289048 - Can he omit Qunut sometimes in Ramadan?

the question

I want to know: are both of Allah’s hands right hands in a literal sense, or is it simply metaphorical and indicative of good? I found a hadith in Saheeh Muslim which some of the scholars say indicates that Allah will carry the entire earth in His left hand, but in another report from Ibn ‘Abbaas and others, the word used is “the other hand of Allah (the right hand) will carry the earth.” Can you explain this?

My second question is: Last Saturday, a boy led us in praying tahajjud. He prayed Witr with three rak‘ahs and one tashahhud, and he also forgot to recite Qunut in the third rak‘ah. When he finished, he said: This is also Sunnah – i.e., omitting Du‘aa’ al-Qunut. But as far as I know, Du‘aa’ al-Qunut is Sunnah whereas omitting it is not. Did the Prophet omit Qunut in prayer? Even though the prayer is still valid, his argument does not seem to be correct. Can you explain to us?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Allah, may He be exalted, has two noble hands, as He, may He be glorified, has told us in His Book and on the lips of His Messenger (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), and the early generations were agreed on that.

One of His hands is a right hand, but can it be said of the other that it is a left hand?

There is a difference of opinion concerning that among Ahl as-Sunnah, because they differed concerning the soundness of the additional phrase narrated by Muslim (2788), which is the words, “Then He will roll up the earths in His left hand.” Some of them regard it as saheeh, and others

said that it is shaadhdh (odd).

What appears to be correct is that this additional phrase is saheeh, and that it may be said that one of His hands is left in in terms of nomenclature, but it is a right hand and blessed in terms of meaning.

That is because the left hand in the case of humans is of lower status than the right hand, but in the case of the Creator, that is not so, for His attributes are of the utmost perfection and greatness, and both of His hands are right hands in terms of meaning.

Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) said: They are all saheeh hadiths according to the scholars of Sunnah. The hadith of Ibn ‘Umar is marfoo‘ and saheeh; it is not mawqoof. There is no contradiction between them, praise be to Allah. The hands of Allah, may He be glorified, are described as right and left in terms of nomenclature, as in the hadith of Ibn ‘Umar, but they are both right and blessed in terms of honour and virtue, as in the other saheeh hadiths.

End quote from Majmoo‘ Fataawa ash-Shaykh Ibn Baaz (25/126).

Secondly:

Whoever prays Witr with three rak‘ahs, may say the tasleem after two rak‘ahs, or he may pray three rak‘ahs one after the other, with one tashahhud at the end, and not make them like Maghrib.

See the answer to question no. 38230.

Thirdly:

Reciting Qunut in Witr is Sunnah, because of the hadith of al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: The Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) taught me some words to say in Qunut of Witr:

Allaahumma ihdini feeman hadayta wa ‘aafini feeman ‘aafayta wa tawallani feeman tawallayta wa baarik li feema a‘tayta, wa qini sharra ma qadayta, fa innaka taqdi wa la yuqda ‘alayk, wa innahu laa yadhillu man waalayta wa laa ya‘izzu man ‘aadayta, tabaarakta Rabbana wa ta‘aalayta

(O Allah, guide me among those whom You have guided, grant me wellbeing among those to whom You have granted wellbeing, take care of me among those of whom You have taken care, bless me in what You have bestowed, and protect me from the evil of what You have decreed. For verily You decree and none can decree concerning You; and he will not be humiliated whom You have protected, nor will be he honoured whom You take as an enemy. Blessed are You, O Lord, and exalted).”

Narrated by Abu Dawood (1425) and by at-Tirmidhi (464) who classed it as hasan. Classed as saheeh by Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in al-Istidhkaar (2/285) and by an-Nawawi in al-Adhkaar (86).

There is nothing in the Sunnah to indicate that it may be done or not done in a clear text from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), even though some of the scholars concluded that so as to reconcile between the hadiths which mention how the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) prayed Witr.

Al-Albaani (may Allah have mercy on him) said in his book Sifat Salaat an-Nabi sall-Allahu ‘alayhi wa sallim (The Prophet’s Prayer Described), p. 160:

He (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to recite Qunut sometimes….

Rather we say sometimes because the Sahaabah who narrated reports about Witr did not mention Qunut in their reports. If he (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) used to do it all the time, they all would have narrated that from him.

Yes, that was narrated by Ubayy ibn Ka‘b only, which indicates that he used to do it sometimes. End quote.

It was also narrated from Ubayy ibn Ka‘b (may Allah be pleased with him) and a number of other Sahaabah that they did not recite Qunut at all in Ramadan, and some of the scholars regarded it as mustahabb for the imam to omit it sometimes, so that it will be known that it is not obligatory.

Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Reports that speak of reciting Qunut in the last half of Ramadan were narrated from ‘Ali, Ubayy ibn Ka‘b, Ibn ‘Umar, Ibn Sireen, ath-Thawri,

az-Zuhri, and Yahya ibn Wathaab. Ibn al-Mundhir said: … and Maalik, ash-Shaafa'i and Ahmad…

It was narrated that al-Hasan said: 'Umar instructed Ubayy ibn Ka'b to lead the people in prayer, and when the first half [of Ramadan] had passed and the second half had begun, on the night of the sixteenth, they recited Qunut and prayed against the disbelievers.

Ibn Jurayj said: I said to 'Ataa': Is there Qunut in Ramadan? He said: The first one to recite Qunut in Ramadan was 'Umar. I said: In the last half of the month? He said: Yes.

End quote from al-Istidraak (2/76, 77)

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) said: With regard to Qunut al-Witr, there are three scholarly views concerning it:

It was said that it is not mustahabb at all, because it is not proven from the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that he recited Qunut in Witr.

And it was said that rather it is mustahabb, as was narrated from Ibn Mas'ood and others, and because in as-Sunan it is narrated that the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) taught al- Hasan ibn 'Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) a du'aa' to recite in Qunut al-Witr.

And it was said that rather Qunut is to be recited in the last half of Ramadan, as Ubayy ibn Ka'b used to do.

The fact of the matter is that Qunut al-Witr is more akin to ordinary supplication that is allowed in prayer; Whoever wants to do it may do it, and whoever does not want to do it may omit it, just as a person has the choice between praying Witr with three or five or seven rak'ahs; and if he prays Witr with three rak'ahs, he has the choice between separating them (and praying two then one), or putting them altogether (and praying three rak'ahs consecutively).

Likewise, he has the choice with regard to the du'aa' of Qunut; if he wishes he may do it, otherwise he may omit it.

If a person leads the people in praying qiyaam in Ramadan, and recites Qunut every night

throughout the entire month, then he has done well; if he does that only in the last half of the month, he has also done well; and if he does not recite Qunut at all, he has also done well.

End quote from al-Fataawa al-Kubra (2/119).

Shaykh Ibn Baaz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about someone who persistently recites Qunut in Witr every night; was that narrated from our forebears (the salaf)?

He replied: There is nothing wrong with that; rather it is Sunnah, because when the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) taught al-Hasan ibn ‘Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) Qunut in Witr, he did not tell him to omit it sometimes, or to do it constantly. This indicates that both are permissible. Hence it is proven from Ubayy ibn Ka‘b (may Allah be pleased with him) that when he led the Sahaabah (may Allah be pleased with them) in prayer in the Mosque of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), he used to omit Qunut on some nights, and perhaps that was so that the people would learn that it was not obligatory. And Allah is the source of strength.

End quote from Fataawa Islamiyyah (2/159).

Shaykh Ibn ‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Du‘aa’ should be omitted sometimes, so that the common folk will not think that du‘aa’ is obligatory.

End quote from Fataawa ‘Ulama’ al-Balad al-Haraam (152).

So there is nothing wrong with what your imam did, and if what he meant by “Sunnah” was what the Sahaabah did, then he was right.

And Allah knows best.