

Reciting Surah Kahaf on Fridays

Q: Salaah-152: People in most of our areas have the custom of reciting Surah Kahaf for fifteen minutes after the first Jumu'ah Adhaan. Each one gets a turn to recite a Ruku of Surah Kahaf as the others listen and those who cannot recite just listen and attain the rewards in this manner. Thereafter, they perform their Sunnah salaah and the Khutbah commences. Some people oppose the practice, saying that it disturbs those performing salaah. Are there not great virtues attached to reciting Surah Kahaf? Is it prohibited to allow people who cannot recite to share in the rewards? Should this practice be maintained or not? Please furnish a well-substantiated reply because there is a serious conflict arising.

Answer: Although there is no doubt that there are great rewards attached to reciting Surah Kahaf on Fridays, it is not necessary to gather in the Masjid after the Jumu'ah Adhaan to recite it. The rewards will be attained by reciting the Surah by oneself either at night or during the day. It is however best to recite it at night (Thursday night) or early on Friday morning.¹ There is therefore no need to cause a fuss over being particular about congregating in the Masjid to recite Surah Kahaf loudly, thereby disturbing other people. Furthermore, to make it a custom and to regard it as Sunnah is an act of ignorance and should be avoided. The best is therefore to recite it at home and if it has to be done in the Masjid, it must be done silently so as not to disturb others.

Although the Ahadeeth prove that Chaast salaah (Salaatut Duha) should be performed, there is no need to gather in the Masjid to do so or to make announcements to the effect. In fact, doing so is an act of Bid'ah, as stated by Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Umar RADI. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Mas'ood RADI also condemned the act of some people who made a habit of performing the Chaast salaah in the Masjid.¹ Similarly, although the Fuqahaa have stated that it is Mustahab to stay awake during the nights of the two Eids, in the night of Baraa'ah, the last ten nights of Ramadhaan and the first ten nights of Dhul Hijjah, they have also stated that it is Makrooh congregate for these salaahs in the Masaajid because such an act has not been proven from Rasulullaah SAW. and the Sahabah RADI.

Imaam Shaatbi RAH. said, "It is an act of Bid'ah to specify methods and times for acts of Ibaadah when these have not been specified by the Shari'ah."

It is also worth noting that apart from reciting Surah Kahaf on Fridays, the Ahadeeth have also stated tremendous virtues for performing Salaatut Tasbeeh on Fridays, for reciting Surah Ikhlaas a thousand times and for reciting Surah Aal Imraan, Surah Hood, Surah Saaffaat, Durood and for seeking forgiveness and making du'aa. The Ahadeeth also mention that at the time of reciting Surah Kahaf (specifically after Zawaal), the Sahabah RADI. engaged in other acts of Ibaadah as well. Hadhrat Abdullaah bin Abbaas RADI. performed Salaatut Tasbeeha, Hadhrat Abu Hurayrah RADI. narrated Ahadeeth to peoples and Hadhrat Tameem Daari RADI. gave advice to people.

The point is that one should do as much as one can, as the occasion arises, To always do a thing at one time and in one particular manner, while leaving out many other things, constitutes an improper intrusion into the Deen.

As far as the fervour goes to have the general masses all share the rewards, it must be noted that the Sahabah RADI. the Taabi'een and Rasulullaah SAW. himself had this fervour even more strongly than we have it today. Despite this, it has not been proven that any of them ever gathered people after the first Adhaan of Jumu'ah to recite Surah Kahaf collectively. This is even though there were a large number of new Muslims during their times, especially during the times of the Taabi'een, those after them and the last times of the Sahabah RADI. By us introducing these new acts into the Deen, we seem to be (Allaah forbid!) saying that the Sahabah RADI. our pious predecessors and Rasulullaah SAW. were wrong in what they did and did not have the fervour to spread the Deen as we have.

Hadhrat Imaam Maalik RAH. said, "The person who invents a new practice in Deen and regards it to be the better practice, he has (Allaah forbid!) indicated that Hadhrat Muhammad SAW. betrayed the responsibility of propagation of the Deen and had displayed a deficiency in doing so.

Nevertheless, our success and salvation does not lie in these newly fangled innovations, but in completely following the ways shown by Rasulullaah SAW. and the Sahabah RADI. Rasulullaah SAW. therefore warned, "There shall arise after me many differences. You must therefore adhere to my way of life and the ways of life of the rightly guided Khulafaa (Khulafaa Raashideen) after me. Bite firmly on this with your back teeth (never let go of it). Beware of newly invented acts and stay far from them because every newly invented act is an act of Bid'ah and every act of Bid'ah leads one astray. There are many virtues cited for strictly adhering to the Sunnah practices of Rasulullaah SAW. Rasulullaah SAW said that the person who remains firm on his way of life and revives a forgotten Sunnah during times of evil and corruption, such a person will receive the reward of a hundred martyrs.

The gist of it all is that it is established from the books of Ahadeeth and Fiqh that this practice of reciting Surah Kahaf in this manner ought to be forsaken. Amongst the many harms of this practice is that it prolongs the time between the Adhaan and the Khutbah, which is against the Sunnah.

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