

ليتفقوا (١)



Ruling of Islamic Law on Celebrating the Prophet`s Birthday (The Noble Mawlid)

Prepared by
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In The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

In The Name Of ALLAH, The Entirely Merciful, The Especially Merciful
All perfect praise be to Allah the Lord of The Worlds. May His peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Mohammad and upon all his family and companions.

This is a pamphlet addressing the most important jurisprudential questions commonly raised regarding the ruling of Islamic Law on celebrating the Prophet's birthday. Its content is derived from authoritative legal rulings (fatāwā) issued by the General Iftaa` Department, drawing upon the established juristic principles documented in the texts of the Shāfi`ī school in particular, and the recognized texts of the four major Sunni schools of thought in general. It is well-established that the status of the Prophet (PBUH), within his Ummah, is one of immense honor and grandeur. He is the Prophet who calls towards all that is good in this life and the Hereafter, and the one who encompasses the keys to immediate and ultimate felicity. Religious texts have clarified that sending prayers upon the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, carries great virtue, and that recounting his exemplary qualities and characteristics, as well as studying his noble biography, has a profound impact on a Muslim's life. Indeed, it is of immense benefit for a person's spiritual and moral upbringing.

For this reason, it has become widespread among Muslims, both the general populace and the scholars, across various eras, to celebrate all matters pertaining to the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, including the commemoration of the day of his noble birth.

Most historians and biographers have mentioned that the correct view is that the birth of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, occurred on the twelfth day of the month of Rabi` al-Awwal in the Year of the Elephant, and their statements on this matter are numerous.

Here, we present some rulings and questions related to this important topic to elucidate the correct perspective, particularly as some individuals have denied the permissibility of celebrating the Mawlid, resorting to certain specious arguments to prevent people from this legitimate celebration—which serves to venerate the status of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and his legislation, and encourages emulating and following his example.

Some people state: If the date of the Prophet's passing, peace and

blessings be upon him, was on the 12th of Rabi` al-Awwal, then we are celebrating his death, not his birth. How do we resolve this misconception?

The date of the Prophet`s passing, peace and blessings be upon him, is a matter of difference among scholars. Imam al-Bukhari recorded in his Sahih (No. 3536) that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, «passed away at the age of sixty-three». Books of the noble Prophetic biography mention that the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, passed away on a Monday in the month of Rabi` al-Awwal, and this is agreed upon by scholars. However, they differed in specifying the exact day of the month. It is stated in the book Al-Rawd al-Anif by Imam al-Suhayli (Vol.7/P.577): «They agreed that he, peace and blessings be upon him, passed away on a Monday... but they said, or most of them said: on the twelfth of Rabi` [al-Awwal]. However, it is not correct that he, peace and blessings be upon him, passed away except on the second of the month, or the thirteenth, fourteenth, or fifteenth».

From the foregoing, we understand that the Prophet`s passing, peace and blessings be upon him, was on a Monday in Rabi` al-Awwal, with some difference of opinion regarding the precise identification of the day.

Whatever the case may be, we affirm that the dates of the Prophet`s death and birth, peace and blessings be upon him, are historical matters; no specific ruling of permissibility or prohibition is inherently tied to them from a Shari`ah perspective.

Just as the date of his birth, peace and blessings be upon him, is a subject of difference, so too is the date of his passing, peace and blessings be upon him. This is established in many historical works, such as the History of al-Tabari, Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah by Ibn Kathir, and other books of the Prophetic biography. Therefore, the claim that we are celebrating the date of his death rather than his birth is invalid and incorrect. It reflects ignorance of the true history of our Islamic nation and constitutes a discourtesy towards those who celebrate the Noble Mawlid.

When we celebrate the birth of the Prophet, peace and blessings

be upon him, on the twelfth day of Rabi` al-Awwal each year, we are thereby aligning ourselves with the view of many historians and biographers; we did not invent this date ourselves.

Furthermore, the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, taught us that intention holds great significance in a Muslim`s actions. He, peace and blessings be upon him, said: « (The value of) an action depends on the intention behind it. A person will be rewarded only for what he/she intended». (Narrated by al-Bukhari, No. 1). Even if it were established that his passing occurred on the same day as his birth, we are instructed by Sharia to express joy for the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and the spread of the religion of Islam. It is not permissible to express grief or distress over his death, for death is merely a transition to the Highest Companion [Allah]. He, peace and blessings be upon him, remains present among us through his gracious Shari`ah and his noble biography.

The Ruling of Islamic Law on Naming the Day of the Noble Mawlid as «Eid al-Mawlid» (The Festival of the Birth)

There is no prohibition against naming the Noble Mawlid as «Eid al-Mawlid» or «The Commemoration of the Mawlid,» as there is no grounds for contention over terminology. People commonly use terms such as «Labour Day,» «Mother`s Day,» and «Arbor Day». The intended meaning here is the linguistic sense of «Eid»—that which recurs periodically.

People do not intend the Sharia meaning of «Eid» when they apply this term to these days. They do not believe that any of these days are designated with specific religious rites, that fasting is prohibited on them, for instance, or that they carry specific Sharia rulings. Therefore, naming the Mawlid as «Eid al-Mawlid» is a customary, not a Sharia, designation. There is no prohibition in this, as no specific evidence exists that prohibits people from mutually agreeing upon particular names. Prohibiting this would constitute an addition beyond the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him.

Is Celebrating the Mawlid a Sunnah or an Innovation (Bid`ah)?

Celebrating the Mawlid is recommended (mustahabb) and good

(hasanah) because it involves venerating and honoring the status of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and expressing joy and glad tidings at his noble birth. This is alluded to by the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him, in his statement: «Whosoever introduces a good practice in Islam, there is for him its reward and the reward of those who act upon it after him without anything being diminished from their rewards». (Narrated by Muslim, No. 69).

Evidence that Celebrating the Mawlid is Recommended and Good
Scholars have relied on numerous pieces of evidence to establish the legitimacy of celebrating this great day, including:

1.The statement of Allah the Almighty {which means}: « Say: «In the bounty of God. And in His Mercy,- in that let them rejoice»: that is better than the (wealth) they hoard». [Yunus/58]. Ibn ʿAbbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said: «(The bounty of Allah) is knowledge, and (His mercy) is Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him». This interpretation is reinforced by the fact that Allah the Almighty described His Prophet, our master Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him, as a mercy: «And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds». [Al-Anbiya`/107]. See Al-Durr al-Manthur by al-Suyuti (Vol.7/P.667).

2.From Abu Qatadah al-Ansari, may Allah be pleased with him, who said: The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was asked about fasting on Mondays. He said: «This is the day on which I was born and the day on which I was sent (with the Message of Islam) and the day on which I received revelation». (Narrated by Muslim, No. 197). The evidence derived is that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, gave significance to the day of his birth due to the events that occurred therein—his birth, his being sent as a Prophet, and the descent of revelation. If this did not indicate his joy at his birth, he would not have singled it out for this virtue. Thus, a specific connection to this day is established by the text of the noble hadith, making it a foundational basis for celebrating the Noble Mawlid.

3.Celebrating the birth of the Master of Creation, peace and blessings be upon him, is a manifestation of honoring the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, as well as showing joy and veneration for him,

peace and blessings be upon him. In fact, honoring and venerating the Prophet is commanded, as Allah the Almighty says {what means}: «In order that ye (O men) may believe in God and His Apostle, that ye may assist and honour Him, and celebrate His praise morning and evening». [Al-Fath/9].

4.Scholars have cited as evidence for the virtue of holding the Noble Mawlid and celebrating it the hadith concerning «Ashura», narrated by Imam al-Bukhari (No. 2004): «The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, arrived in Medina and saw the Jews fasting on the day of «Ashura». He said, «What is this?» They replied, «This is a righteous day. It is the day Allah saved the Children of Israel from their enemy, so Musa fasted on it». He said, «We have more right to Musa than you,» so he fasted on that day and commanded that it be fasted».

The evidence from the noble hadith is that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, commanded fasting on «Ashura» out of joy for the blessing of the salvation of our master Musa, peace be upon him. Similarly, we celebrate the day of the Mawlid out of joy for the blessing of the appearance of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani used this hadith as evidence for the permissibility of holding the Mawlid. It is stated in Al-Hawi lil-Fatawa (Vol.1/P.229): «The eminent scholar, the Hafiz of his age, Abu al-Fadl Ibn Hajar, was asked about holding the Mawlid. He responded, stating: «The origin of holding the Mawlid is an innovation (bid`ah) not transmitted from any of the pious predecessors (al-Salaf al-Salih) of the first three generations. However, it encompasses both commendable and objectionable elements. Whoever is diligent in incorporating its commendable aspects and avoiding the contrary, then it is a good innovation (bid`ah hasanah); otherwise, it is not.» He said: «It became clear to me that it can be supported by an established principle, which is what is confirmed in the two Sahih collections: «The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, came to Medina and found the Jews fasting on the day of «Ashura». He asked them, and they said, «This is the day Allah drowned Pharaoh and saved Musa, so we fast it out of gratitude to Allah»». From this, it is understood that showing gratitude to Allah for a blessing bestowed on a specific day—such as

granting a favor or averting an affliction—and renewing that gratitude on the corresponding day each year is recommended. Gratitude to Allah is expressed through various acts of worship like prostration, fasting, charity, and recitation. And what blessing is greater than the emergence of this Prophet, the Prophet of Mercy, on that day?»

5. The statement of Allah the Almighty {which means}: «And teach them to remember the Days of God». [Ibrahim/5], meaning, remind them of Allah's favors upon them, as interpreted by many commentators from among the Companions and their successors, such as Ibn 'Abbas, Mujahid, and Qatadah.

The connection to the noble verse is that the birth of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, is the greatest blessing and favor upon the entire world, a fact no Muslim doubts. Therefore, celebrating the day of the Mawlid is an act of complying with Allah's command to remember His blessings, favors, and days in which He bestowed grace upon all creation.

Did the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, celebrate his Mawlid, and did the noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, do so?

In the first place, a Muslim must be aware of an important principle: The fact that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and his Companions did not engage in a particular matter does not in itself indicate its prohibition. Allah the Almighty says {what means}: «So take what the Apostle assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you». [Al-Hashr/7]. A command indicates obligation, and a prohibition indicates forbiddance. No scholar has ever stated that mere omission indicates prohibition. Something the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, omitted and did not do remains either permissible (mubah) by default, or it falls under the scope of a general Sharia proof and takes that ruling.

Furthermore, the Sunnah of the Prophet, according to our scholars, comprises his statements, actions, approvals, physical characteristics, and moral conduct. No scholar has stated that omission is a Sunnah to be followed.

Any Sharia ruling must be established by Sharia evidence, which

includes the Qur`an, the Sunnah, consensus (ijma`), analogical reasoning (qiyas), and other recognized proofs, such as the principle of original permissibility (al-bara`h al-asliyyah) and the principle that the default ruling for beneficial matters is permissibility. The mere omission of something by the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, is not in itself a Sharia proof (dalil shar`i), and thus it is not valid to rely on it to prohibit the celebration of the Mawlid.

Based on this, the Sharia basis for celebrating the Mawlid is not contingent upon the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, having done it, or it being reported from the noble Companions, may Allah be pleased with them.

Indeed, we affirm that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, was the paramount concern of the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, in his movements, stillness, actions, and character. After his transition to the Highest Companion, he remained alive in their hearts, never absent from them for a moment.

Now that a long time has passed between us and the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and we are unable to see him with our eyes, and we have become like those bereaved due to losing his companionship and presence, the least we can do is to witness his states with the eyes of our hearts by reading his noble biography, contemplating his luminous character and radiant qualities. We should designate a day—indeed, days and nights—for keeping company with the most beloved to Allah and to the believers, and we should have our children and families participate in this immense joy.

The Manner of Celebrating the Noble Mawlid

The celebration of the Noble Mawlid is conducted by reciting verses from the Noble Qur`an, recounting aspects of the noble Prophetic biography and his generous characteristics, exhorting adherence to the religion, listening to praises of the Prophet (Madaih Nabawiyyah), and concluding the gathering with supplication (du`a`). The Mawlid celebration serves as an annual season for further calling towards emulating the Sunnah of the Chosen Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and following his path and methodology. Allah the Almighty has commanded us to do this: «Ye have indeed in the Apostle of God

a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for any one whose hope is in God and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of God». [Al-Ahzab/21]. Subsequently, it is recommended to honor the attendees with food or drink.

It is established that the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, frequently fasted on Mondays. He was asked about fasting on Mondays and said: «This is the day on which I was born and the day on which I was sent (with the Message of Islam) and the day on which I received revelation». (Narrated by Muslim, No. 197).

The Ruling on Reciting Poetry in the Mosque and Offering Food and Sweets

Reciting poetry in the mosque is permissible if its content is lawful, and it is recommended if it involves praising the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him. Al-Bukhari narrated (No. 3212) that «Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, passed through the mosque while Hassan [ibn Thabit] was reciting poetry. He said: «I used to recite poetry in it [the mosque] while there was present in it one who was better than you [i.e., the Prophet],» then he turned to Abu Hurayrah and said: «I adjure you by Allah, did you hear the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, say, «Respond on my behalf. O Allah, support him with the Holy Spirit?»» He said: «Yes». Imam al-Nawawi al-Shafi'i stated in his commentary on Muslim (46/16): «This indicates the permissibility of reciting poetry in the mosque if its content is lawful, and its recommendation if it is in praise of Islam and its people».

As for offering food, sweets, and other matters, these are complementary acts. If they are offered to express joy and happiness at the birth of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, there is no prohibition. They are not conditions or necessary components of the celebration. In all cases, feeding people is a recommended act in Shari'ah. «Abdullah ibn «Amr, may Allah be pleased with them, reported that a man asked the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him: «Which aspect of Islam is best?» He said: «Feeding people, and greeting with peace those you know and those you do not know». (Narrated by al-Bukhari, No. 12).

Is Celebrating the Mawlid Considered the Exaggerated Praise (Itra`) which is Prohibited in the Hadith: «Do not exaggerate in praising me

as the Christians exaggerated in praising the son of Mary. I am only a servant. So say, «The servant of Allah and His Messenger»». (Narrated by al-Bukhari, No. 3445)?

The prohibited *itra`* does not refer to frequently praising, venerating, and honoring the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. Were that the case, the Companions, may Allah be pleased with them, demonstrated the ultimate level of veneration and honor for the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, even seeking blessings through his relics. «Urwah ibn Mas`ud said: «By Allah, I have been sent to kings; I have been sent to Caesar, Khosrau, and the Negus, and by Allah, I have never seen a king whose companions venerate him as the companions of Muhammad venerate Muhammad...» (Narrated by al-Bukhari, No. 2731).

In addition, the Qur`an is replete with texts that indicate the exaltation and reverence of the Prophet (peace be upon him), including: The statement of Allah the Almighty {which means}: «And thou (standest) on an exalted standard of character». [Al-Qalam/4], and His saying: «Verily those who plight their fealty to thee do no less than plight their fealty to God» [Al-Fath: 10]. Therefore, the type of excessive praise (*al-itra`*) that is prohibited in the hadith refers to ascribing to the Prophet (peace be upon him) a quality that is only befitting for Allah, just as the Christians ascribed divinity to our master Jesus (peace be upon him). The explicit wording of the hadith indicates this.

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