

The position of  
*Ahl As-Sunnah  
wal-Jamā'ah*  
as it was understood by  
the earliest generations  
of Muslims, free from  
latter day additions and  
distortions



حكم الاحتفال  
بالمولد النبوي



The Origins of the Celebration of the

# PROPHET'S BIRTHDAY

صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Abu Khadeejah Abdul-Wāhid Alam  
FOURTH EDITION 2020



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First Edition: January 2013

Second Edition: 2014

Third Edition: December 2016

Fourth Edition: August 2020

Published by:  
Salafi Publications

472 Coventry Road,  
Birmingham, UK,  
B10 0UG

t. 0121.773.0003

t. 0121.773.0033

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ISBN: 978-1-902727-46-2

00 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 10

## THE ORIGINS OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE PROPHET'S BIRTHDAY

صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ



All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all creation; may Allah extol the mention of our noble Prophet Muhammad in the highest company of Angels and give him peace and security—and his family, his Companions and all those who follow him correctly until the establishment of the Hour.

One of the most talked about, hotly debated and controversial points of discussion amongst Muslims for a long time has been whether or not it is permitted to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ). In this short booklet, we hope to shed light on this practice that has been celebrated by numerous groups of Muslims for centuries.

One fact that Muslims on both side of the ‘fence’ agree upon is that Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) did not celebrate his own birthday, nor did he encourage anyone else to do so. The Rightly Guided Caliphs after him, Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and ‘Ali (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ), likewise did not celebrate his birthday, and nor did they celebrate their own birthdays, and nor of any Prophet that came before our noble Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ). It’s obligation, allowance or recommendation is not stated in any verse from the Book of Allāh, nor in the authentic sayings of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ). Both sides, proponents and opponents alike, also agree that the

term ‘Eid (celebration) was never used for the occasion of the birth of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ). However, the opponents of ‘Eid Milād An-Nabiyy assert, “The mere mention of the event of the Prophet’s birth and his nobility and virtue over the rest of creation, which is accepted by every Muslim, is not a proof for the permissibility of celebrating his birthday.” And this point will be made clear in this book (*inshā’Allāh*).

The generation that followed the Companions known as the *Tābi’īn* and then those who followed them, likewise did not celebrate the Messenger’s (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) birthday, nor the birthday of Prophet Jesus the son of Mary (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) nor the birthdays of other than them. So those who were the most closely connected to the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) from his immediate family, his wives, his children, his grandchildren and his Companions—those who knew his excellence, his birth and his Prophethood—those who defended him more than those who came in the later generations, those who loved him more than the later generations, those who knew him better than any of mankind—none of them singled out the day of his birth as a celebration, not a single one of them.

Additionally, not one of the four well-known Imāms celebrated his birthday, not Abu Haneefah (died 150AH), Mālik bin Anas (died 179AH), Ash-Shāfi’ī (died 204AH) or Ahmad bin Hanbal (died 241AH) and nor any of their well-known students. Till this day, over fourteen centuries since the passing away of our noble Prophet, not one verse or *Hadeeth* (Prophetic Tradition) has been authentically established proving the validity of this religious act, not in the six fa-

mous books of *Hadeeth*<sup>1</sup> and not other than them. Yes, there is mention of his birth in various authentic narrations—that is not under dispute just as there is mention in the Qur’ān of the birth of Maryam (may Allāh be pleased with her) and the miraculous birth of her son, ‘Īsā, or Jesus (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ). However, there is a clear absence of any narration mentioning the singling out of a particular day or week, once a year, for the celebration of their birthdays.

We must make clear from the outset that the love of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is a binding obligation upon every believer—and we hold that opposing his *Sunnah* and his commands is forbidden and leads to misguidance. This has been explicitly stated by Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) in the Qur’ān:

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ  
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا

**“And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the Path of the believers, We shall**

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<sup>1</sup> The six famous books of Prophetic Tradition being: al-Bukhāri, Muslim, Abu Dawūd, at-Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah and an-Nasā’i. The most authentic of these without question are the collections of al-Bukhāri and Muslim. The remaining four are not considered to be free from containing weak narrations. In this era, the great *Hadeeth* scholar, Shaikh al-Albāni (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) has checked the authenticity of these works using the principles of the early *Hadeeth* scholars and has separated the weak narrations from the authentic ones.

keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in Hell, what an evil destination.”<sup>2</sup>

Introducing new acts of worship or rituals that were not performed by the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his Companions (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ) by which a person seeks nearness to Allāh is prohibited in our religion and rejected. These newly introduced deeds are referred to as *Bid'a* (religious innovations). Acts of worship are legislated by Allāh through His Law, the *Sharī'ah*, and no one has the right to legislate into Allāh's Religion. He, the Most High, stated:

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِّنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنَ بِهِ اللَّهُ

“Or have they set up associates alongside Allāh who legislate for them in the Religion, that for which they have been given no authority.”<sup>3</sup>

Imām al-Awzā'ī (died 157AH رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ), one of the illustrious scholars of the second century, stated, “Have patience upon the Sunnah and stop where the people before you stopped. Speak with that which they spoke, and hold back from what they held back from. Tread upon the path of your Pious Predecessors (*As-Salaf As-Sālih*), for whatever sufficed them will suffice you.”<sup>4</sup>

This statement of Imām al-Awzā'ī is in agreement with the saying of our noble Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), “Whoever intro-

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<sup>2</sup> The Noble Qur'ān, an-Nisā: 115.

<sup>3</sup> The Noble Qur'ān, ash-Shūrā: 21.

<sup>4</sup> See *Sharh Usūl al-I'tiqād* of al-Lālikā'ī, 2/154.

duces into this affair of ours (Islām) that which is not from it, then it will be rejected.”<sup>5</sup>

A person may claim, “But I did not introduce this birthday celebration, I just follow my sheikhs in this deed, so I am free of any blame.” The answer to this doubt is yet another saying of the Prophet (ﷺ) in which he said, **“Whosoever does a deed that is not from this affair of ours (Islām), then it will be rejected.”**<sup>6</sup>

So whether one introduces a new affair himself or one merely acts and follows others in an affair that is not from Islām (and has no clear evidence for it) is rejected by Allāh, the Most High, and rejected by Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ). This means Allāh will not reward the one who does any religious act that was not performed by the Prophet and his Companions. Rather, Allāh has threatened to punish the doer if he persists upon it after the truth has been conveyed to him. The Messenger (ﷺ) clearly stated in an authentic narration: **“The best of speech is the speech of Allāh, the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad—and the most evil of affairs are the newly introduced affairs [into Islām]—and every newly invented matter is a *Bid’ah* and every *Bid’ah* is misguidance, and every misguidance is in the Hellfire.”**<sup>7</sup>

So, innovations in the Religion lead to Hell, and Allāh’s refuge is sought from it. So whilst a person believes he is

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<sup>5</sup> Bukhāri, no. 2697, Muslim, no. 1718.

<sup>6</sup> Muslim, no. 1718.

<sup>7</sup> Reported by an-Nasā’i, and in *al-Mishkāt*, no. 137.

doing good, he is in fact collecting for himself sins that will be a cause of regret for him in the Hereafter. So these are the commands of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)—and Allāh, the Most High, stated:

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمُ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا<sup>٤</sup>

**“And whatever the Messenger gives you, then take it and whatever he forbids for you, then keep away from it.”<sup>8</sup>**

So we are commanded to keep away from innovations in the Religion by the direct command of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). The servants of Allāh are threatened with punishment from Allāh for disobeying the Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ):

فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ  
أَلِيمٌ<sup>٩</sup>

**“Let those beware who disobey the Prophet’s order, lest a *fitnah* (tribulation) strikes them or they are inflicted with a painful punishment.”<sup>9</sup>**

And even if a person was to come along and quote a religious scholar in his opinion in support of the innovation of celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), then that is not a proof in the Religion at all, and it cannot override the Qur’ān and *Hadeeth*. Evidence for religious beliefs and deeds is established in the Qur’ān and *Sunnah*. So if two Muslims differ in any affair, even if they be scholars, then they are

<sup>8</sup> The Noble Qur’ān, al-Hashr: 7.

<sup>9</sup> The Noble Qur’ān, an-Nūr: 63.

obligated to accept the Judgement of the Qur’ān and *Sunnah* in order to prove who is correct and who is in error:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ  
الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

**“O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything between yourselves, refer it to Allāh and the Messenger if you truly believe in Allāh and the Last Day. That is the best way and best in result.”<sup>10</sup>**

Today we see the misguided Sufis<sup>11</sup> and others taking the *Mawlid* as a Religious festival and an annual day of special worship.

So when the Muslims differ, as they do in this matter, they are obligated to return this differing back to the Book and

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<sup>10</sup> The Noble Qur’ān, an-Nisā: 59.

<sup>11</sup> An old religious esoteric sect that is prevalent today in the ranks of the Muslims. Their main traits include seeking intercession through deceased ‘righteous men’ by calling upon them for assistance. Many embark upon special pilgrimages visiting the graves of the pious, often prostrating in front of a shrine or tomb and performing *Tawāf* around it. They believe that the dead have an effect upon the living, so they seek aid and assistance from them. They also engage in innovated practices of chanting the name of Allāh and the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in a manner that was never practiced by the Prophet of Allāh (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and his Companions. For more detailed information visit [tawhidfirst.com](http://tawhidfirst.com), [bidah.com](http://bidah.com) and [barelwis.com](http://barelwis.com).

*Sunnah* for judgement. The reader can clearly see from what has already been mentioned above that the *Mawlid* celebration and ritual is not supported by any Religious text. Indeed there is not one scholar of *ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah* from the first three centuries who celebrated this birthday or even encouraged its celebration. **So a quotation of an odd Scholar centuries later who may have, according to the Sufis, allowed its celebration does not make the celebration a part of our perfected and completed Religion.** And if a person was to appear from among the ranks of the Sufis and decided to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet 'Isā, or Mūsā or any other Prophet (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ), or the birthday of a Companion (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ), then our response would be the same: “Bring your proof for this practice of yours from the Book and *Sunnah* if you are truthful. Present to us an authentic narration where the Prophet (عَلَيْهِمُ السَّلَامُ) or his Companions (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ) or the four Imāms would single out one day in a year for the celebration of this event which you call ‘*Eid Milād an-Nabiyy*?’”

You should know that a Religion that is perfect and complete requires no further perfection, completion, innovated practices or rituals. Allāh, the Most High, stated:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ  
الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

“This day I have completed your Religion for you and perfected my favour upon you and I am pleased with

**Islām as your Religion.”**<sup>12</sup> After this verse was revealed there were no further acts of worship revealed, and all praise is due to Allāh. What followed from Revelation after this verse was the confirmation of what was already present. The Messenger of Allāh (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) died after conveying the complete and clear message, and he did not leave off any affair that leads to Paradise except that he explained that to his followers, and likewise he did not leave off an affair that would distance his followers from Hell except that he warned them from it. He (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stated: **“Allāh did not send a Messenger except that he was duty-bound to direct his Nation to whatever he knew of good for them, and to warn them from whatever he knew to be evil for them.”**<sup>13</sup>

Abu Dharr (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said:

تركنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وما طائر يقلب جناحيه في  
الهواء إلا وهو يذكرنا منه علما

**“Allah’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) left us and there was not a bird that flapped its wings in the sky except that he gave us some knowledge concerning it.”** Then he narrated that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

ما بقي شيء يقرب من الجنة ويباعد من النار إلا بين لكم

<sup>12</sup> The Noble Qur’ān, al-Mā’idah: 3.

<sup>13</sup> Saheeh Muslim from Abdullāh bin ‘Amr (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ).

“There does not remain anything that brings one closer to Jannah or distances one from the Fire except that it has been explained to you.”<sup>14</sup> He (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) also said: “By Him in whose hand is my soul, I have not left anything which brings you closer to Paradise and distances you from the Fire except that I have commanded you with it. And I have not left anything which brings you closer to the Fire and distances you from Paradise except that I have prohibited you from it.”<sup>15</sup>

Imām Ad-Dārimi (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said: Hakeem Ibn Al-Mubārak informed us saying: ‘Amr bin Yahyā told us saying: I heard my father narrating from his father who said: “We were sitting at the door of Abdullāh bin Mas’ūd (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) before the *Dhuhr* prayer. So when he came out, we would walk with him to the Masjid.

Then Abu Mūsā Al-Ash’ari (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) came along and said: ‘Has Abu Abdur-Rahmān (Ibn Mas’ūd) come out to you yet?’ We said: ‘No.’ So he sat down with us until he came out of his house. When he exited, we all stood and Abu Mūsā said to him: ‘O Abu Abdur-Rahmān! I just saw in the Masjid an affair that I found to be reprehensible but I did not see, *alhamdulillah*, except that which was seemingly good!’ Ibn Mas’ūd (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said: ‘What did you see?’ He replied: ‘If you are alive until we reach, you’ll see it. I saw in the Masjid groups of people sitting in circles waiting for the Prayer. In each circle,

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<sup>14</sup> At-Tabarāni in *Mu’jam Al-Kabīr* (2/155), Al-Haythami in *Majma’ Az-Zawā’id* (8/266). Declared *sahīh* by Al-Albāni in *As-Silsilah As-Sahīhah* (no. 1803).

<sup>15</sup> Reported by Imām Ahmad and Ibn Khuzaymah.

there was a man with stones in his hand, and he said to them: ‘Say *Allāhu Akbar* a hundred times.’ So, they repeated *Allāhu Akbar* a hundred times. Then he said: ‘Say *Lā ilāha illallāh* a hundred times.’ So, they repeated *Lā ilāha illallāh* a hundred times. Then he said: ‘Say *Subhānallāh* a hundred times.’ So, they repeated *Subhānallāh* a hundred times.’

Ibn Mas’ūd said: ‘So what did you say to them?’ Abu Mūsā said: ‘I didn’t say anything. I was waiting for your opinion or waiting for your command.’ Ibn Mas’ūd (رضي الله عنه) said: ‘Rather, you should have told them to count their sins instead, and assured them that their good deeds will not be lost.’

So then he walked on and we walked on with him until he reached one of those circles and stopped and said: ‘**What is this that I see you doing?**’ They replied: ‘**O Abu Abdur-Rahmān, these are stones with which we are counting the *Takbeer*, the *Tahleel* and the *Tasbeeh*.**’ He said to them: ‘**Rather, you should count your sins! And I assure you that you will not lose any of your good deeds!**’

Woe to you, O Ummah of Muhammad! How quickly you have hastened to your destruction! Here are the Companions of your Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) still widespread—and here are his garments still not worn out—and his utensils that have not yet broken. By the One in whose Hand is my soul, either you are upon a religion more guided than the Religion of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) or you have opened a door of misguidance.’

They said: ‘By Allah, O Abu Abdur-Rahmān! We did not intend except good.’ He replied: ‘And how many people intend good but never attain it. Indeed Allah’s Messen-

ger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) narrated to us that there will be a people who will recite the Qur'an, but it will not pass beyond their collarbones. I do not know, but perhaps most of them are from among you.' Then he turned away from them."

'Amr bin Salamah said: "I saw most of them who were sitting in those circles fighting against us on the day of the battle of Nahrawān alongside the Khawārij."<sup>16</sup>

Al-Imām Abdul-'Azīz Ibn Bāz (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) stated: "What is correct is that every *Bid'ah* is misguidance—and a *Bid'ah* is whatever is done by the people in seeking nearness to Allah but it has not been legislated by Allāh or His Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) such as what the people were doing in the time of Ibn Mas'ūd (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ)—and other matters that the people have innovated such as celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ); or those who build structures over graves, and those who build mosques over graves, or turn them into places of worship; or those who cement over the graves and inscribe writings upon them—all of these are innovations that the people have invented (without proof from the Quran and *Sunnah*) so it is obligatory to warn against these matters."<sup>17</sup>

People who encourage others with rituals and religious deeds that were not practised by Allāh's Messenger and his

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<sup>16</sup> Reported by Ad-Dārimi in *Al-Muqaddimah*, Chapter: "The Dislike of Following Opinions", no. 210.

<sup>17</sup> See *Ta'liq Samāhatush-Shaikh Ibn Bāz 'alā Kitāb Fadl al-Islām*, pp 52 to 55.

noble Companions are, in essence, saying that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) failed, forgot or neglected to inform his nation about the importance of celebrating his birthday annually, as well as all the paraphernalia that goes with it such as the lighting of candles, decorative window lights, singing, parading in the streets, dancing with joy, visiting the graveyards, eating and drinking, handing out sweets to children, exchanging gifts and participating in long sessions of *Dhikr* for the occasion.

So, all of this, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) either neglected to tell his nation or forgot to tell them—and such a notion is of course absurd.

Or are we to believe that the great Companions such as Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and ‘Ali (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ) who had positions of leadership after the death of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) hid this information, or that the great scholars of *Hadeeth* such as Bukhāri, Muslim, Abu Dawūd, Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah and others neglected this annual practice and deliberately did not include it in their *Hadeeth* collections?

Or do these misguided innovators believe that the noblest of all the Prophets of Allāh (تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى), who would not speak and act except upon Revelation gave them the right to invent new rituals and acts of worship for which Allāh, the Most High, gave them no authority? They should fear Allāh and ponder over His saying (سُبْحَانَكَ وَتَعَالَى):

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ شَرَعُوا لَهُمْ مِنَ الدِّينِ مَا لَمْ يَأْذَنْ بِهِ اللَّهُ<sup>ع</sup>

**“Or have they set up associates alongside Allāh who legislate laws for them in the Religion, that for which they have been given no authority?”<sup>18</sup>**

Allah’s Religion was perfected and it encompasses complete guidance, leaving nothing to one’s own imagination and whims. This Religion guides to Allāh’s Pleasure and His Paradise. The Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) guided his *Ummah* to what was best for them and forbade them from newly innovated practices, worship and celebrations. Had this event of the *Mawlid* been something good, then the noble Companions would have been the first to race to it, and they would never have left this deed for the later centuries!

The noble Companion, Hudhayfah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said: **“Every act of worship which was not practised by the Companions of Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) then do not do it—for indeed the early ones did not leave any speech for the later ones. So fear Allah, O people of knowledge! And take the path of those who have preceded you.”<sup>19</sup>**

Ibn Taymiyyah (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) died 728AH) said: “Taking particular occasions that are not reported in the legislation of the Qur’ān and Sunnah such as certain nights in the month of Rabī’ al-Awwal, which is said to be the birthday of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), or certain nights in Rajab, or the 18th of Dhul-Hijjah, or the 8th of Shawwāl, which is referred to by some as the ‘Eid of the ‘Pious Ones’—then all of these are innovations which were not recommended or performed by

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<sup>18</sup> The Noble Qur’ān, ash-Shūrā: 21

<sup>19</sup> See Al-Lālikā’i 1/95, no. 119.

the Righteous Predecessors—and Allāh, the Most Perfect, knows best.”<sup>20</sup>

Ibn al-Hāj al-‘Abdari (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ دِيَهُ 737AH) stated: “And from what they have introduced from the affairs of *Bid’ah* along with their belief that this is from the greatest of the acts of worship and the most manifest of signs is what they practice in the month of Rabī’ al-Awwal, and that is the birthday of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ)—and this practice encompasses a body of innovations and forbidden acts.

From them are the use of singers and performers with musical instruments. So look, may Allāh have mercy upon us and you, at the opposition to the pure Sunnah! How it is disfigured and made unsightly, and dragged into what is forbidden. Do you not see that when they oppose the pure Sunnah and celebrate the birthday of the Prophet, they do not simply limit themselves to the act alone? Rather, they add to it numerous futile deeds, as has been mentioned. So joy and happiness is for the one who tightens his handhold in following the Book and the *Sunnah* and the path that connects to that—and that lies in following the Salaf who have preceded, may Allāh be pleased with all of them—because they were more knowledgeable of the Sunnah than us, more acquaint-

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<sup>20</sup> See *Mu’jam al-Bid’ah*, p. 981. See also Ibn Taymiyyah’s tremendous work, *Iqtidā as-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm li Mukhālifati as’hāb al-Jahīm*, (2/619 *Maktabah ar-Rushd*), wherein he clearly states that people are rewarded for their love of Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and striving in that regard, but they are not rewarded for innovations. Then he goes on to show how these innovators have opposed the early pious generations in the celebration of the *Milād*.

ed with the sayings and had better understanding of the affairs.”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Al-Madkhal*, 2/30 and others. See *Mu’jam al-Bid’ah*, p. 981.

## Who Began the Practice of ‘Eid Milād An-Nabiyy?

The first people to innovate this celebration of the birthday of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) were the tribe of *Banī ‘Ubaid al-Qaddāh*<sup>22</sup>, those who called themselves the *Fātimids*, and

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<sup>22</sup> ‘Ubaid bin Maymoon al-Qaddāh was the founder of the state of the ‘Ubaidiyyah in Tunisia, North Africa at the end of the third century Hijrah. Imām al-Dhahabi (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) said in *as-Siyar* (15/141): **“Ubaidullaah Abu Muhammad, the first of the Caliphs of the Kharijite ‘Ubaidi Bātinīs who overturned Islām, and proclaimed rejection and hatred (*rafḍ*) of the Companions whilst concealing the doctrine of the Isma‘iliyyah Shi‘ites. They sent out callers to misguide the ignorant and the mountain dwellers. He claimed he was a *Fātimi*, from the offspring of Ja‘far as-Sādiq.”** ‘Ubaid was the son of Maymoon who was a Persian Jew with Magian influence. He ruled the ‘Ubaidi state until 322 AH. It was then ruled over by his son, Abul-Qāsim al-Qā‘im bi-Amrillāh until 334 AH, then his son al-Mansoor Isma‘il until his death in 341AH, and then his son Abu Tamīm al-Mu‘izz li-Dīnillāh who expanded the Isma‘ili Bātinī esoteric state into Egypt in the year 358 AH. Many wars took place between the Sunni rulers and these Isma‘ili Bātinīs. **Al-Mu‘izz himself was an astrologer believing in the influence of the stars, and he also established tombs and taught the people to seek blessings from them, leading to the introduction of polytheistic practices into Egypt.** Al-Hākim bi-Amrillāh, the ruler who came after al-Mu‘izz claimed divinity for himself. It was the likes of these who innovated the celebration of the Prophet’s birthday and making it a day of ‘Eid—thus including it amongst the other celebrations of the Shi‘ah such as the day of *Ghadeer*, and the birthdays of ‘Ali, Fātimah, Hasan and Husayn—and also the celebration of Christmas, as is established from them by al-Maqrīzī in his work, *al-Khitat*. The ‘Ubaidi state was set up to spread disbelief and to fight against Sunni Islam, their rulers and their nations. (Refer to [bidah.com](http://bidah.com))

they claimed ascription to the children of the Prophet's cousin, 'Alī bin Abī Tālib (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) and his wife Fātimah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا), the daughter of Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

They appeared during the Abbaside Caliphate and ruled Egypt from 360AH onwards for two centuries, and were a sect of the Shi'ites known as the *Ismā'ilis*, due to their connection to Ismā'il Muhammad bin Ja'far—and it is for this reason they are called *Ismā'ilis*. They had many oppositions to the Islamic belief and monotheism (*Tawheed*). They committed clear unbelief, to the point that their leaders claimed divinity for themselves and were worshipped by their followers. And from them was their Ruler, al-'Ubaidi. The Muslim historians mention that their real origins are far from Fātimah and 'Alī (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ)—rather their origins lie with the Magian fire-worshippers of Persia and to the tribe of 'Ubaid al-Qaddāh. So it is more appropriate that they be called *'Ubaidiyyah* and *Ismā'ilis*—and they are present till this day. They used to believe that Allāh is in-dwelling in His creation, and that the Revelation has hidden esoteric meanings that are only known to their scholars and 'saints' leading them to be considered as unbelievers by the great Scholars of *ahlus-Sunnah* of that time.

Before they appeared, there was no celebration of the *Mawlid* of Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).<sup>23</sup> Imām Ahmad al-Miqrīzī (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) died 845AH) known as the Shaikh of the historians of Egypt has a work entitled *Kitāb Khitat al-Miqrīziyyah*. He lists

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<sup>23</sup> See *Kashf ash-Shubuhāt*, explanation of Shaikh Sālih al-Fawzān and the explanation of Shaikh Sālih bin 'Abdul-Azīz Āl ash-Shaikh. See also *al-Khitat al-Miqrīziyyah* 1/490.

in this work<sup>24</sup> those Days which the Ismā'īli Shī'ah would take as days of celebration, and the condition of the people during these periods and what they would do. So throughout the year they would single out days for festivities, rituals and celebrations. From them, he mentions:

- New year celebrations,
- 'Āshoorā festivities,
- the birthday of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَىٰ آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ),
- the birthday of 'Ali bin Abi Tālib,
- the birthday of al-Hasan and al-Husain,
- the birthday of Fātimah, the daughter of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ),
- the birthday of their ruler,
- the first night of the month of Rajab,
- the middle night in the month of Rajab,
- the first night of the month of Sha'bān,
- the middle of Sha'bān,
- the commencement of Ramadān,
- the last night of Ramadān,
- 'Eid al-Fitr, 'Eid al-Adhā<sup>25</sup>,
- the celebration of the conquest of the Gulf,

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<sup>24</sup> See 1/490.

<sup>25</sup> 'Eid al-Fitr and 'Eid al-Adhā are the only two from this list that are actually legislated in the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*!

- the Persian new year,
- the Day of Epiphany and so on.

He mentions several others, but this list should suffice the respected reader and cause him to reflect upon the origins of this innovated practice of the *Mawlid*. It was these Ismā'ili Shī'ah who unleashed these false celebrations upon the *Ummah* of Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ). So, who would imitate them except (a) the ignorant blind-follower, (b) the one who is deceived by his misguided Sufi sheikhs, or (c) the one who believes the path of these Sufis and Shī'ah is more befitting to be followed than that of the Companions of Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

The Muslim who knows the origin of this celebration, will he still celebrate it? Will he still claim that it is a good *Bid'ah*? And if he persists in celebrating this day, then there should be nothing preventing him from celebrating all the other celebrations that the Ismā'ili Shī'ah and the non-Muslims celebrate! If *Bid'ah* is truly good in Islām, then why not? Why stop just at the *Mawlid* (or birthday) of the Messenger Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)? Why not Jesus (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام), 'Ali, Fātimah, Hasan, Husain (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ)? Why not New Years' Day, the Persian New Year and Chinese New Year? Why not Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day, Valentine's Day, Christmas Day and so on? And make it an endless year of daily celebrations and innovated rituals!

As for the people of Sunnah, those who love Allāh, the Most High, and love His Messenger and follow the early believers, then for them it is sufficient what the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said after he migrated to Madīnah and found the people cel-

celebrating two days of ‘Eid, one of which they took from the Persians. The Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said to them: **“Indeed Allāh has replaced them with two days that are better than them: the Day of Adhā and the Day of Fitr.”**<sup>26</sup>

So the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) replaced all other celebrations with these better ones, so these are better than the *Mawlid*, or New Year, or other than them. And as Ibn al-Hāj (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ) stated above, it is not only the fact that these people introduce a misguided and forbidden action and then claim it is from Islām—they compound this misguidance with further sins and transgressions such as free mixing between the sexes, dancing innovated Sufi and Dervish dances, playing musical instruments, parading and chanting in the streets in groups, lighting candles and lanterns for days and weeks before and after the *Mawlid*, filling their homes and places of worship with decorations and festive lights just like the Christians at Christmas, partaking in *Dhikr* gatherings that were unheard of in the time of Prophethood—loud chanting and calling out to the Prophet, ‘*Yā Muhammad!*’ over and over again, calling upon their deceased sheikhs, some of whom are buried thousands of miles away, seeking aid and intercession from them through supplication (*du‘ā*) and worship that is directed to other than Allāh!

Many of the same people will visit the graves of their sheikhs and *Awliyā* prostrating at the graveside, seeking help and

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<sup>26</sup> Reported by Abu Dawūd and an-Nasā’ī. See *as-Sahīhah*, no. 2021. *Adhā* is the ‘Eid celebration after Hajj and *Fitr* is the ‘Eid celebration after the month of Ramadān.

deliverance or intercession. All of this violates the monotheistic belief (*Tawhīd*) in Allāh.<sup>27</sup>

Some ignorant Muslims fast only one Monday in the year in the month of Rabī' al-Awwal and celebrate in the evening, thinking that it is from the *Sunnah* to fast that Monday in the year on the birthday of Allāh's Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). By doing so, they have misunderstood the words of the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) wherein he was asked about fasting on a Monday, to which he replied:

فِيهِ وُلِدْتُ وَفِيهِ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيَّ

**“That is the day on which I was born, and the day upon which I started to receive Revelation.”**<sup>28</sup>

Misguided Muslims imagine that this is a proof that enables them to celebrate once a year whereas the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is talking about the weekly fasting on Mondays which he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) used to fast along with Thursdays as is clearly reported in authentic narrations.<sup>29</sup> Usāmah bin Zaid (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said: “O Messenger of Allāh, sometimes you fast, and you hardly ever cease fasting. And sometimes you cease fasting and you hardly fast—except for two days which, if you are fasting, you include them, and if you are not fasting, then you make sure to fast them.” He said: **“Which two**

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<sup>27</sup> See *al-Bā'ith* of Abu Shāmah 110, *al-Madkhal* of Ibn al-Hāj 2/5-16, *al-Ibdā' fi Madār al-Ibtidā'* of Ali Mahfūdh.

<sup>28</sup> Saḥīḥ Muslim, no. 1162, Chapter: “It is recommended to fast three days of every month, and to fast on the days of ‘Arafah and ‘Āshūrā, and to fast on Mondays and Thursdays.”

<sup>29</sup> See *al-I'tisām* of ash-Shātibee, 2/23.

days?” Usāmah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said: “Monday and Thursday.” He said: “Those are two days in which deeds are presented to the Lord of the worlds, and I like my deeds to be shown to Him when I am fasting.”<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) never described Monday as a day of ‘Eid and neither did he make it a once-in-a-year event. Rather, he would fast on Mondays and Thursdays, as we have proven.

The reader should clearly understand that there is no day of celebration, ritual or worship for the birthday of Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) reported in any authentic text, and it was not practiced in the earlier generations until the emergence of the **Bātini ‘Ubaidi Ismā’īli Shi’ites**.

If one claims that it is a *Bid’ah Hasanah* (a good innovation), then we say to them that there is no such thing in the acts of worship as a good innovation. If one asserts that some of the later scholars used this term, then we say that when we analyse the sayings of many of those scholars, then we quickly realise that they only held the term good innovation to be applied linguistically or in the worldly affairs, but not in the Religious sense.

For example, when the second Caliph ‘Umar bin al-Khattāb (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) saw the people praying the *Tarāweeh Prayer* in the month of Ramadān in congregation, he said, “**What an excellent innovation this is.**” So, did ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) intend by this saying that there are good innovations in the Religion? When we examine the context of the events that led to

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<sup>30</sup> Reported by an-Nasā’ī, no. 2358 (*hasan*).

‘Umar’s statement, we quickly realise that he (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) was speaking linguistically and not that praying *Tarāweeh* in congregation was newly innovated. This is due to the fact that the *Tarāweeh* prayer was already legislated and established by Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in his Mosque years earlier as has been reported by numerous Companions. Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) led his Companions in night prayer during the month of Ramadān, **“and the people prayed behind him.”** Then he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) stopped praying it in congregation and said, **“I feared that it would be made obligatory upon you and you would not be able to manage it.”** Ā’ishah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهَا) said: **“So Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) died and the situation remained like that.”**<sup>31</sup>

Several years later, during the Caliphate of ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ), ‘Umar entered the Mosque and saw the people praying in separate groups so he said, **“I think it would be better if I gathered them behind a single reciter,”** i.e. just as they did when they prayed behind Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)—there is no *Bid’ah* in worship here! ‘Umar gathered them and followed the example of the Prophet from years earlier. When he saw them a few nights later praying behind one reciter, that is when he said, **“What an excellent innovation this is.”**<sup>32</sup>

So did ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) introduce something new that was not previously established in the time of Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَعَلَى آلِهِ وَسَلَّمَ)? No, he did not. One can see that clearly he

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<sup>31</sup> Reported by Bukhāri, 3/220 and Muslim, no. 761.

<sup>32</sup> Reported by Bukhāri, 4/218, Mālik, 1/114.

revived the *Sunnah*, and did not innovate any new Religious act. So when he said, “**What an excellent innovation this is,**” he clearly was speaking linguistically, meaning that it is new in this time because it had been abandoned for many years. So, he was not justifying religious innovations, *alhamdulillah*.<sup>33</sup>

And this is, without any doubt, the meaning of that which has been ascribed to Imām ash-Shāfi’ī (رحمته الله) died 204AH). Al-Bayhaqi reports<sup>34</sup> with his chain of narration from ash-Shāfi’ī (رحمته الله) that he said: “Newly invented matters are of two types: The first of them is what opposes the Book, or the *Sunnah*, or a narration [from the Companions], or the consensus—this is the misguided innovation. And the second is what has been introduced of goodness and there is not a single scholar who opposes it. This is newly-introduced yet not blameworthy—and Umar (رضي الله عنه) had said about the night prayer in the month of Ramadān, ‘What an excellent innovation this is,’ meaning, that it is newly introduced and was not previously done.”<sup>35</sup> Meaning that the *Tarāweeh* in congregation was a new affair in the time of ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه), not that it was new to Islām. It is beyond comprehension that this isolated report from al-Bayhaqi is used by the misguided innovators to justify the *Mawlid* whilst Imām ash-

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<sup>33</sup> See *Iqtidā as-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm* of Ibn Taymiyyah, p. 275-277, *al-I’tisām* of ash-Shātibi, 1/193-195, and *Salāt at-Taraweeh* of al-Albāni, p. 52-54.

<sup>34</sup> *Manāqib ash-Shāfi’ī* (1/469).

<sup>35</sup> See Bidah.com.

Shāfi'ī himself gives us a clear example of what he intended by a good newly introduced affair!

Additionally, innovations in the worldly affairs such as cars, airplanes, phones and so on are also permissible innovations so long as they do not oppose the Qur'ān, *Sunnah* and Consensus (*Ijmā'*).<sup>36</sup>

Al-Hāfidh Ibn Kathīr (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said in his *Tafsīr*<sup>37</sup>, “*Bid'ah* is of two types. Sometimes it can be a legislative innovation, such as his (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) saying, ‘**Every newly invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance,**’ and sometimes it can be a linguistic innovation, such as the saying of the Leader of the Faithful, ‘Umar bin al-Khattāb, (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) when he brought them together for the *Tarāweeh* prayer and their continuance upon that, ‘**What an excellent innovation this is!**’”

So all of this should be sufficient for the heart that is sincere, that seeks the truth, that is not bound by the shackles of blind-following, a heart that is free from those blameworthy people who Allāh, the Mighty and Majestic, refuted in His Book:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا أَلْفَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا  
أُولَئِكَ كَانَ آبَاؤُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَهْتَدُونَ

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<sup>36</sup> See *Tahdhīr al-Muslimīn anil-Ibtidā' wal-Bida'i fid-Dīn* of Shaikh Ahmad bin Hajr Āl-Butāmi (died 1423AH) 1428H, p. 114, refer also to Bidah.com.

<sup>37</sup> *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, Dar Tayyibah, 1422H, 1/398, refer to Bidah.com.

**“And when it is said to them, ‘Follow what Allah has revealed,’ they say, ‘No, rather we will follow that which we found our forefathers doing.’ Even though their forefathers understood nothing, nor were they guided.”<sup>38</sup>**

We finish by saying: All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of all creation—may Allah extol the mention of our noble Prophet Muhammad in the highest company of Angels and give him peace and security—and his family, his Companions and all those who follow him correctly until the establishment of the Hour.

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<sup>38</sup> The Noble Qur’ān, al-Baqarah: 170.









# The Prophet's Birthday Celebration

## Eid Milād An-Nabiyy ﷺ

One of the most talked about, hotly debated and controversial subjects of discussion amongst Muslims for a long time has been whether or not it is permitted to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (ﷺ). In this short booklet, we hope to shed light on this practice that has been celebrated by a body of Muslims for centuries. To enable oneself to eventually come to a conclusion in this subject, we must be certain of the fact that the earlier one goes back in history, the purer the religion gets, until we reach the era of the Companions of Allāh's Messenger (رضي الله عنه), to whom the Messenger (ﷺ) said, **"I have left you upon clear proof, its night is like its day, no one deviates from it except that he is destroyed—and whomsoever amongst you lives for long will see great differing. So cling to what you know from my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me. Bite on to that with your molar teeth and beware of newly invented matters."** So when Muslims differ, they must return to clinging to the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Sunnah of his noble Rightly Guided Companions (رضي الله عنهم). So this brief booklet has been compiled in light of this principle.



472 Coventry Road  
Birmingham  
United Kingdom B10 0UG  
Tel. 0121.773.0033  
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