88109 - Their saying “O Allaah, send blessings upon Muhammad as much as the perfection of Allaah”

the question

There is a custom in the mosque, where after praying in congregation and straight after reciting tasbeeh (“Subhaan-Allaah”), tahmeed (“al-hamdu Lillaah”) and takbeer (“Allaahu akbar”), they repeat salawaat (blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)) following the muezzin, in three different forms, as follows:
1- “O Allaah, send blessings and peace and bless our master Muhammad and his family, as much as the perfection of Allaah and as befits His perfection.”
2- “O Allaah, send blessings and peace and bless our master Muhammad and his family, as much as the names of Allaah and as befits His perfection.”
3- And they recite al-Salawaat al-Ibraaheemiyyah which is well known.
Please note that there are those who say that the phrase “as much as the perfection of Allaah” is not permissible, as mentioned in the first version, on the grounds that it is limiting the perfection of Allaah, but they regard the phrase “as much as the names of Allaah” as permissible, as in the second version. What is your opinion of all these versions? May Allaah reward you with good.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Among the adhkaar that are prescribed after prayer are: tasbeeh (“Subhaan-Allaah”), tahmeed (“al-hamdu Lillaah”), takbeer (“Allaahu akbar”) and tahleel (“laa ilaaha ill-Allaah”), because of the report narrated by Muslim (596) from Ka’b ibn ‘Ujrah , that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Dhikrs after the prayer, the one who says them or does them will not be disappointed: thirty-three tasbeehahs, thirty-three tahmeedahs and thirty-four takbeerahs after every prayer.”

Muslim also narrated (597) from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “Whoever glorifies Allaah thirty-three times after every prayer, and praises Allaah thirty-three times, and magnifies Allaah thirty-three times, making ninety-nine, and completes it by saying, ‘There is no god but Allaah alone, with no partner or associate; His is the Dominion, to Him be praise, and He is Able to do all things,’ his sins will be forgiven even if they are like the foam of the sea.”

In al-Saheehayn it is narrated from Abu Hurayrah that the poor among the Muhaajireen came to the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said: The people of great wealth have taken the highest ranks and eternal bliss. He said: “Why is that?” They said: They pray as we pray and they fast as we fast, but they give in charity and we do not, and they free slaves and we do not. The Messenger of Allaah (S) said: “Shall I not teach you something by means of which you may catch up with those who have gone ahead of you and go ahead of those who come after you, and there will be no one who is better than you except those who do as you do?” They said: Yes, O Messenger of Allaah. He said: “Glorify Allaah, magnify Him and praise Him at the end of every prayer, thirty-three times.” Abu Saalih said: The poor Muhaajreen went back to the Messenger of Allaah (S) and said: Our wealthy brothers have heard what we did and they did likewise. The Messenger of Allaah (S) said: “That is a bounty from Allaah; He gives it to whomever He wills.”

Al-Bukhaari (843) and Muslim (595).

This great dhikr should be recited by each person individually. Reciting it in unison, led by the muezzin or imam or anyone else is a bid’ah (innovation), because it is a manner that is not narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and the scholars have drawn attention to that.

Al-Shaafa’i (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: I think that the imam and the person praying behind him should remember Allaah after they finish the prayer and they should recite the dhikr quietly, unless he is the imam who should be learned from, in which case he may recite it out loud until he thinks that they have learned from him, then he should recite it quietly. Allaah says

(interpretation of the meaning):

“And offer your Salaah (prayer) neither aloud nor in a low voice”

[al-Isra’ 17:110]

This refers – and Allaah knows best – to du’aa’ (supplication), which should be recited “neither aloud” in a loud voice nor “in a low voice” such that you cannot hear yourself.

The evidence for that is what Ibn al-Zubayr narrated about the tahleel of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and what Ibn ‘Abbaas narrated about his takbeer, as we have quoted above. Al-Shaafa’i said:

I think that he may raise his voice a little in order for the people to learn from him, because most of the reports that we have written here and elsewhere do not mention reciting tahleel or takbeer after the salaam. End quote from al-Umm (1/127).

Al-Shaatibi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: Bid’ah (innovation) refers to something that is newly invented in matters of religion that appears similar to that which is prescribed, by which people intend to go to extremes in worshipping Allaah, may He be glorified. That includes adhering to certain forms of worship, such as reciting dhikr in a group, in unison, or taking the day of the Prophet’s birth as a festival, and so on.

That also includes adhering to certain acts of worship at certain times, for which there is no evidence in sharee’ah, such as always fasting on the fifteenth of Sha’baan (al-nusf min Sha’baan) and spending that night in prayer. End quote from al-I’tisaam (1/37-39).

Shaykh Jamaal al-Deen al-Qaasimi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: In some mosques, when the imam says the salaam at the end of the obligatory prayer of ‘Asr, the muezzin shouts ameen and recites a du’aa’ loudly after that, and in some mosques when the imam says the salaam, the followers start to recite blessings on the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) with “al-salaah al-kamaaliyyah” [the format referred to in the question] out loud. This is contrary to sharee’ah, because the Sunnah is, immediately after the prayer, to recite silently the du’aa’s that

have been narrated, each worshipper reciting by himself. Similarly, the etiquette of du’aa’ is to keep the voice low. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

“Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret”

[al-A’raaf 7:55]

These people are turning away from humility and secrecy by means of their shouting and yelling. End quote from Islaah al-Masaajid min al-Bida’ wa’l-‘Awaa’id, p. 154.

Shaykh ‘Ali Mahfooz (may Allaah have mercy on him) said: A kind of reprehensible bid’ah is ending the prayer in the well known manner, raising the voice with the du’aa’ in the mosque, reciting it in unison and doing it regularly, to the extent that a lot of people think that this is part of praying properly, and that it is Sunnah and is essential, although it is mustahabb to recite du’aa’ individually and quietly.

This format is innovated, and it is not known from the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or from the Sahaabah. The people have taken it as a part of the obligatory prayer, to be done after praying in congregation.

How can it be permissible to raise one's voice in reciting it, when Allaah, may He be exalted, says in His wise Book (interpretation of the meaning):

“Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret. He likes not the aggressors”

[al-A’raaf 7:55]?

Reciting quietly is closer to sincerely and further-removed from showing off. End quote from al-Ibdaa’ fi Madaar al-Ibtidaa’, p. 283.

In Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa’imah (7/98) it says:

Question: The people differed with regard to reciting du’aa’ in unison after the regular Sunnah prayers. One group says that there is no report concerning that from the Prophet (peace and

blessings of Allaah be upon him) or from the Sahaabah, and if it was good they would have done it before us, because they were the keenest of people to follow the truth. Another group says that reciting du'aa' in unison after the regular Sunnah prayers is mustahabb and even Sunnah because it is dhikr and worship and no dhikr or worship can be anything less than mustahabb and Sunnah. They criticize those who do not wait for the du'aa' and get up straight after praying.

Answer: Du'aa' is an act of worship, and acts of worship are based on tawqeef (adhering only to that which is mentioned in Qur'aan and Sunnah). So it is not permissible to say that an act of worship is prescribed – with regard to its principle, number, form or place except with proper shar'i evidence. We do not know of any Sunnah concerning that which was narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), whether in word or deed, or his approval, which would point to the claim made by the second group. All goodness is in following the guidance of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and his guidance with regard to this matter is proven with evidence of what he (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) used to do after prayer, and what his successors (the caliphs) and companions and the Taabi'een and those who followed them in goodness also used to do. Whoever introduces anything that goes against the guidance of the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) will have it rejected. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever does any deed that is not in accordance with this matter of ours will have it rejected." The imam who says du'aa' after the prayer and the congregation says ameen to his du'aa', all of them raising their hands, should be asked for evidence to support his action, otherwise it is to be rejected, The same applies to one who does that after naafil prayers; he should be asked for evidence as Allaah says concerning such things (interpretation of the meaning):

"Say (O Muhammad), Produce your proof if you are truthful"

[al-Baqarah 2:111]

We do not know of any evidence from the Qur'aan or Sunnah which suggests that what the second group claims is prescribed in Islam, namely reciting du'aa' together and reciting dhikr in the manner mentioned in the question. End quote.

Conclusion: Reciting dhikr in unison, whether it is tasbeeh or blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) – in any form – is not Sunnah, rather it is a bid'ah and innovation.

Secondly:

Al-salaah al-kamaaliyyah, which is "O Allaah, send blessing and peace and bless our master Muhammad and his family, as much as the perfection of Allaah and as befits His perfection" is not narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or from any of his companions (may Allaah be pleased with them), and it is not the best form of sending blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) as some people think. Rather the best form of sending blessings is that which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) taught to his companions, which is al-salaah al-Ibraaheemiyyah.

al-Bukhaari (6357) and Muslim (406) narrated that 'Abd al-Rahmaan ibn Abi Layla said: Ka'b ibn 'Ujrah met me and said: Shall I not give you a gift? The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) came out to us and we said, We know what it means to send salaam upon you, but what does it mean to send blessings upon you? He said: "Say: Allaahumma salli 'ala Muhammadin wa 'ala aali Muhammadin kama salayta 'ala aali Ibraaheem, innaka hameedun majeed; Allaahumma baarik 'ala Muhammadin wa 'ala aali Muhammadin kama baarakta 'ala aali Ibraaheem, innaka hameedun majeed (O Allaah, send Your salaah (grace, honour and mercy) upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, as You sent Your salaah upon the family of Ibraaheem, You are indeed Praiseworthy, Most Glorious. O Allaah, send Your blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You sent Your blessings upon the family of Ibraaheem, You are indeed Praiseworthy, Most Glorious)."

Al-Bukhaari (3369) and Muslim (407) narrated from Abu Humayd al-Saa'idi (may Allaah be pleased with him) that they said: O Messenger of Allaah, how should we send blessings upon you? He said: "Say: Allaahumma salli 'ala Muhammadin wa 'ala azwaajihi wa dhurriyyatihi kama salayta 'ala Ibraaheem, wa baarik 'ala Muhammadin wa 'ala azwaajihi wa dhurriyyatihi kama baarakta 'ala aali Ibraaheem, innaka hameedun majeed (O Allaah, send Your salaah (grace, honour and mercy) upon

Muhammad and upon his wives and offspring, as You sent Your salaah upon Ibraaheem, and send Your blessings upon Muhammad and upon his wives and offspring, as You sent Your blessings upon the family of Ibraaheem. You are indeed Praiseworthy, Most Glorious).”

Al-Suyooti (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in al-Haraz al-Manee’: I read in al-Tabaqaat by al-Taaj al-Subki a quotation from his father that said: The best manner of sending blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is the way that is mentioned in the Tashahhud.

He said: Whoever says this has definitely sent blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), but whoever says any other version, there is some doubt as to whether he has recited the blessings as required, because they said: “How should we send blessings upon you?” and he said: “Say…” so he stated that blessings upon him should be sent by saying that.

Al-Suyooti said: When I grew old, when I sent blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) I would say: O Allaah, send blessings and peace upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad as You sent blessings and peace upon Ibraaheem and upon the family of Ibraaheem. You are indeed Praiseworthy, Most Glorious. It was said to me in a dream: Are you more knowledgeable of the meaning of words and more eloquent than the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)? If there was not some extra meaning in the version spoken by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) he would not have preferred that? So I asked Allaah for forgiveness for that, and I went back to the preferred version at times when it is obligatory and mustahabb.

And he said: If a person has sworn to send blessings upon him in the best manner, then the best thing is to do that. End quote from al-Sunan wa’l-Mutada’aat by Muhammad ‘Abd al-Salaam al-Shuqayri, p. 232. The words of al-Taaj al-Subki appear in Tabaqaat al-Shaafa’iyyah al-Kubra (1/185).

Thirdly:

Al-salaah al-kamaaliyyah contains something that goes against sharee’ah, when it says “as much

as the perfection of Allaah". The apparent meaning of the phrase (in Arabic, 'adada kamal Allaah) is that the perfection of Allaah, may He be exalted, is limited by number. Hence some of the scholars stated that this prayer is not allowed, as we shall see below. The same applies to their saying "the number of the names of Allaah", because the names of Allaah are not limited to a specific number, as the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "I ask You by every name by which You have called Yourself or You have taught to anyone of Your creation or You have revealed in Your Book or You have kept secret in the knowledge of the Unseen which is with You." Narrated by Ahmad (3704).

Ibn 'Aabideen (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in his Haashiyah (6/396): You should avoid using such phrases as "O Allaah, send blessings upon Muhammad as much as Your knowledge and forbearance, to the extent of Your mercy, as many as Your Words, and much as the perfection of Allaah," and so on, because this may suggest than a divine attribute has many forms or that there is a limit to His knowledge, especially phrases such as "as much as Your knowledge, as much as You can hear,as much as Your words", because there is no limit to His knowledge or mercy, or to His words. The word 'adad (translated as "as much as" or "as many as") etc suggests something other than that. I read the commentary by al-'Allaamah al-Fasi on the book Dalaa'il al-Khayraat, where he discussed this issue. He said: The scholars differed as to whether it is permissible to use phrases that may be misinterpreted for those who will not misinterpret them, or to use phrases that may be easily interpreted in the proper manner. A number of scholars selected certain ways of sending blessings on the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and said that they are the best ways of sending blessing, such as Shaykh 'Afeef al-Deen al-Yaafa'i, al-Sharaf al-Baarazi and al-Baha' ibn al-Qattaan, and it was narrated from him by his student al-Maqdisi. End quote. I say: the words of our imams imply that that is not allowed, except in the words narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), according to the view favoured by the faqeeh. And Allaah knows best. End quote.

As stated above, the manner of sending blessing that you mentioned is not Sunnah, even if it is reciting al-salaah al-Ibraaheemiyyah.

May Allaah help us and you to do that which He loves and which pleases Him.

And Allaah knows best.