



Performing Tarawih (special supererogatory night Prayer in Ramadan) in congregation in a Masjid (mosque)

Fatwa No. 4167

Q: How do we perform Tarawih in congregation at a Masjid according to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) behind one Imam?

A: Performing Tarawih during the month of Ramadan behind one Imam in the Masjid is a Sunnah performed by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). 'Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) offered Salah in the Masjid and people followed him. The next night he also offered Salah and many people gathered. On the third and the fourth nights more people gathered, but Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) did not come out to them. In the morning he said: ("I saw what you were doing and the only thing that prevented me from coming out to you was that I feared that it would become Fard (obligatory) for you.") This happened during the month of Ramadan. This Hadith was reported by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. 'Abdul-Rahman Ibn 'Abdul-Qarry said:

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("I went out in the company of 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab one night in Ramadan to the Masjid and found people performing Salah in different groups. A man performing Salah alone or a man performing Salah with a little group behind him. So, 'Umar said: 'In my opinion I would collect these (people) under the leadership of one Qari (Reciter) (i.e. let them pray in congregation!)'. So, he made up his mind to congregate them behind Ubay Ibn Ka'b. Then on another night I went again in his company and the people were performing Salah behind their reciter. On that, 'Umar remarked: 'What an excellent Bid'a (i.e. innovation in religion) this is; but the Salah which they do not perform, but sleep at its time is better than the one they are offering.' He meant the prayer in the last part of the night. (In those days) people used to pray in the early part of the night.") This Hadith was reported by Al-Bukhari.

Therefore, it becomes clear that Tarawih was offered in congregation in the Masjid during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and then during the era of 'Umar Ibn Al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him). Moreover, Muslims continued performing it in such a manner until this day. But the saying of 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him): "What an excellent Bid'ah!" means the Bid'ah in the lateral meaning of the word. 'Umar deemed it as Bid'ah because it was not done in congregation during the lifetime of the Prophet (peace be upon him) except for three or four nights only. Then, he gave up performing it in congregation fearing that it might become obligatory upon Muslims. After the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him), making it an obligation was not possible. Therefore, 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) ordered performing it.

May Allah grant us success! May peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, and Companions!

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