

Clarification Regarding Celebrating the Birthday of the Prophet

CONTENTS

1. Discussion of the Hadeeth, "The Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam performed Aqeeqah for himself after his Prophethood."
2. Shaykh ul-Islam ibn Taymiyah rahimahullaah on the Mawlid
3. Did Ibn Katheer Author a Book Endorsing the Mawlid?
4. Ruling on the Celebration of al-Mawlid (the Prophet's Birthday) by Shaykh Saalih al-Munajjid
5. Discussion of the Hadeeth, "The Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam performed Aqeeqah for himself after his Prophethood."

As-Suyutee said, "...another primary text has occurred to me by which the legitimacy of the Mawlid can be derived, namely what is reported by al-Bayhaqee from Anas that 'The Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam performed Aqeeqah for himself after his prophethood.' And it occurs that his grandfather Abdul Muttalib performed the Aqeeqah for him when he was a child of seven years, and the Aqeeqah is not repeated a second time. So therefore this is to taken to mean that what the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam did was to openly manifest gratitude for Allah making him the mercy for the universe and to legislate this for his Ummah, just as he used to do by his sending salaam upon himself. Therefore it is recommended for us that we openly manifest gratitude for his birth." ('Husnul Maqsad' of as-Suyutee contained in his 'Haawi lil Fataawi')

These words were also quoted by the commentator to 'al-Muwaahib al-Laduniyyah' (1/140) - az-Zarkaane.

The reply to this Hadeeth:

1. When Imaam Maalik was asked about this Hadeeth he replied, "...do you see the Companions of the Messenger of Allaah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, for whom the Aqeeqah was not performed in the days of Jaahiliyyah, performing Aqeeqah for themselves in Islaam? This is from the rejected (narrations)." [Quoted from him by ibn Rushd al-Maaliki in the 'Book of Aqeeqah' of his work 'al-Muqaddamaat al-Mumahhadaat' 2/15]
2. Abu Dawood said in his 'Masaa'il Imaam Ahmad' his work in which he reports from him, "I heard Ahmad...so Ahmad said, 'Abdullaah bin Muharrar from Qataadah from Anas that 'The Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam performed Aqeeqah for himself.' This hadeeth is munkar (rejected) due to the weakness of Abdullaah bin Muharrar' "

[This was report was also mentioned by ibn al-Qayyim in his 'Zaad al-Ma'aad' and 'Tuhfatul Mawdood bi Ahkaamil Mawlood' (pg.51)]

3. Ibn Hibbaan said in his 'Kitaab al-Majrooheen' (2/29) in the biography of Abdullaah bin Muharrar, "He reported from Qataadah from Anas that 'The Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam performed Aqeeqah for himself after Allaah had sent him as a Prophet.'...he (ibn Muharrar) used to be from the best of the servants of Allaah, except that he was from those that would lie without knowing it, and reverse (the meanings) of the narrations without understanding...Abu Ishaq at-Taalaqaanee said, 'I heard ibn al-Mubaarak saying: if I was given the choice of entering paradise or accuse Abdullaah ibn Muharrar. I would choose to accuse him and then enter Paradise. For when I saw him I found dung to be more beloved to me than him.' [This report is also narrated by Imaam Muslim in the introduction to his Saheeh]. I (ibn Hibbaan) heard ad-Daarimee saying, 'I heard Yahyaa bin Ma'een saying: Abdullaah bin Muharrar is not trustworthy and precise (thiqah)'"

4. al-Bazaar said, "...from Abdullaah bin Muharrar from Qataadah from Anas that the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam....Abdullaah bin Muharrar was alone in reporting the Hadeeth and he is severely weak, one would find written from him what is not found with other than him." ['Zawaa'id al-Bazaar alaa Kutub as-Sitta' in the chapter 'Qadaa al-Aqeeqah']

5. al-Bayhaqee said, "Abdullaah bin Muharrar reported a munkar (rejected) Hadeeth concerning the Prophet's performing Aqeeqah for himself...[quotes the Hadeeth]...Abdur Razzaaq said, 'Indeed they (scholars of Hadeeth) abandoned Abdullaah bin Muharrar due to the state of this Hadeeth and it is reported from another perspective from Qataadah and yet another perspective from Anas and it is nothing.' " ['Sunan al-Kubraa' (9/300) of al-Bayhaqee. Chapter: 'al-Aqeeqah Sunnah'] This is the reference from which as-Suyutee quotes the Hadeeth, yet it is strange that he did not quote the rest of al-Bayhaqee's words.

6. an-Nawawee said, "As for the Hadeeth that he -i.e. ash-Shayraazee - mentioned concerning the Prophet's performing Aqeeqah for himself, then it was reported by al-Bayhaqee with his isnaad from Abdullaah bin Muharrar from Qataadah from Anas...[Hadeeth]...and this Hadeeth is false (baatil)."

7. Al-Bayhaqee said: "This is a rejected hadeeth...(quoting previous words of Bayhaqee)....and Abdullaah ibn Muharrar is da'eef, being agreed upon to be so by the memorising scholars. He (Abdullaah ibn Muharrar) is abandoned." ['Majmoo' Sharh Muhadhdhab' (8/330) of an-Nawawee chpt: 'Aqeeqah']

8. al-Mizzi in his biography to Abdullaah ibn Muharrar endorses the above words of Abdul Razzaaq. ['Tahdheeb al-Kamaal' of al-Mizzi]

9. adh-Dhahabee said during the course of presenting the biography of Abdullaah ibn Muharrar, "Ahmad said: the people have abandoned his hadeeth. Al-Jawzajaanee said: destroyed. Ad-Daaruuqutnee and a group (of scholars) said: abandoned. Ibn Hibbaan

said: he used to be from the best of the servants of Allaah except that he would lie without knowing it, and reverse (the meanings) of the narrations without understanding...." ['Meezaan al-I'tidaal' of adh-Dhahabee]

10. Ibn Hajr al-Asqalaanee said, "His saying - i.e. ar-Raafi'ee - it is reported that he sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam performed Aqeeqah for himself after his prophethood by al-Bayhaqee from the hadeeth of Qataadah from Anas. He (ibn Hajr) said: it is munkar, it contains Abdullaah bin Muharrar and he is severely weak. Abdur Razzaaq said...[the words previously quoted]. I (ibn Hajr) say: as for the other perspective from Qataadah then I have not found it as a hadeeth of the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, all that is reported is in this regards is that Qataadah used to pass rulings on this as related by ibn Abdul Barr. Rather al-Bazaar and others were certain that Abdullaah bin Muharrar is alone in reporting this hadeeth from Qataadah. As for the other perspective still from Anas then it is reported by Abu ash-Shaykh in 'al-Adaahee' and ibn Ayman in his 'Musannaf' via the route of Abdullaah bin Muthnaa from Thamaamah bin Abdullaah bin Anas from his father. An-Nawawee said in 'Sharh Muhadhdhab': this hadeeth is false." ['Talkhees al-Habeer' 4/147 of ibn Hajr chpt: 'al-Aqeeqah']

11. Likewise in Fath al-Baree he declares the Hadeeth from all of it's various perspectives to be da'eef. [Sharh Baab Imaatatul Adha]

12. Therefore az-Zarqaanee in his 'Sharh Muwaahib' (1/140) follows up his quote by quoting the verdicts of Ibn Hajr and an-Nawawee on this hadeeth and then saying, "Therefore to use it to derive the legitimacy (of the Mawlid) is not correct."

[Taken from 'al-Qawl al-Fasl' of Shaykh Ismaa'eel al-Ansaaree with summary]

Shaykh ul-Islam ibn Taymiyah rahimahullaah on the Mawlid

Ibn Taymiyyah says, "...because the Eeds are legislated laws from amongst the laws, so it is necessary to follow them, and not to innovate them, and the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam had many lectures, treaties, and great events that happened on a number of (documented) days such as the Day of Badr, Hunain, al-Khandaq, the Conquest of Mecca, the occurrence of his hijrah, his entry to Madeenah...and none of this necessitated that these days be taken as days of Eed. Rather this sort of thing was done by the Christians who took the days in which great events happened to Jesus as eeds, or by the Jews. Indeed the Eed is a legislated law, so what Allaah legislates is followed, otherwise do not innovate in this religion that which is not part of it.

And like this is what some of the people have innovated, either in opposition to the Christian celebration of the birthday of Jesus, or out of love for the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam and in honour of him. And Allaah will reward them for this love and ijtihaad, but NOT FOR THE BID'AH of taking the day of the birth of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam as an eed - this along with the difference of the people as to when he was born. For indeed this (celebration) was not done by the salaf, despite the existence of factors that would necessitate it and the lack of any factors that would prevent them from doing so if it were indeed good. And if this was genuinely good or

preferable than the salaf, may Allaah be pleased with them, would have more right to doing so than us, for they had more severe love and honour of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam in following him, obeying him, and following his command, and reviving his sunnah inwardly and outwardly, and spreading that which he was sent with, and performing jihad for this in the heart, with the hand and upon the tongue. So indeed this was the way of the Saabiqaen al-Awwaleen from the Muhajiroon and the Ansaar, and those that followed them in good.

And you will find the majority of these (who celebrate the birthday) in ardent desire of these sort of innovations - along with what they have of good intention and ijtihaad for which reward is hoped for - but you would find them feeble in following the command of the Messenger, that which they have been commanded to be eager and vigorous in, indeed they are of the position of one who adorns the Mushaf but does not read what is in it or reads what is in it but does not follow it. Or the position of one who decorates the mosques but does not pray in them, or prays in them rarely...

And know that from the actions are those that have some good in them, due to their including types of good actions and including evil actions such as innovation etc. So this action would be good with respect to what it includes of good and evil with respect to what it contains of turning away from the religion in its totality, as is the state of the hypocrites and faasiqaen. This has what has afflicted the majority of the Ummah in the later times. So upon you is two manners (of rectification):

1. That your desire be to follow the sunnah inwardly and outwardly, with respect to yourself specifically and those that follow you, and you enjoin the good and forbid the evil.
2. That you call the people to the sunnah in accordance to ability, so if you were to see someone doing this (celebration) and he were to not leave it except for an evil greater than it, then do not call him to leaving the evil so that he may perform something more evil than this...[a page omitted in which he explains this principle]

So honoring the mawlid, and taking it as a festive season (mawsam) which some of the people have done, there is a great reward in it due to the good intention and the honoring of the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam because of what I have previously stated to you - that it is possible that something be good for some of the people and be denounced/considered to be ugly by the strict believer. This is why it was said to Imaam Ahmad about some of the leaders, that he spent 1000 dirhams upon the mushaf or similar to this. So he replied, 'leave them, for this is better than them spending it on gold (jewellery).' This despite the fact that the madhhab of Imaam Ahmad was that it is abhorrent to decorate the mushafs, and some of the companions (of Ahmad) interpreted this to mean that the money was spent in renewing the pages and writing. But this is not the intent of Ahmad here, his intention here was that this action had a benefit in it, and it also contained corruption due to which it became abhorrent. But these people, if they did not do this, would have substituted this for a corruption that contained no good whatsoever, for example spending upon one of the books of evil..." [Iqtidaa Siraat al-Mustaqeem 2/618+ my copy has the tahqeeq of Shaykh Naasir al-Aql]

He says in another place of the same book, "There is no doubt that the one who practices these - i.e. the innovated festive seasons - either the mujtahid or muqallid will have the reward for his good intention and the what the action contains of legislated actions, and will be forgiven for what it contains of innovation if his ijtihaad or taqleed contains one of the excuses (that would lift this sin from him)..."

He continues: "But this does not prevent one from detesting and prohibiting it and to replace it with a legislated action containing no bid'ah.... Just as the Jews and Christians may find benefit in their worship because it is possible that their worship includes an aspect of what is legislated but this does not necessitate that you perform their actions of worship or you report their words because all of the innovations contain evil that outweighs their good, this due to the fact that if their good outweighed the evil then why would the Sharee'ah have disregarded it? So we depend upon the fact that it's sin is greater than it's benefit and this necessitates forbiddance."

He continues: "And I say: it's sin is removed from some of the people due to the reason of ijtihaad or other than it, as the sin of usury and alcohol (from dates) which has been differed about (by the salaf) is removed from the salaf (who allowed it), then despite this it is necessary to explain it's condition and not to follow those that considered it permissible...So this is sufficient evidence in explaining that these innovations include corruptions of belief or condition contradicting what the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam came with, and that what benefit they contain is marjooh (not to be relied upon) and it not correct to use for objection."

He continues: "As for what they contain - i.e. these innovated festive seasons such as the Mawlid - of benefit then they are opposed by what they contain of the corruption of innovations that outweigh the benefit, along with with what has preceded of the corruptions of belief and state - that the hearts become content with it at the expense of a large number of Sunnahs to the extent that you find that the elite and the general masses preserve this in a way that they do not preserve the Taraaweeh's or the five prayers..." mentioning many more cases. [al-Qawl al-Fasl (pg. 102) of Shaykh Ismaa'eel al-Ansaaree]

A number of points can be seen here:

1. Ibn Taymiyyah regards the mawlid as a bid'ah which the strict believer is not allowed to follow.
2. He allows it only for those who would leave this bid'ah for a greater bid'ah.
3. He states that those practicing this, either out of taqleed or ijtihaad, will get reward for their good intentions, but they will get no reward for their practicing it.
4. That they will not get the burden of the sin of the innovation if their taqleed of ijtihaad contains the excuses that would lift this from them.

Did Ibn Katheer Author a Book Endorsing the Mawlid?

From 'al-Qawal al-fasl fee al-Ihtifaal bi Mawlid Khayr al-Rusul' (pg. 110+) of Shaykh Ismaa'eel al-Ansaaree:

As for the claim of the author of the letter published in the magazine 'al-Mujtama' (no.559), while listing the authors who considered the celebration of the Mawlid to be permissible and their works (concerning this), that the author of 'Kashf al-Dhunoon fee Usaamee al-Kutub wa al-Funoon' mentioned on page 319 that al-Haafidh ibn Katheer authored a number of treatise concerning the noble Mawlid. From amongst them: 'Jaami al-Aathaar fee Mawlid al-Nabiyy al-Mukhtaar' in three volumes, 'al-Lafdh al-Raa'iq fee Mawlid Khayr al-Khalaa'iq' and it is succinct. And his claim that ibn Fahd mentioned that ibn Katheer authored a book which he entitled, 'Mawrid as-Saadee fee Mawlid al-Haadee.' And his saying that al-Haafidh as-Sakhaawee had a book concerning the Mawlid entitled, 'at-Tibr al-Masbook fee Dhail as-Sulook' – then all of this is a grievous error having no basis for being correct.

As for 'Jaami al-Aathaar fee Mawlid al-Nabiyy al-Mukhtaar' then we looked up 'Kashf al-Dhunoon' to ascertain the truth of his words and we found it under the letter 'jeem' (pg.533) and the text is, 'Jaami al-Aathaar fee Mawlid an-Nabiyy al-Mukhtaar of Shams ad-Deen Muhammad bin Naasir ad-Deen ad-Dimishqee, died in the year 842, being in three volumes commencing with the words, "All praise is due to Allaah Who displayed Muhammad as the most purest of the Universe..."

And we found under the letter 'laam' page 1559 the words, 'al-Lafdh al-Raa'iq fee Mawlid Khayr al-Khalaa'iq' a short booklet by al-Haafidh Shams ad-Deen Muhammad bin Naasir ad-Deen ad-Damishqee who died in the year 842.'

And we found under the letter 'meem' page. 1910 the words, 'al-Haafidh as-Sakhaawee mentioned in his 'Daw al-Laami' a group who wrote concerning the Mawlid of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam from amongst them al-Haafidh... ibn Naasir ad-Deen ad-Damishqee who authored in this regards 'Jaami al-Aathaar fee Mawlid an-Nabiyy al-Mukhtaar' in three volumes and a booklet 'al-Lafdh al-Raa'iq fee Mawlid Khayr al-Khalaa'iq' and it is shorter than the one mentioned before it...'

As for 'Mawrid as-Saadee fee Mawlid al-Haadee' then the claim of the author of that article that ibn Fahd attributed it to ibn Katheer is without basis for ibn Fahd said in 'Lahdh al-Alhaadh bi Dhail Tabaqaat al-Huffaadh' (pg. 320-321) under the biography of ibn Naasir ad-Deen ad-Damishqee, 'he authored, and some of them concerned the Mawlid of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam and it is 'Jaami al-Aathaar fee Mawlid al-Mukhtaar' in three volumes, and 'Tawdeeh al-Mushtabah' ... and 'Mawrid as-Saadee fee Mawlid al-Haadee' ...'

And this which is mentioned by ibn Fahd is declared with certainty by as-Sakhaawee and ash-Shawkaanee...

So it becomes clear with all of this that the claims of the author of that article published in 'al-Mujtama' magazine has no basis.

Then what ibn Katheer mentions in the section on the Prophetic biography in his 'Bidaayah wan Nihaayah', and in his lengthy 'Seerah' and in the sections of 'Ikhtisaar Seerah ar-Rasool', and in his stand alone treatise on the Mawlid published with the tahqeeq of Salaah ad-Deen al-Manjad, and in his revision to the Mawlid of his shaykh Kamaal ad-Deen Abee Ma'aalee Muhammad bin Alee al-Ansaaree contained in the section detailing 'Dalaa'il an-Nubuwwah' in his 'Bidaayah wan Nihaayah' – he does not present anything in these concerning the celebration of the Mawlid of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam and neither of the evil practices that have occurred amongst the later generations with respect to the Mawlid. Therefore as long as the matter is like this then we cannot accept the claim of the author of that article. [Note: And what Muhammad bin Alawee al-Maalikee vainly thinks in his work 'al-Ihtifaal bi Mawlid an-Nabawiyy ash-Shareef' (pg. 38) that the 'Mawlid' of al-Haafidh ibn Katheer is from those works that present celebrating the Mawlid of the Prophet is not correct.]

As for the saying of the author of that article that as-Sakhaawee authored a book about the Mawlid entitled 'at-Tibr al-Masbook fee Dhail al-Sulook' then this is also incorrect... as-Sakhaawee said in his autobiography contained in 'Daw al-Laami li A'yaan al-Qarn at-Taasi' (8/17) while listing his works, 'and 'at-Tibr al-Masbook fee Dhail alaa Taareekh al-Maqreezee as-Sulook' containing the events and deaths (of scholars) since the year 45 to this day in 4 volumes' so this is what as-Sakhaawee himself clarifies and it is clear that the subject matter of the book is not the Mawlid even though it may contain things connected to the Mawlid.

Ruling on the Celebration of al-Mawlid (the Prophet's Birthday) by Shaykh Saalih al-Munajjid

Praise be to Allaah, alone, and peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allaah, his family, his companions, and whoever follows his guidance.

Many people have asked about the ruling concerning celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), standing up for him, sending salaam (greetings) upon him and reading soorahs from the Qur'aan during such celebrations, holding gatherings of dhikr, doing various things to show their joy, reciting qaseedahs and poems, and other things that are done to commemorate "Mawlid" which many people celebrate on the 12th day of Rabee' al-Awwal each Hijri year.

The answer is that it is not permitted to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), or the birthday of any other person, because this is a matter that has been innovated in the religion. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not do this, neither did his successors, the Rightly-Guided Khaleefahs (al-khulafaa' al-raashidoon), or others among his Companions (may Allaah be pleased with them), or those who followed them exactly (in faith) during the best centuries – these are the people who had the best knowledge of the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), who loved him the most and

followed the sharee'ah most perfectly, better than any who came after them. It is proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever innovates something in this matter of ours (i.e., Islaam), will have it rejected." i.e., it will be thrown back at him. In another Hadeeth, he said: "I advise you to adhere to my sunnah and the way of the rightly-guided successors (al-khulafaa' al-raashidoon) who will come after me, and to cling stubbornly to it. Beware of newly-invented things (in religion), for every newly-invented thing is an innovation and every innovation is a going astray." These two ahadeeth contain a very stern warning against coming up with innovations (bid'ah) and acting on them. Allaah says in His clear Book (interpretation of the meaning) :

"... And whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain from it..." [al-Hashr 59:7]

"... And let those who oppose the Messenger's commandment beware, lest some fitnah (disbelief, trials, afflictions, etc.) befall them, or a painful torment be inflicted on them." [al-Noor 24:63]

"Indeed in the Messenger of Allaah you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in (the Meeting with) Allaah and the Last Day and remembers Allaah much." [al-Ahzaab 33:21]

"And the first to embrace Islaam of the muhaajiroon (those who migrated to Madeenah from Makkah) and the Ansaar (the citizens of Madeenah who helped and gave aid to the muhaajiroon), and also those who followed them exactly (in Faith). Allaah is well-pleased with them as they are well-pleased with Him. He has prepared for them Gardens under which rivers flow (Paradise), to dwell therein forever. That is the supreme success." [al-Tawbah 9:100]

"...This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and have chosen for you Islaam as your religion..." [al-Maa'idah 5:3]

There are many other aayaat which convey the same meaning. Innovating things like "Mawlid" could be interpreted as meaning that Allaah did not complete the religion for this Ummah, that the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) failed to convey to this Ummah all that they should do, until those people came along later and innovated in the religion things that Allaah had not permitted, claiming that these were things that would bring them closer to Allaah. Without a doubt, this is a very serious matter, which indicates opposition and resistance towards Allaah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). Allaah has perfected the religion for His slaves and completed His favour upon them. The Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) has conveyed the Message clearly, and there is no way of reaching Paradise and avoiding Hell that he has not explained to his Ummah, as is clear from the Saheeh Hadeeth narrated by 'Abd-Allaah ibn 'Amr (may Allaah be pleased with them both), in which the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Allaah has not sent any prophet but it was his duty to point out to his ummah the best of what he knew, and to warn them against the worst of what he knows." (Reported by Muslim in his Saheeh).

It is well known that our Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is the best and the Seal of the Prophets, the most eloquent and the most sincere in advice. If celebrating his birthday had been a part of the religion which Allaah liked, His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) would have told his Ummah about it, and he would have done it during his lifetime, or his Companions would have done it. Since nothing of the sort happened, we know that this is not part of Islaam at all, rather it is one of the innovations about which the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) warned his Ummah, as stated in the two ahadeeth quoted above. Other ahadeeth also convey the same meaning, such as the words spoken by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) in his Friday sermons: "... The best of speech is the Book of Allaah and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). The most evil of things are those which are newly-invented (in religion), and every innovation is a going astray." (Reported by Imaam Muslim in his Saheeh).

There are many aayaat and ahadeeth which say the same thing. A group of scholars have condemned the practice of celebrating the Prophet's birthday and warned against it, in accordance with the evidence quoted above and other texts. Some of the later scholars went against this and allowed these celebrations as long as they did not involve anything forbidden such as exaggerating about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), mixing between men and women, musical instruments, etc. They thought that this was a kind of "bid'ah hasanah (good innovation)". But the rule is to refer disputed matters to the Book of Allaah and the Sunnah of His Messenger Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"O you who believe! Obey Allaah and obey the Messenger, and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allaah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allaah and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination." [al-Nisaa' 4:59]

So, let us refer this matter, celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), to the Book of Allaah. We find that the Qur'aan commands us to follow the Messenger in that which he has brought to us, and warns us to shun that which he has forbidden, and it tells us that the religion (Islaam) has been completed and perfected for this Ummah. This celebration is not a part of that which the Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) brought, so it is not a part of this religion which Allaah has perfected for us and in which He has commanded us to follow his Messenger. Let us also refer this matter to the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him): we will find that he did not do this, or command others to do it, and his Companions (may Allaah be pleased with them) did not do it either. So it is not part of the religion; it is a newly-invented innovation, and an imitation of the Jews and Christians in their festivals. So it should be clear to anyone who has the slightest common sense, sincere desire for the truth and open-mindedness, that celebrating the birthday of the Prophet is not a part of Islaam; it is an innovation, which Allaah and His Messenger (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) warned us against and told us to

shun. A wise person should not be swayed by the fact that so many people all over the world do this. Truth is not known by how many people follow it; it is known through the evidence of sharee'ah, as Allaah says of the Jews and Christians (interpretation of the meaning):

"And they say: 'None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian.' These are their own desires. Say: 'Produce your proof, if you are truthful.'" [al-Baqarah 2:111]

"And if you obey most of those on earth, they will mislead you far away from Allaah's path. They follow nothing but conjectures, and they do nothing but lie." [al-An'aam 6:116]

Most of these mawlid celebrations, besides being bid'ah, are also not free from other sinful practices, such as the mixing of men and women, use of songs and musical instruments, consumption of alcohol and other intoxicants, and other evils. They could even involve something worse, which is al-shirk al-akbar, in the form of exaggeration about the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or other awliyaa' (so-called "saints"). They may even pray to him, calling out for his help and support, claiming that he knows the Unseen, and other forms of kufr which many people indulge in when they celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or others whom they call awliyaa'.

In a Saheeh Hadeeth, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Beware of going to extremes in religion, for those who came before you were destroyed by their going to extremes in religion." He also said: "Do not exaggerate about me as the Christians exaggerated about the son of Maryam. I am only a slave, so say 'the slave and Messenger of Allaah.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari in his Saheeh from the hadeeth of 'Umar, may Allaah be pleased with him). It is most strange indeed that many people make huge efforts to attend these innovated gatherings and to defend them, when they do not do this in the case of the duties that have been enjoined on them like attending Jumu'ah (Friday) prayers and prayers in congregation; they do not care about these duties and do not think that they are doing anything wrong. There is no doubt that this is due to weakness of faith, lack of understanding and the effects of sins piling up on one's heart. We ask Allaah to keep us and all the Muslims safe from that.

Some of them think that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) actually attends the mawlid celebration, so they stand up to greet and welcome him. This is a serious falsehood and a form of gross ignorance. The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) will not come out of his grave, or contact anybody, or attend any gatherings. He will remain in his grave until the Day of Resurrection, and his soul is in the highest 'Illiyoon (in Paradise), with his Lord in the abode of honour, as Allaah says in Soorat al-Mu'minoon (interpretation of the meaning): "After that, surely, you will die. Then (again), surely, you will be resurrected on the Day of Resurrection." [al-Mu'minoon 23:15].

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "I will be the first whose grave will be opened on the Day of Resurrection, and I will be the first to intercede and

the first to be asked to intercede." May Allaah bless him and grant him peace. This aayah and Hadeeth, and others that say the same thing, all indicate that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and everyone else who has died will only emerge from their graves on the Day of Resurrection. This is something on which all the Muslim scholars agree; there is no controversy here. Every Muslim should pay attention to these matters and be careful to avoid the innovations and illusions introduced with no authority from Allaah by those who are ignorant. Allaah is the One whom we ask for help, and in Him we put our trust. There is no power and no strength except with Him.

Sending prayers and blessings upon the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is one of the righteous deeds that bring a person closer to Allaah, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "Allaah sends His Salaat (blessings, etc.) on the Prophet and His angels also (ask Allaah to bless and forgive him). O you who believe! Send your salaah on him (ask Allaah to bless him) and greet him with the Islaamic way of greeting (i.e., al-salaamu 'alaykum)." [al-Ahzaab 33:56]

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever sends one blessing on me, Allaah will send ten on him." This sending of blessings is recommended on all occasions, and is prescribed at the end of every prayer – indeed, according to all scholars, it is obligatory in the final tashahhud of every salaah (prayer), and it is sunnah mu'akkadah (confirmed sunnah) on a number of other occasions, such as after the adhaan, when the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is mentioned, and during the day and night of Jumu'ah (i.e. from maghrib on Thursday until maghrib on Friday), as is indicated in a number of ahadeeth.

We ask Allaah to help us and all the Muslims to understand His religion and adhere to it, to bless us all by making us follow the Sunnah, and to protect us from bid'ah, for He is the Most Kind and Generous. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad, and his family and companions.

Question 1

Is Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) created from light? What is wrong with celebrating his birthday? In our locality there are people who hold celebrations of the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) every year. They think that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is not like the rest of mankind, but that he is light from the Light of Allaah Himself, that he is present and watching in every place, and that he himself attends every gathering held to celebrate his birthday, he hears what the people say about him, and he is there with them. For that reason they stand up and say in unison: "Yaa Nabi-Allaah, yaa Rasool-Allaah, yaa Habeeb-Allaah, salaam 'alayka (O Prophet of Allaah, O Messenger of Allaah, O Beloved of Allaah, peace be upon you)." They call out to him as if he were present and

ask for his help and support. What is the Islaamic ruling on this? Is it correct or not? Is it sunnah, bid'ah, or what?

Answer 1

Praise be to Allaah alone, and peace and blessings be upon His Messenger and his family and companions.

1. Celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is an innovation (bid'ah) which goes against the guidance of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and of the Rightly Guided Khaleefahs (al-khulafaa' al-raashidoon) and the Sahaabah, may Allaah be pleased with them. It is proven that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: "Whoever does anything that is not part of this matter of ours (i.e., Islaam), will have it rejected." (For more details, please see Question 2 below).

2. Believing that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is not like the rest of humanity, and that he is light from the Light of Allaah Himself is not a correct belief, because it contradicts the Qur'aan. Allaah has stated that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is human, and has explained what makes the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) different from the rest of mankind. He said (interpretation of the meaning): "Say (O Muhammad): 'I am only a man like you. It has been inspired to me that your God is One God (Allaah). So whoever hopes for the Meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship of his Lord.'" [al-Kahf 18:110]

Mankind, human beings, are created, as Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "O mankind! Be dutiful to your Lord, Who created you from a single person (Adam), and from him He created his wife (Hawwa/Eve), and from them both He created many men and women..." [al-Nisaa' 4:1]

"O mankind, if you are in doubt about the Resurrection, then verily! We have created you from dust, then from a nutfah (mixed drops of male and female sexual discharge)..." [al-Hajj 22:5]

"O Prophet! Verily, We have sent you as witness, and a bearer of glad tidings, and a warner, - and as one who invites to Allaah by His leave, and as a lamp spreading light." [al-Ahzaab 33:45-46]

In contrast, Allaah is the First, and He has no beginning, as He says (interpretation of the meaning): "He is the First (nothing is before Him) and the Last (nothing is after Him), the Most High (nothing is above Him), and the Most Near (nothing is nearer than Him). And He is the All-Knower of every thing." [al-Hadeed 57:3]

Allaah called His Prophet "light" and a "lamp spreading light" because of the guidance and light with which Allaah sent him, with which Allaah guides all those who answer his call (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), as He says (interpretation of the

meaning): "... Indeed, there has come to you a light (Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)) and a plain Book (this Qur'aan)." [al-Maa'idah 5:15]

3. Saying that he is present and watching in every place, that he is himself present at every gathering to celebrate his birthday, and that he hears what the people present are saying, is all false. There is no basis for this in either the Qur'aan or the Sunnah.

4. Calling on him and seeking his help and support is a form of major shirk which is not permitted, whether one is calling on the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) or on any other created being, because Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning): "... so invoke not anyone along with Allaah." [al-Jinn 72:18] "And whoever invokes (or worships) besides Allaah, any other god of whom he has no proof, then his reckoning is only with his Lord. Surely! Al-kaafiroon (the disbelievers) will not be successful." [al-Mu'minoon 23:117]

(Fataawa al-Lajnah al-Daa'imah, 3/4)

The Muslim should follow, not innovate. He should believe in Allaah alone, call on Him alone and seek His help alone. He should not call on or seek the help of anyone else. The consequences of shirk are devastating, as it will wipe out all a person's good deeds and lead to his doom in Hell. Bid'ah is a serious matter, which will cause a person's deeds to be thrown back at him, not accepted. The Muslim should love, respect, honour and obey the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and give his words precedence over the words of any other human being, but it is not permitted to exaggerate about him, or to raise his status above that which has been bestowed upon him by Allaah, or to call on him instead of Allaah, because this is a violation of the rights of Allaah, and involves directing acts of worship to someone other than Allaah, when they should only be directed towards Allaah, may He be glorified and exalted. We ask Allaah to help us to do that which will please Him and to avoid that which will earn His wrath, and to help us to love Him and His Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad. And Allaah knows best.

Question 2

Mawlid al-Nabi (the Prophet's birthday). Why some people accept and some unaccept the celebration of the prophet (s.a.w.)? What is your opinion?

Answer 2

Praise be to Allaah. There is nothing in the Qur'aan to say that we should celebrate the Mawlid or birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). The Prophet himself (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not do this or command anyone to do it, either during his lifetime or after his death. Indeed, he told them not to exaggerate about him as the Christians had exaggerated about Jesus (upon whom be peace). He said: "Do not exaggerate about me as the Christians exaggerated about the son of Maryam. I am only a slave, so say, 'The slave of Allaah and His Messenger.'" (Reported by al-Bukhaari). What has been reported is that the Prophet

(peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) made the day of his birth a day of worship, which is different to celebration. He was asked about fasting on Mondays, and he said: "That is the day on which I was born and the day on which I was entrusted with the Mission or when I was first given Revelation." (Reported by Muslim, al-Nisaa'i and Abu Dawood).

Moreover, we know that the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them) were the people who loved the Prophet most. Was it reported that Abu Bakr, who was the closest of people to him and the one who loved him the most, celebrated the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)? Was it reported that 'Umar, who ruled for twelve years, or 'Uthmaan, did this? Was it reported that 'Ali, his relative and foster son, did this? Was it reported that any of the Sahaabah did this? No, by Allaah! Is it because they were not aware of its importance, or did they not truly love the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)? No one would say such a thing except one who has gone astray and is leading others astray.

Did any of the imaams – Abu Haneefah, Maalik, al-Shaafi'i, Ahmad, al-Hasan al-Basri, Ibn Seereen – do this or command others to do it or say that it was good? By Allaah, no! It was not even mentioned during the first and best three centuries. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said in a Saheeh Hadeeth: "The best of mankind are my generation (or my century), then those who come after them, then those who come after them. Then there will come a people who will not care if their testimony comes before their oath or vice versa (i.e., they will not take such matter seriously)." (Reported by al-Bukhaari, Muslim and al-Tirmidhi). The celebration of the Prophet's birthday appeared many centuries later, when many of the features of true religion had vanished and bid'ah had become widespread.

Thus this celebration became a sign of one's love for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)? But can it be possible that the Sahaabah, the imaams and the people of the best three centuries were unaware of it, and it was only those who came later who were aware of its importance?! What the Qur'aan tells us is that love of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is demonstrated by following the guidance he brought. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"Say (O Muhammad): 'If you (really) love Allaah, then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allaah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. Say: 'Obey Allaah and the Messenger.' But if they turn away, then Allaah does not like the disbelievers." [Aal 'Imraan 3:31-32]

The first aayah explains that love is just a claim, but the proof of sincerity is following what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) brought. The second aayah reaffirms the importance and necessity of obeying Allaah and His Messenger. Hence Allaah ended the aayah with a very stern warning in which those who refuse to obey are described as kaafirs, and Allah does not love the disbelievers. We ask Allaah to keep us safe from that. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told us of the danger of not obeying him, and the danger of adding to what he brought. The celebration of Mawlid or his birthday is indeed an addition to what he brought – as all

the scholars agree. He said: "The best of speech is the Book of Allaah, and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad. The most evil of things are those which are newly-invented (in religion), and every innovation is a going astray." (Reported by Muslim and al-Nisaa'i).

We ask Allaah to protect us from bid'ah and to bless us by helping us to follow. Allaah knows best. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad.

Taken from ahya.org