91305 - Remembering Allaah (dhikr) by saying His name by itself

the question

I heard a student of knowledge mentioning the bida' (innovations) of the Sufiyyah (Sufism). Amongst them was the innovation of mentioning Allah by his one name. He said that the prophet did not do this, neither did his honoured companions. I am wondering, did not the prophet (PBUH) say a Hadeeth (I do not remember it very well) that means that the hour will not begin as long as there is a slave saying, 'Allah' 'Allah'. This is considered mentioning Allah by His One Name, and the prophet praised, as mentioned, who does this, as he excluded him of the evildoers whom the hour will begin with?.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

Remembering Allaah by saying His name by itself, whereby the worshipper says "Allaah, Allaah, Allaah," is one of the bid'ahs (innovations) of dhikr which have been invented by the ignorant Sufis and those who follow them. It was not narrated from the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or from any of the Sahaabah.

We have discussed this matter in detail in the answer to questions no. 9389 and 26867.

Secondly:

As for the reports quoted by some as evidence that this dhikr is prescribed, this is a specious argument which does not indicate that this kind of dhikr is prescribed at all. This evidence includes the following:

The report narrated from Anas ibn Maalik (may Allaah be pleased with him), that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "The Hour will not begin so long as it is said on

earth, ‘Allaah, Allaah.’”

This hadeeth does not indicate that dhikr means saying the name of Allaah on its own. That is for several reasons:

1 – In some reports it says: “The Hour will not begin so long as anyone says ‘Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah.’”

This version was narrated by Ahmad in al-Musnad (3/268) and by Ibn Hibbaan in his Saheeh (15/262) and al-Haakim (4/540). It is also one of the versions narrated by Muslim, as was narrated by al-Qaadi ‘Iyaad from Ibn Abi Ja’far. See: al-Nawawi, Sharh Muslim (2/178).

This version explains the first version. What it means is: the Hour will not come upon those who believe in Tawheed and who say Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah.

2 – The hadeeth cannot mean that the Hour will not come upon the one who mentions Allaah by His name on its own, and it will come upon those who mention Him by something other than that. The most that can be said is that it is mustahabb to mention the name of Allaah on its own, but it is not obligatory. How can the matter of salvation from the horror of the onset of the Hour depend on something that is mustahabb?

3 – The Arabic language does not help the one who wants to use this as evidence, because the name of Allaah on its own does not carry a complete meaning, and remembrance of Allaah (dhikr) must also convey a sense of praise of Him by mentioning some of His attributes.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in Majmoo’ al-Fataawa (10/564):

The scholars of Arabic language and all other languages are unanimously agreed that it is not proper to pause after mentioning the name on its own and it is not a complete sentence and it does not convey any meaning. End quote.

4 – The Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them) and the Taabi’een who came after them did not understand from this hadeeth that it is mustahabb to say dhikr by saying the name of Allaah

on its own, and it is not narrated that any of them derived this idea from this hadeeth. This is sufficient indication that this idea is invalid.

5 – There are numerous scholarly comments about the meaning of the hadeeth, but it is not narrated that any of them understood it as referring to dhikr by saying the name of Allaah on its own.

Al-Nawawi (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in Sharh Muslim (2/178):

“says ‘Allaahu, Allaahu’” [i.e., nominative case] Some people make a mistake and do not add the vowel at the end. End quote.

Al-Teebi said, as mentioned in Tuhfat al-Ahwadhi (6/375):

What is meant by “so long as it is said” is so long as the name of Allaah is mentioned and He is worshipped. End quote.

Al-Manaawi said in Fayd al-Qadeer (6/417):

It does not mean that this word will not be spoken, rather it means that Allaah will not be remembered in a true sense, and it is as if the Hour will not begin when there is any perfect man on earth, or it is a metaphor for there being no denunciation in the heart of evil, because usually when a person denounces evil he says “Allaah, Allaah” in expression of his disgust. So what is meant is that the Hour will not come when there is still anyone who denounces evil. End quote.

Shaykh al-Albaani (may Allaah have mercy on him) said in Fataawa Jeddah (tape no. 6/minute 60):

This does not mean that the Muslim should sit remembering Allaah by saying His name on its own, so he says one hundred times “Allaah, Allaah, Allaah,” as is done by many tareeqahs. Its explanation is given in the report narrated by Imam Ahmad in al-Musnad: “The Hour will not begin so long as there is anyone on the face of the earth who says Laa ilaaha ill-Allaah.

The mention of the name on its own in the first report is a metaphor for Tawheed, and what that means is that the Hour will not begin whilst there is still anyone on the face of the earth who

worships Allaah.

This is stated clearly in the hadeeth of Abu Sam’aan that is narrated in Saheeh Muslim, in which it says that when Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted, wants the Hour to begin, He will send a good wind which will take the soul of every believer, and there will be no one left on the face of the earth except the most evil of mankind, and upon them the Hour will come.

This dhikr is no more than something that is mustahabb, and will the Hour come upon those who omit something mustahabb?! Do you mean that if the Muslims continue to do all their obligatory duties and adhere to sound belief, but they omit this mustahabb matter, the Hour will come upon them?! End quote.

And Allaah knows best.