45518 - When should the words al-salatu khayrun min al-nawm (prayer is better than sleep) be said? In the first adhan or in the second?

the question

I have been studying with this Shaikh in Dubai for the last two years. He revealed an astonishing so called fact that `As salatu Khairum minan Naoom`in FAJR Adhan is a Bi`da cause Hazarat Bilal use to use these words in TAHAJJUD Adhan and IBN MAKTOUM use to call the FAJR Adhan where by he did not use these words.The other evidence is that, by meaning of these words you are trying to compare SLEEP with FAJR Salat which should not be the case. He also said that Shaikh Albani had made a Du`a for the youngsters of today asking ALLAH to give them Hidaya to stop this Bi`da. If my Teacher is correct, why is it being followed in Mecca and Madina as well. Please give me your comments.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is narrated in a number of saheeh ahadith that the words al-salatu khayrun min al-nawm (prayer is better than sleep) are to be said in the adhan for Fajr. It is mentioned in some of them that this phrase is to be said in the first adhan without stating what is meant by the phrase “the first adhan” – is it the adhan that is given before Fajr or is it the adhan of Fajr itself?

These ahadith include the following:

1 – It was narrated that Abu Mahdhoorah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I used to give the adhan for the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and in the first adhan of Fajr I used to say: “Hayya ‘ala al-falah, al-salatu khayrun min al-nawm, al-salatu khayrun min al-nawm, Allahu akbar Allahu akbar, la ilaha ill-Allah (come to prosperity, prayer is better than sleep, prayer is better than sleep, Allah is Most Great, Allah is Most Great, there is no god but Allah).”

Narrated by Abu Dawood, 500; al-Nasa’i, 647; classed as saheeh by al-Albani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

2 – It was narrated that Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) said: In the first adhan after the word al-falah it said: Al-salatu khayrun min al-nawm, al-salatu khayrun min al-nawm (prayer is better than sleep, prayer is better than sleep).

Shaykh al-Albani said:

It was narrated by al-Tahhawi (1/82) with a hasan isnad as al-Hafiz said in al-Talkhees (3/169).

Al-Thamr al-Mustatab, p. 131

These ahadith provide evidence for those who said that this should be said in the first adhan which comes at the end of the night. But the correct view is that it should be in said the adhan which comes after the time for prayer has begun. That is for a number of reasons:

(a)

The word awwal (first) is in relation to the iqamah, and the iqamah is the second call to prayer. In the saheeh Sunnah there are reports in which the iqamah is called an “adhan”, as in the words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): “Between each two calls (adhanayn)...” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 598; Muslim, 838.

In Saheeh Muslim (739) the adhan which comes after the time for prayer begins is called the first adhan. This appears in the hadeeth narrated by ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) about the prayer of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). She said: He used to sleep during the first part of the night and wake up during the latter part, then if he had any need for intimacy with his wife he would satisfy that need, then he would sleep. Then when it was the time of the first call, he would wake up and pour water over himself, and if he was not junub he would do wudoo’ as a man does for prayer, then he would pray two rak’ahs.

What is meant by two rak'ahs here is the regular Sunnah of Fajr, as stated by al-Nawawi in Sharh

Muslim.

(b)

In some saheeh ahadith it is clearly stated that the adhan in which this phrase appears is called adhan salat al-subh, adhan al-fajr, etc. These phrases indicate that this adhan should come after the time for the prayer begins and the adhan that is given at the end of the night comes before the time for prayer begins. These ahadith include the following:

1 – It was narrated that Abu Mahdhoorah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: I said: “O Messenger of Allah, teach me the Sunnah of adhan.” He wiped the front of my head and said: “Say Allah akbar, Allahu akbar, Allah akbar, Allahu akbar (Allah is Most Great, Allah is Most Great, Allah is Most Great, Allah is Most Great)… And if it is Fajr prayer, then say: Al-salatu khayrun min al-nawm, al-salatu khayrun min al-nawm (Prayer is better than sleep, prayer is better than sleep).

According to another, similar report, it says: “Al-salatu khayrun min al-nawm, al-salatu khayrun min al-nawm (Prayer is better than sleep, prayer is better than sleep) in the first adhan of dawn.”

Narrated by Abu Dawood, 501; al-Nasa’i, 633; classed as saheeh by al-Albani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

According to another report narrated by Abu Dawood (504) from Abu Mahdhoorah (may Allah be pleased with him): He used to say in Fajr: “al-salatu khayrun min al-nawm (Prayer is better than sleep). Classed as saheeh by Shaykh al-Albani in Saheeh Abi Dawood.

2 – It was narrated that Anas (may Allah be pleased with him) said: It is Sunnah for the muezzin, after saying Hayya ‘ala al-falah (come to prosperity), to say: “al-salatu khayrun min al-nawm (prayer is better than sleep)” twice.

Shaykh al-Albani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This was narrated by al-Daraqutni (90), Ibn Khuzaymah in his Saheeh and al-Bayhaqi in his Sunan (1/423), and he said: its isnad is saheeh.

It was also narrated by al-Daraqutni and al-Tahhawi (1/82) via Hushaym from Ibn ‘Awn with the wording: In the adhan for Fajr prayer, when the muezzin said: Hayya ‘ala al-falah (come to prosperity), he said: “al-salatu khayrun min al-nawm (prayer is better than sleep),” twice. This version was narrated by Ibn al-Sakan who classed it as saheeh, as it says in al-Talkhees, 3/148

Al-Thamr al-Mustatab, p. 132

These ahadith show that this phrase appears in the adhan for Fajr prayer.

The adhan which is the call to prayer is that which comes after the time for the prayer has begun, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “When the time for prayer begins, then let one of you give the adhan for you.” Agreed upon.

As for the adhan which comes at the end of the night, this is not an adhan for Fajr prayer as such, rather it is done “so that the one who is praying qiyam may go back and the one who is asleep may wake up”, as is narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in al-Saheehayn. Thus it is clear that the phrase which appears in the adhan which comes after the time for the prayer begins is not a bid’ah (innovation), rather it is Sunnah.

The scholars of the Standing Committee were asked:

What is the reason why the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), to say al-salatu khayrun min al-nawm, is not done in the first adhan for Fajr, as is mentioned in Sunan al-Nasa’i, Ibn Khuzaymah and al-Bayhaqi?

They replied:

Yes, the this phrase should be mentioned in the first adhan of Fajr, in accordance with the command of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). It is clear from the hadeeth that it is the adhan that is done when the true dawn comes, and it is called ‘first’ in relation to the iqamah, which is an adhan according to sharee’ah, as it says in the hadeeth, “Between every two calls (adhanayn) there should be a prayer.” The word adhan here does not refer to the call that is given before the appearance of the true dawn. That call is prescribed in order to wake those who

are asleep and so that those who are praying qiyam may go back. It is not a call to announce the Fajr prayer. Whoever studies the ahadith about this phrase will see clearly that they refer to the adhan given to announce the time of Fajr, not the adhan which is given at night just before dawn. End quote.

Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn ‘Abd-Allah ibn Baz, Shaykh ‘Abd al-Razzaq ‘Afeefi, Shaykh ‘Abd-Allah ibn Ghadyan, Shaykh ‘Abd-Allah ibn Qa’ood.

Fatawa al-Lajnah al-Da’imah li’l-Buhooth al-‘Ilmiyyah wa’l-Ifta’, 6/63

For more information on the refutation of those who say that this phrase should be said in the adhan which comes before the time for the prayer begins, please see al-Sharh al-Mumti’ by Shaykh al-‘Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him), 2/61-64

As for the view of your teacher, that this phrase is comparing sleep with Fajr prayer, this is not correct, because this phrase is stating that prayer is better than sleep and thus encouraging the sleeper to stop sleeping and get up to do something that is better.

And Allah knows best.