66652 - Is it permissible to pray Witr with nine rak’ahs, two tashahhuds and one salaam?

the question

What is the ruling on praying Taraweeh in congregation in the mosque, with nine rak’ahs and a tashahhud after the eighth rak’ah, and another tashahhud after the ninth rak’ah, followed by the salaam? Some people say that this is bid’ah (an innovation).
I hope that you can tell me the ruling with the evidence, supported by the comments of earlier and later scholars.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

The best way of praying Taraweeh is to pray eleven rak'ahs, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to do during Ramadaan and at other times. He used to pray two by two, then pray Witr with three. If a worshipper does more or less than eleven rak’ahs, there is nothing wrong with that. We have explained that in the answer to question no. 9036.

As for the way of praying Witr that is asked about here, it is one of the ways of praying Witr. It was narrated that ‘Aa’ishah (may Allaah be pleased with her) was asked about the Witr of the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and she said: “The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to pray nine rak'ahs during which he would not sit except in the eighth rak’ah, when he would remember Allaah and praise Him and call upon Him, then he would get up without saying the salaam, then he would stand and pray the ninth rak’ah, then he would sit and remember Allaah (dhikr) and praise Him and call upon Him, then he would say a tasleem that we could hear.” Narrated by Muslim, 746.

Ibn al-Qayyim said, explaining the various ways in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prayed Witr:

The fifth way is nine rak’ahs in which he would pray eight of them continuously, and did not sit at all except in the eighth, when he sat and remembered Allaah and praised Him and called upon Him, then he got up without saying the salaam, then he prayed the ninth rak’ah, then he sat and recited the tashahhud and said the salaam, then he prayed two rak’ahs sitting down after he said the salaam. End quote.

Zaad al-Ma’aad, 1/317

Some people think that these ahaadeeth contradict one another, because it is proven in al-Saheehayn that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prayed at night two by two (rak’ahs), but that is not the case, because this hadeeth was narrated concerning qiyaam al-layl, but the way of praying that we have mentioned and that is mentioned in the question was narrated concerning Witr prayer.

Ibn al-Qayyim (may Allaah have mercy on him) said, after quoting the ahaadeeth about the ways in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) prayed Witr:

All of these are saheeh ahaadeeth which do not contradict one another. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The night prayers are two by two,” which is a saheeh hadeeth. But at the same time he prayed witr with nine or seven or five rak’ahs. All of his Sunnahs are true and confirm one another. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) answered the one who asked him about the night prayers by saying that they are two by two, and he did not ask him about Witr. As for seven or five or nine or one, this has to do with Witr prayer. Witr refers to the one rak’ah that is offered separately from the prayers that are offered before it, as well as the five, seven or nine are joined to one another, just as Maghrib is the name for three rak’ahs that are joined to one another. If the five or seven are separated with two salaams like the eleven, then Witr is the name given to the rak’ah that is performed separately, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The night prayers are two by two, and when one of you fears that dawn is about to break, let him pray witr with one rak’ah, to make the prayer that he has offered odd-numbered.” So the actions and words of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) are in agreement, and they confirm one another. End quote.

I’laam al-Muwaqqi’een, 2/424, 425

In the answer to question no. 52875 we have explained that Witr prayer is part of the night prayer, but they differ in the way that they are done.

Based on this, Taraweeh prayers cannot be offered as nine rak'ahs joined together with two tashahhuds and one salaam, rather the prayer that is offered in this manner is Witr.

And Allaah knows best.