70317 - Reading Quran together, giving good deeds to the dead, and al-Mawlid al-Nabawi (celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him))

the question

On every last Sunday of the month, we get together with a group of 30 or more sisters and each of us reads two or three hizb (portions of Quran) until we complete the Holy Quran in one and a half or two hours. We have been told that this will count – in sha Allah – as a completion of the Quran for each one of us. Is that correct? After that we make du`a and ask Allah to give the reward for our reading to the rest of the believers, living and dead. Will the reward reach the dead? They quote as evidence for that the words of our master Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him): “When a man dies, all his good deeds come to an end except three: ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge or a righteous son who will pray for him.”

On the festival of the Prophet’s birthday (al-mawlid al-nabawi), they hold a ribaat (vigil) which starts at 10 a.m. and lasts until 3 p.m. They start with prayers for forgiveness, praise of Allah, tasbeeh and takbeer, and sending blessings upon our master Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) silently, then they read the Quran, and some sisters fast on that day. Is singling out this day for all these acts of worship regarded as an innovation (bid’ah)? We also have a lengthy du`a seeking blessing that we say at the time of suhoor, for those who are able to say it. It is called du`a al-raabitah. It starts by sending blessings and salaams upon our master Muhammad and his party and the other Prophets, and the Mothers of the Believers, and the female companions of the Prophet, the Rightly Guided Caliphs, the Taabi’een, and the righteous close friends (awliya’) of Allah, mentioning each of them by name. Is it correct that mentioning all these names will make their owners recognize us and call out to us in Paradise? Is this du`a an innovation? I feel that it is, but most of the sisters disagree with me. Will I be punished by Allah if I am wrong? How can I convince them if I am correct? This matter is making me lose sleep and every time I remember the hadeeth of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him) which says that every newly-invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is a going-astray, and every going-astray will be in the Fire, my worry and grief get even worse.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

In the saheeh Sunnah there are many reports which speak of the virtues of gathering to read the Book of Allah, but in order for the Muslim to attain those rewards, he should ensure that the gathering is in accordance with sharee'ah. One of the prescribed ways in which people may gather to read Quran is for the people gathered to read together for the purpose of study, learning the meanings and how to recite properly. Another kind of gathering that is prescribed is for each of them to read and the others to listen, so that they may ponder the meanings of the verses. Both are mentioned in the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).

For more information please see question no. 22722, which explains the ruling on gathering to read the Quran.

With regard to what each person reads being counted as a khatmah (complete reading of the Quran) for each of them, this is not correct, because none of them has read the entire Quran, or even listened to it, rather each of them has read a part of it, so they will only be rewarded for whatever they have read of the Quran.

The scholars of the Standing Committee said:

Distributing ajza' or parts of the Quran to those who are present so that each one of them may read a hizb of the Quran is not necessarily regarded as a khatmah or complete reading of the Quran on the part of each one of them."(Fatawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah, 2/480)

Secondly:

It is not prescribed to say du`a together after reading Quran, and it is not permissible to pray that the reward for the reading go to any of the dead or the living. Our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not do that, and neither did any of his companions (may Allah be pleased with them).

Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked:

Is it permissible for me to read the entire Quran for my parents, knowing that they are illiterate and cannot read or write? Is it permissible for me to read the entire Quran for a person who knows how to read and write, but I want to give this khatmah to him? Is it permissible for me to read the entire Quran for more than one person?

He replied:

There is no report in the Holy Quran or in the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), or from his companions (may Allah be pleased with them) to indicate that it is prescribed to give one's reading of Quran (or the reward thereof) to one's parents or to anyone else. Rather Allah has enjoined reading Quran so that one may benefit from it, learn from it, ponder its meanings and act upon it. Allah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“(This is) a Book (the Quran) which We have sent down to you, full of blessings, that they may ponder over its Verses, and that men of understanding may remember” [Saad 38:29]

“Verily, this Quran guides to that which is most just and right” [Al-Isra’ 17:90]

“Say: It is for those who believe, a guide and a healing”[Fussilat 41:44]

And our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Read the Quran, for it will come as an intercessor for its companions.” And he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “The Quran will be brought on the Day of Resurrection along with its people who used to act upon it, preceded by Soorat al-Baqarah and Aal ‘Imraan, like two clouds or two flocks of birds, spreading their wings, pleading on behalf of their companions (i.e., those who used to read them).”

The point is that it was revealed to be acted upon and pondered, to be read as an act of worship and read a great deal, not to be given to the dead or to anyone else. I do not know of any reliable basis for giving it to one’s parents or anyone else. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever does any action that is not in accordance with this matter of ours will have it rejected.” Some of the scholars are of the view that that is permissible, and they said: There is no reason why the reward for reading Quran and other righteous actions cannot be given to others, and they liken that to the case of charity and du`a for the deceased and others. But the correct view is the first view, because of the hadeeth quoted above, and other similar reports. If giving the reward for reading to another was permissible or prescribed, the righteous salaf would have done it. It is not permissible to make analogies with regard to acts of worship, because they can only be proven by a text from the Book of Allah, may He be blessed and exalted, or the Sunnah of His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), because of the hadeeth quoted above and other similar reports."(Majmoo’ Fatawa al-Shaykh Ibn Baz, 8/360, 361)

With regard to their quoting the hadeeth, “When the son of Adam dies, all his good deeds come to an end…” this is not correct, rather if you think about it, you will see that the hadeeth indicates that it is not prescribed to give the reward for reading Quran to the dead, because the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “A son who will pray for him,” not “who will read Quran for him.”

Thirdly:

We should not write the letter (S) or abbreviations for the blessing upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). If a person can write such a lengthy question, he is not incapable of writing the blessing upon the Prophet in full. We have already discussed the ruling on writing such abbreviations in the answer to question no. 47976.

Fourthly:

Celebrating the Prophet’s birthday (al-mawlid) is an innovation, and doing special acts of worship on this day such as saying tasbeeh and tahmeed, observing i’tikaaf, reading Quran and fasting is

an innovation for which a person will not receive any reward, for these are all rejected.

It was narrated from ‘Aa’ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: “Whoever introduces anything into this matter of ours that is not part of it will have it rejected.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 2550; Muslim, 1718.

According to a version narrated by Muslim (1718) he said: “Whoever does an action that is not in accordance with this matter of ours will have it rejected.”

Al-Faakihaani (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

I do not know of any basis for this mawlid in the Quran or Sunnah, and there is no report that any of the scholars of this ummah, who are examples in matters of religion and adhere to the path of those who came before, did this. Rather it is an innovation (bid’ah) which was introduced by those who have nothing better to do, and it is a means for them to have fun and eat a lot.

Al-Mawrid fi ‘Aml al-Mawlid, quoted in Rasaa’il fi Hukm al-Ihtifaal bi’l-Mawlid al-Nabawi, 1/8, 9

Shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azeez ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

If celebrating the Prophet’s birthday was prescribed, then the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) would have told his ummah of that, because he is the most sincere of people and there is no Prophet after him who could explain anything he did not speak about. He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the Seal of the Prophets and he explained to the people what he had to explain of the truth, such as loving him and following his sharee’ah, sending blessings and salaams upon him and other rights of his that are explained in the Quran and Sunnah. He did not tell his ummah that celebrating the day of his birth was something prescribed so that they would do that. He (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) did not do that during his lifetime and his companions (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) who were the dearest of people to him and the most knowledgeable of his rights did not celebrate that day, neither did the Rightly-Guided Caliphs or any others. Then those who followed them in truth of the best three generations did not celebrate this day either.

Do you think that all these people were ignorant of his rights or fell short with regard to them, until the later generations came and made up for this shortfall and made the truth complete? No, by Allah. No wise man who understands the nature of the Sahaabah and how they followed the truth would say this. If you understand that the celebration of the Prophet's birthday was unknown at the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the time of his companions and the time of their earliest followers, you will realize that it is an innovation that has been introduced into the faith, and it is not permissible to do it, approve of it or advocate it, rather we must denounce it and warn people against it."(Majmoo' Fatawa al-Shaykh Ibn Baz, 6/318, 319)

Fifthly:

It is not permissible for anyone to make up a du`a or dhikhr and promulgate it among the people. The du`a that is called du`a al-raabitah is an innovated du`a, and thinking of those who are being prayed for and believing that they will recognize the one who is praying for them and will call out to him in Paradise – all of that is Sufi myths and fables that have no basis in the religion of Allah. The Islamic guidelines by means of which a person can distinguish between Sunnah and bid'ah, right and wrong, are clear. The basic principle with regard to acts of worship is that nothing is permitted unless there is evidence. We cannot seek to draw closer to Allah by doing an act of worship unless there is evidence from the Quran or saheeh Sunnah that it is prescribed. The basic principle for the Muslim is to follow and not to innovate, and innovations will be rejected. Allah has completed this sharee'ah for us and has completed His blessing upon us, so what need do we have for such innovations to be part of our lives at the time when we are falling so far short with regard to that which is proven in sharee'ah?

For more information see the answer to questions no. 27237 and 6745

We hope that what we have mentioned is sufficient to make these sister refrain from their innovation. We advise them to fear Allah and follow the Sunnah. They should remember that Allah does not accept any innovated act of worship, no matter what efforts and wealth are expended on it. Being moderate in following the Sunnah is better than striving hard in following innovation, as the great Sahaabi 'Abd-Allah ibn Mas'ood (may Allah be pleased with him) said.

We ask Allah to guide those sisters to that which pleases Him, and we advise you to convey this message well and not take part in that with them, and to be patient in bearing any problems that may result from that.

And Allah knows best.