribed actions at the time when innovated actions are being done. There is no report of any of the well-known imams recommending doing such a thing.

This comes under the heading of dealing with sin by means of innovation, as happened in the case of responding to the innovation of mourning on the occasion of 'Ashura , as done by the Rafidis, by introducing the innovation of spending a great deal and making a show of joy and happiness.

Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

“As for taking the days of calamities as occasions for mourning, this is not part of the religion of the Muslims; rather it is closer to the religion of Jahiliyyah. Thus they missed out on the virtue and reward of fasting on this day. Some other people introduced things on the basis of fabricated Hadiths for which there is no basis, such as the virtue of doing Ghusl on this day, or applying kohl to the eyes, or shaking hands. These and similar things are innovations, all of which are disliked.

What is recommended is to fast on this day.

There are also well known reports about spending generously on one's family on this day, such as the Hadith of Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn Al-Muntashir from his father, who said: We heard that the one who spends generously on his family on the day of 'Ashura, Allah will give him in abundance for the rest of the year. This was narrated by Ibn `Uyaynah, but the fact that he said `we heard that…' and it is not known who said it indicates that the chain of narrators is interrupted. It is most likely that this was fabricated because of the hatred that appeared between the Nasibis and Rafidis. The Rafidis regarded the day of 'Ashura as a day of mourning, so the Nasibis fabricated reports about it which indicated that one should spend generously on this day and take it as an `Eid. Both views are false.

It is not permissible for anyone to change anything in Islam for the sake of anyone. Expressing joy and happiness on the day of `Ashura and spending generously on this day are all innovations that were introduced as a reaction against the Rafidis." (Iqtida' Al-Siraat Al-Mustaqeem, p. 300, 301)

We have quoted some other valuable words of Shaykh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah in the answer to question number 4033 .

- There are special times for offering Du`a and prayers as prescribed in Islam. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) encouraged us to offer Du`a at these times, such as the last third of the night, which is the time when the Lord, may He be Glorified and Exalted, descends to the nearest heaven. Encouraging people to do that at a time when no authentic text has been narrated concerning it is introducing legislation concerning the reason or the time, and going against Shari`ah with regard to either of them is sufficient to deem the action to be a reprehensible innovation, so how about if it has to do with both of them?!

In the answer to question number 8375 , we were asked about giving charity to poor families at the time of the Gregorian New Year, and we replied that it is not allowed. Among the things that we said there was the following:

If we Muslims want to give in charity, we can give to those who really deserve it, and we should not aim to do that specifically on the days of the disbelievers' festivals. We should do that whenever there is a need, and make the most of good and great occasions such as the month of Ramadan and the first ten days of Dhul-Hijjah , and other virtuous occasions when rewards are multiplied."

The basic principle for a Muslim is to follow (the Sunnah) and not introduce innovations. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Say (O Muhammad to mankind): `If you (really) love Allah, then follow me (i.e. accept Islamic Monotheism, follow the Quran and the Sunnah), Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.'

32. Say (O Muhammad): `Obey Allah and the Messenger (Muhammad)." But if they turn away, then Allah does not like the disbelievers.'" [Al `Imran 3:21, 32]

Ibn Kathir (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"This verse states that everyone who claims to love Allah but is not following the path of Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) is lying in his claim unless he follows the path or religion of Prophet Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) in all his words and deeds, as it is proven in an authentic report that the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever introduces an action that is not part of this matter of ours will have it rejected." (Tafsir Ibn Kathir, 2/32)

Shaykh Muhammad ibn Salih Al-`Uthaymin (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

"You should love the Messenger more than you love yourselves, and your faith is not complete unless you do that. Do not introduce into his religion anything that is not part of it. What the seekers of knowledge should do is explain to the people and tell them: Occupy yourselves with legitimate and sound acts of worship; remember Allah; send blessings upon the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) at all times; establish regular prayer; pay Zakah; and be kind

towards the Muslims at all times.” (Liqa’at Al-Bab Al-Maftuh, 35/5)

- You are forgetting to do what you are obliged to do with regard to these sins and evils, which is enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, offering sincere advice to those who are going against Islam, and focusing on individual acts of worship when there are other communal acts of disobedience and evil which you should not do.

What we think is that it is prohibited to spread such messages and that it is an innovation to adhere to these acts of worship on such occasions. It is sufficient for you to warn against forbidden celebrations on occasions of shirk and innovation. You will be rewarded for that and you will be doing your duty with regard to these sins.

Please see the answer to question no. 60219 for some comments on good intentions and that good intentions will not benefit a person or make his innovated deeds rewardable.

And Allah knows best.