Ten Questions Regarding the Mawlid Celebrations

Questions

1. It is a known fact that our Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihī wa sallam) is the most superior of all the Prophets and Messengers (alayhimus salam) and also that he is the seal of all the Prophets (alayhimus salaam). He left no stone unturned in conveying the religion to us and rendering precious advice to us. If the “Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi” was a divinely inspired act, then surely the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihī wa sallam) would have commanded the Muslims to it, or at least, either he or his beloved Sahabah,Radi-Allahu anhum, would have practiced it.

2. Surah Miadah: we have perfected your religion … so why do you Sunnis add to religion; don’t you believe this Quranic verse?

3. There’s a hadith in Tirmizi Shareef which says any Bid’ah in religion leads one astray, so why do you Sunnis add this Bid’ah of celebrating?

4. All this Milaad celebration is just a Bid’ah and innovation introduced by a modern day Indian called Ahmed Raza Khan.

5. How come Imam Abu Hanifa or Imam Bukhari didn’t celebrate milaad?

6. Is fixing date for milaad shareef permissible?

7. Celebrating the birth is a way of the Christians for Jesus, why do you Sunnis light up your houses and put decorations like the Christians?

8. You shouldn’t celebrate Milaad on 12 Rabi ul Awal as that’s the date the Prophet (ṣallallāhu ‘alaihī wa sallam) passed away.

9. The contemporary form of Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabee apart from being a manifestation of Bid’ah also encompasses other evils such as the intermingling of sexes, usage of musical instruments and many other such evils. The most abhorring and shocking evils in these functions are the acts of shirk that take place. With hollow claims of “Hubbe-Rasul” (love for Rasulullah) entreaties and supplications are made to beings other than Allah, namely to Ambiyaa alaihimus-salaam.

10. I turn my lights off and some of my friends keep lights off on 12 Rabi ul awal because we believe it has no significance to our lives – how will celebrating the Milaad help us in this life and the hereafter?

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Answers

All praise is for Allah, Lord of all creation. He created the most beloved with perfection, elevated His status beyond imagination. He prepared Him with qualities in abundance, including vast knowledge, and in all, competence. He sent Him as a messenger to every nation, on a specific day fixed by the most Benevolent. He revealed upon him a book of excellence, known as the mother of all revelation; they all declared His birth, for mankind, a divine form of guidance, surely a great gift from the most Beneficent. Salutations be upon his eminence, and also a shower of mercy, and be it endless.

Celebrating the birth of Allah’s most beloved is without doubt permissible and encouraged according to the unanimous consensus of our predecessors. Its origin shines clearly from the divine book of Allah and the traditions of our great Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

Firstly, it is important that one understands what the Mawlid actually is. Those who are kept behind a veil tend to have this illusion that the Mawlid is a party in which impermissible acts take place, like music and dancing. Things that were prohibited by the Qur’an and Hadith suddenly become permissible due to the birth of the greatest of all mankind (peace be upon him). I assure you that this is nothing but assumptions and accusations. Allah, in the Qur’an condemns such evil assumptions and accusations.

“O’ those who believe! Stay away from much assumptions for surely some assumptions are sins” (Surah Al-Hujuraat, Verse: 12)

The truth is, celebrating the Mawlid simply means to thank Allah for sending his most beloved to this world. For the Mawlid celebrations, people gather and remember the coming of our great Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) into this world from the world of souls. People gather and listen to speeches regarding the auspicious birth from the sound narrations recorded by the masters of Hadith and Seerah. The prosperous life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is remembered and also His (peace be upon him) beautiful characteristics. Poetry in praise of Allah and His beloved are recited without the slightest sound of prohibited music. The Muslims carry out these acts solely for expressing their gratitude to Allah, the most merciful.

1. The Arabic word Mawlid simply means, the time of birth or place of birth. According to the custom amongst the Muslims around the globe, it means to mention and remember the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) into this world. Whether it is on the 12th of Rabee’ Al-Awaal or any other day of the year. This is not a stone left unturned by Allah in the Qur’an and neither by our Prophet (peace be upon him) in his traditions. This is not an act which was strange amongst the companions and those that followed until today. The truth is that the coming of our Prophet (peace
be upon him) into this world has been celebrated by Allah in the Qur’an, by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the gatherings of His companions, by the companions after the Prophet (peace be upon him) left this material world and by all our predecessors. Until today those who remain on their path (The path shown by the Qur’an, Hadith and the predecessors) enjoy celebrating the Mawlid.

Allah mentions the coming of the beloved (peace be upon him) into this world in the following words,

“There has come unto you a messenger, (one) of yourselves” (Surah Al-Tawbah, Verse: 128)

And in another place,

“Now has come unto you light from Allah and clear scripture” (Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse: 15)

In the commentary of the above verse says that the light in the second verse is our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him). The verse can be better understood from a specific Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This specific Hadith is a gathering of the Mawlid, the speaker is our most beloved, the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself and the audience are the eminent companions (Allah is pleased with them all).

Amongst his companions, he said,

“Now I shall inform you of my birth (first matter), I am the prayer of Ibrahim, glad tiding of Isa’ and I am the very sight of my mother which she saw when she gave birth to me, a light exited her which enlightened for her the palaces of Syria” (Musnad Ahmad, Bayhaqi, Mustadrak and Ibn Hibban)

The aforementioned verses and the Hadith are sufficient to establish the permissibility of celebrating the Mawlid for a person in search of the truth. Allah clearly mentions the coming of the Prophet (peace be upon him) into this world from the world of souls. The pronoun in the verse, “Now hath come unto you”, is plural and for the second person which means Allah is addressing a gathering. The same pronoun is used in the words of the Hadith, “Now I shall inform you”. Only a lack of sense would now stop one from understanding the permissibility of the Mawlid gathering.

The companions celebrated the Mawlid by mentioning the birth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and sometimes by singing poetry about the beautiful birth.

It is narrated regarding Ibn Abbas and Jaabir (Allah is pleased with them) that they mentioned the birth in the following words,

“He (peace be upon him) was born on the 12th of Al-Rabee’ Al-Awwal” (Al-Bidayah Wa Al-Nihayah)
Surely, if mentioning the birth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a bid’ah, the Sahabah would not have mentioned anything about it, neither the day nor the word “birth”. Everything about the Prophet (peace be upon him) recorded by the companions is of utmost importance for the believer. Why did the companions record the date of the beloved’s birth (peace be upon him)?

Hassan Ibn Saabit was known as the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) poet. He sang praises for the Prophet (peace be upon him) and also refuted the poetry of those who tried to ridicule the Prophet (peace be upon him) in their poetry. The Prophet (peace be upon him) would pray for Hassan by saying, “O’ Allah, help him through the angel Jibreel”. Surely Allah is pleased with Hassan Ibn Saabit. Once he recited poetry regarding the beautiful Mawlid, these words are remembered and sung today by all Muslims, young and old. He says,

“My eyes have never seen more handsome than you, no woman has given birth to more beautiful than you, you have been created beyond all faults, as though you have been created as you wished”

Abbas; the uncle of the Prophet (peace be upon him) also wrote poetry regarding the Mawlid of the Prophet (peace be upon him), in these words,

“And when you were born (O’ Beloved) the earth became bright, and through your light did the horizon shine, and today we walk the path of guidance in that very shining light” (Al-Tanweer)

There are many other verses, Hadith and narrations from the companions which mention the coming of our most beloved master (peace be upon him). However, I want to show that celebrating the Mawlid is not only practiced in the Qur’an and Hadith but it is also encouraged and demanded.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) is a grace (favor) of Allah for all creations. This is not something one can disagree on and yet remain a believer. It is an obligation to believe that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is a divine gift from the almighty Lord of all the worlds. The Ahl Al-Sunnah believes that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the greatest gift Allah has bestowed mankind with. He (peace be upon him) is the heart of faith.

Allah says in the Qur’an,

“Allah verily has shown grace to the believers by sending unto them a messenger of their own who recites unto them His revelations, purifies them, and teaches them the scripture and wisdom; although before they were in clear misguidance”. (Surah Aal Imran, Verse: 164)

Knowing that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is a gift, bounty, grace, mercy and favor from Allah, do we not have a duty to thank Allah? Should we not express our gratitude to Allah? If yes, and surely yes then in what way and how? Let’s see how Allah
demands us to show our thanks and express our gratitude for the gifts He has bestowed us with.

Allah says in the Qur’an,

“Say: In receiving the grace and mercy of Allah, they must rejoice, it is better than what they hoard” (Surah Yunus, verse: 58)

From the above verse, we learn that we should rejoice which means we should be happy and we should celebrate. We also learn that it is better than hoarding wealth, which means we should spend it to show our gratitude to Allah. Where must we spend our wealth to rejoice? Should we buy new clothes, decorations, give to the poor and feed the poor and also feed our fellow Muslims? The answer is common sense; spend your wealth on that which is within the law of Islam and that which shows your happiness and thankfulness towards Allah.

We now know that we should rejoice the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is demanded by Allah to rejoice and spend to show our gratitude on receiving the mercy and grace of Allah. Isn’t that exactly what the true lovers of the beloved do to celebrate the Mawlid?

Allah, the greatest says in another verse of the Qur’an,

“And publicise well the bounty of your Lord” (Surah Al-Duha, verse: 11)

The Prophet Muhammad’s birth (peace be upon him) is surely the most gracious bounty of Allah for us believers. Allah commands us to publicize it. How must we publicize the coming of the Prophet (peace be upon him)? According to the masses around the globe, one of the ways of publicizing and showing their acknowledgment is marching in the streets. Is there anywhere in the Qur’an where Allah has prohibited the marching in the streets to publicize His best of gifts? If not and surely not then why not?

Allah says,

“O, those who believe! Forbid not the good things which Allah has made lawful for you, and transgress not, Lo! Allah does not love the transgressors” (Surah Al-Maa’idah, verse: 87)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) explains this verse in a following Hadith narrated by Salmaan Al-Faarsi,

“Lawful is that which Allah has made lawful in the book. Unlawful is that which Allah has made unlawful in the book. And that which Allah has not mentioned is forgiven (permissible)” (Tirmizi and Ibn Maajah)
This is the very reason why the Muslim Scholars unanimously agree that anyone who regards something as unlawful must provide evidence, otherwise it is deemed lawful.

Publicizing can also be achieved by holding gatherings and addressing people the bounties and gifts of Allah. In the same way the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) used to gather the companions together. Flags, banners and posters are also very effective for publicizing. Chanting praises and speeches are also a way of publicizing. The fact of the matter is, whatever lies within the boundaries of Islamic law is allowed and whatever the law of Islam has prohibited is not allowed. Therefore, music, dancing, intermingling with the opposite sex, consuming the unlawful, swearing, hurting others through unlawful acts such as shouting, screaming and jumping around like hooligans whilst marching in the streets are all unlawful. Marching in the streets in a respectable manner or gathering and speaking of the beautiful characteristics, life or birth of the beloved (peace be upon him) is all lawful. The Islamic Law does not suddenly change on the 12th of Al-Rabee’ Al-Awwal, that which was lawful remains lawful and that which was unlawful remains unlawful.

Allah says in the Qur’an,

“Isa’ son of Maryam said: O’ Allah, our Lord! Send down for us a clothe spread with food from heaven, that it maybe an eid for us, for the first of us and the last of us and a sign from You, give us sustenance for You are the best of sustainers” (Surah Al-Maa’idah, verse: 114)

From the aforementioned verse we learn that the Prophet Isa’ (upon him be peace) asked the Lord for food from heaven as a gift for his people. The Prophet Isa’ (upon him be peace) also said that the receiving of the gift will be an eid for them, and for those who will come later in generation. The day will be remembered and celebrated as an eid. It is an Islamic principle that everything from the previous Prophets (upon them all be peace) mentioned in the Qur’an or Hadith without being refuted remains established. Therefore, remembering the days Allah sent his bounties as days of eid is perfectly permissible. If the people of the Prophet Isa’ (upon him be peace) made the day an eid when they received the food from heaven. Then why can the Muslims not remember the day their greatest gift came from Allah as a day of eid? Surely the day of our Prophet’s Mawlid (peace be upon him) is a day of eid.

Surely, now the stone appears to have been turned. I believe it is correct to say, it is a known fact that the Mawlid is an eid and according to the command of Allah we must rejoice and publicize it.

2. The Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Jamaa’ah are the Muslims which have remained on the path shown by the Qur’an, Hadith and the predecessors. It is infidelity to not believe in a verse of the Qur’an and to add something to the religion which is contradicting its sources.

From the above, it is clear that the Mawlid is not a new addition to the Islamic Law
but actually an act encouraged in the Islamic Law. The verse in Surah Al-Maa‘idah mentioned in the question is actually a verse in support of the Mawlid celebration.

Allah, the almighty Lord says,

“This day I have perfected your religion for you and completed my favor unto you, and have chosen for you as religion Al-Islam” (Surah Al-Maa‘idah, verse: 3)

When this verse was revealed, a Jew said to Umar (Allah is pleased with him), “If this verse was revealed upon us, we would have made that day an eid”. Umar (Allah is pleased with him) replied that we know very well the day and the place of that revelation and Umar (Allah is pleased with him) indicated, that day is an eid. (Bukhari and Muslim)

If the day; when the aforementioned verse was revealed, can be known and remembered as a day of eid then surely the day of our Prophet’s birth (peace be upon him) should be known and remembered as a day of eid.

3. Celebrating the Mawlid is not a bid‘ah. However, one may say that the way the Mawlid is celebrated nowadays is not like it was in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and therefore it is bid‘ah.

It is correct that the Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him) says that any bid‘ah in religion leads one astray. However, there are many other narrations of Hadith which apparently seem to contradict this one. Unfortunately, the people who today call themselves Ahl- Al-Hadith (people of the Hadith) only follow some of the Hadith and reject the rest. Whichever Hadith befits their desires, they accept. The rest they don’t even consider, that is the very reason why the Ahl Al-Sunnah declare them as the Munkireen Al-Hadith (Rejectors of the Hadith).

It is a known principle amongst all the great Hadith masters and jurists (those who deduce rulings from the Qur’an and Hadith) that when two or more Hadith apparently seem to contradict each other, it is necessary to reconcile between them. This is simply because the Prophet (peace be upon him) was free from faults and therefore in reality never contradicted Himself.

The Hadith mentioned in the question from Tirmizi is,

“Every innovation is a bid‘ah, and every bid‘ah is misguidance”

Here is a Hadith recorded in the two most authentic books of Hadith; Bukhari and Muslim which explains the above mentioned Hadith,
“He who innovates in this religion of ours something which is not from it, is rejected” (Bukhari and muslim)

In the above Hadith, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has conditioned the act of innovation in religion with, “that which is not from it”. This condition tells us that an innovation can have its roots within the religion and therefore not always be unlawful and misguidance. This is confirmed by a verse of the Qur’an and a Hadith I have mentioned in answer to question one. Let us read it one more time,

Allah says,

“O, those who believe! Forbid not the good things which Allah has made lawful for you, and transgress not, Lo! Allah does not love the transgressors” (Surah Al-Maa’idah, verse: 87)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) explains this verse in the following Hadith narrated by Salmaan Al-Faarsi,

“Lawful is that which Allah has made lawful in the book. Unlawful is that which Allah has made unlawful in the book. And that which Allah has not mentioned is forgiven (permissible)” (Tirmizi and Ibn Maajah)

This is the very reason why the Muslim Scholars unanimously agree that anyone who regards something as unlawful must provide evidence, otherwise it is deemed lawful.

The conclusion (reconciliation between the apparently contradicting traditions regarding innovations) is that if someone invented an act and deemed it lawful, whereas it is mentioned as unlawful in the Qur’an or the Hadith, then it is surely misguidance. Otherwise it will be from the religion and therefore permissible.

Here is a Hadith recorded in Sahih Muslim which clears all apparent contradiction and clearly explains the actual Islamic ruling,

“He who innovates in Islam a good innovation, then it is acted upon after him; for him will be written his reward and the reward of all who acted upon it without any decrease in their reward. And he who innovates in Islam a bad innovation, then it is acted upon after, against him will be written his punishment and the punishment of all who acted upon it without any decrease in their punishment” (Muslim)

This Hadith leads us to understand the Hadith from Tirmizi which was mentioned first. We reconcile between the apparently contradicting Hadith by declaring that every bad innovation is unlawful and misguidance, everything other than that is lawful and permissible. Let us read the Hadith once again with this explanation,

“Every (bad) innovation is a (bad) bid’ah and every (bad) bid’ah is misguidance”
Now it will be easy to understand the acts of the companions and our predecessors (Allah is pleased with them all) which they performed after the Prophet (peace be upon him) had left this world.

The Qur’an was not compiled into one collection in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Different parts and verses were written in different places. When many of the Huffaz (Those who had memorized the whole Qur’an) were martyred, Umar came to Abu Bakr who was the caliph at the time and pleaded him to gather the Qur’an into one collection. Abu Bakr at first had replied negatively,

“How can I do what the Prophet (peace be upon him) never did?”

After a few days passed, Abu Bakr realised its need and told Umar that Allah had opened his heart to understand what Umar was pleading. Thus, the Qur’an was compiled into one. Now who would be dumb enough to say that Abu Bakr and Umar were both misguided? Did Abu Bakr and Umar innovate something that is unlawful? Allah is surely pleased with them both.

Imam Bukhari has recorded a narration regarding Umar. In the month of Ramadan he gathered the people to perform the taraweeh salah in congregation behind Ubay Ibn Ka’b. Once he came and saw them performing the taraweeh salah in congregation, he said,

“How good is this bid’ah”

Umar (Allah is pleased with him) confirms our understanding of bid’ah and clearly declares that bid’ah can also be acceptable. There are many other examples such as building the domes and minarets on the Masjids, the Mihrab in the Masjids, building schools, the new languages and subjects of knowledge that were apparently not learnt or taught in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) or in the time of any companion. The list of things and acts that were innovated after the best of times; the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him), can result in volumes of books. The fact is, not every bid’ah is unacceptable.

Sometimes the misguided people object by saying there are two types of innovations,

“For the religion and in the religion”

They say it is lawful to innovate for the religion but not in the religion. This objection itself is a bid’ah, it was never made before by any of our predecessors. It is a baseless claim. The Hadith from Muslim I mentioned above clearly states the words,

“He who innovates in Islam a good innovation……………….”

4. The great Imam, Sheikh Al-Arab Wa Al-Ajam, Ahmad Raza Khan Al-Barelwi Al-Hanafi (Allah is pleased with him) was not an innovator but a reviver. The
gathering of the Mawlid is not an innovation that was never practiced before His time. The great Imam revived the love of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and His family in the hearts of the true believers. This may have led the untrue believers to accuse the great Imam, of innovating acts and beliefs. I assure the fact that many scholars of the Muslim world before Imam Ahmad Raza have written extensively on celebrating the Mawlid.

It may amaze the people who regard themselves as the Ahl Al-Hadith; and disagree with the permissibility of the Mawlid, that one of the great books of Hadith, Jami’ Al-Tirmizi (One of the Sihah Sittah) contains a whole chapter on the Mawlid that is titled, “Babu Maa Jaa’a Fi Milaad Al-Nabiyyi (May Allah shower Him with complete mercy and send salutations upon him)” (Tirmizi)

The great Imam of the Muhadditheen, Al-Imam Jalal Al-Deen Al-Suyooti (Allah is pleased with him) has written a whole book on the permissibility of the Mawlid. The book is named, Husn Al-Maqsad.

The Egyptian master of Hadith, Al-Imam Shahab Al-Deen Ahmad Al-Qastalani (Shaarih of Al-Bukhari) writes,

“The Muslims have always held gatherings to rejoice the birth of the Prophet (peace be upon him)” (Mawaahib)

This indicates scholarly consensus on the permissibility of celebrating the Mawlid.

The great Muhadditheen, Imam Sakhaawi, Allama Ibn Jazri, Muhaddith Ibn Jowzi, Imam Mulla Ali Al-Qari, Imam Halabi, Sheikh Abd Al-Haq Muhaddith Al-Dehelvi, Shah Wali-Allah Al-Dehelvi and many others have clearly agreed with its permissibility. All of these Imams lived before Imam Ahmad Raza (Allah is pleased with all our predecessors). Even Ibn Taymiyyah has declared that it is a rewarding act to celebrate the Mawlid.

Ibn Taymiyyah writes,

“If the purpose of the Mawlid gathering is the respect of the Prophet (peace be upon him), there is much reward for the people as I have stated before” (Iqtida’ Siraaat Al-Mustaqeem)

The truth is every one of our predecessors (Salaf) believed it to be a rewarding act. That is the very reason why, nobody has been able to provide any reference from any of our predecessors who said it is an unacceptable bid’ah and therefore not lawful to celebrate the Mawlid. The actual unlawful bid’ah is to deem it impermissible.

For satisfaction of some, here is a reference from the work of Imam Ahmad Raza Khan regarding the Mawlid to show that he did not innovate the act of celebrating the Mawlid but simply recorded the statements of our predecessors,
“Without doubt reciting the Qur’an in the Mawlid gathering has been the custom of our predecessors. Imam Jalal Al-Deen Al-Suyooti writes in his Fatawa,

The reality of the Mawlid is the gathering of people, reciting the Qur’an, mentioning narrations regarding the birth of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the signs that occurred at that time.

Imam Hafiz Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani,

Expressing thanks to Allah can be obtained through different types of worship like prostrating, fasting, spending in the path of Allah and reciting the Qur’an. And which gift from Allah (Ni’mah) is greater than the appearing of the Prophet (peace be upon him) on that day?

In Seerah of Allama Shaami it says,

In the act of Mawlid which we have regarded as a rewarding act nothing takes place but recitation of the Qur’an and feeding the Muslims and that is a blessing, good deed and a means to get closer to Allah” (Al-Fatawa Al-Ridwiyyah, Volume: 23)

Now who can possibly say that celebrating the Mawlid is an act, innovated by Imam Ahmad Raza? He has clearly quoted three of the great Imams of Hadith and Fiqh that lived before Him.

5. The one who says that Imam Al-Mujtahideen Abu Hanifah or Imam Al-Muhadditheen Al-Bukhari did not celebrate the Mawlid is a liar. He merely speaks to deceive others with that which he knows not. Allah, the almighty has prohibited us to speak of that which we have no knowledge of. If there is no mention of the two Imams celebrating the Mawlid, it does not mean they did not.

“Something that has not been mentioned or recorded does not mean it did not exist or occur”

If the books written in the past do not mention that Ibn Taymiyyah used to perform his five times daily Salah, give zakah once a year and fast in the month of Ramadan it does not mean he did not. Surely there is no mention of each specific obligatory and necessary act of worship that Ibn Taymiyyah fulfilled for every day and year of his life. This does not necessitate that he did not perform his obligatory and necessary acts.

If we rely on text to establish the occurrence of acts, it will be impossible to prove many of the companions and those who came after them performed their obligatory acts. It will be hard to establish many of them believed the essentials of belief.

Apart from what I have mentioned above, Imam Bukhari has recorded narrations regarding the beautiful incidents that occurred at the time of the birth of the Prophet (peace be upon him).
According to Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Al-Shafa’i there is an established rule,

“The essence of all (everything) is permissibility unless prohibited”

This is sufficient to believe the permissibility of celebrating the Mawlid according to Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Al-Shafa’i for it has not been prohibited in the Qur’an and Sunnah. Many have regarded Imam Bukhari as a follower of the Shafa’i fiqh. Imam Al-Tirmizi was a student of Imam Bukhari and as mentioned before he has recorded a whole chapter on the birth of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

6. There is no harm in fixing a specific day for the Mawlid gathering. Not only fixing a day is permissible but also a time and a place. Fixing a time, day and place is a common practice of every human. Actually, time and place is a necessity for us creations of Allah. Our existence cannot be free from time and place. Allah has specified the time and place for everything, this is what the Muslims know as, “Taqdeer” (destiny). Allah, the almighty has chosen our times and places of birth, death and everything that happens between them. Allah is the best of planners and advises us to also plan.

Therefore it is Allah who fixed the day for the birth of His most beloved (peace be upon him). And Allah demands us to remember the days he granted us His bounties.

“Remind them of days of Allah” (Surah Ibrahim, Verse: 5)

The verse relates to the days Allah has bestowed upon creation His gifts, mercy, grace and bounties. We should remember those specific days. (Tafseer Ibn Abbas, Ibn Jareer, Khazin, Madaarik and others)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) remembered and celebrated His birth on a specific day by worshipping Allah voluntarily. He (peace be upon him) fasted on the day and expressed His gratitude towards Allah.

“There the Messenger of Allah was asked why He fasted every Monday. He said on that day I was born and on that day I received the divine revelation from Allah” (Muslim, Kitab Al-Siyam)

Remembering specific days and rejoicing on them days is established from many verses of the Qur’an and from many Hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Many of the verses I have mentioned before also establish this. The prayer of Isa’ (Upon Him be peace) pleading Allah to send food from heaven also states that specific day would be a day of eid for all generations to come.

The actual objection or more of an accusation from the misguided people is that the Barelwies have specified or conditioned the permissibility of celebrating the Mawlid with a specific day; the 12th of Rabee’ Al-Awwal. This means that according to the
Barelwies, the Mawlid can only be celebrated on that specific day and if someone does it on another day then it is not permissible. Just like the many acts of worship that are conditioned with specific days, times and places. For example, the Isha salah cannot be performed before its time begins, the Jum’ah salah cannot be performed on a Monday, the rituals of Hajj cannot be performed in the local Jami’ Masjid.

To condition an act of worship with a specific time, day or place is not within the authority of anyone except Allah and His beloved Messenger (peace be upon him). None of our scholars and neither our general Muslims condition the celebration of the Mawlid with a specific time, day, or place. This is just another accusation. The truth is, we believe that the celebration of the Mawlid is not conditioned with a time, day and place but is unconditional. One can celebrate the Mawlid, anytime of the day, any day of the year and in every clean and respectable place.

7. The Christians celebrate the birth of the Prophet Isa’ (upon him be peace) and the Muslims celebrate the birth of the greatest Prophet of Allah (peace be upon him). What seems to be the objection?

Is celebrating the birth of a Prophet resemblance of the Christians?

Resemblance of another religion that Allah and His beloved (peace be upon him) have prohibited is unlawful. Otherwise it remains lawful.

From the Qur’an and Sunnah, one can understand that resemblance of other religions that Allah and His beloved (peace be upon him) have declared unlawful is: If the action is a specific sign of a religion and if one would carry out the act of resembling or imitating it, he would apparently seem to be from amongst them. For example: Wearing a cross around the neck or on clothes, prostrating in front of fire or idols, celebrating Easter or Diwali, using a Christmas tree or father Christmas for decorations etc. These are specific signs of another religion and therefore are not only unlawful but are acts of infidelity. Another type of resemblance such as growing the moustache and shaving the beard is also severely disliked; not permissible because the Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned it as a resemblance to the non-believers and demanded the contrary from the Muslims.

If someone celebrates the Mawlid using a Christmas tree or lights of father Christmas as decorations then surely it would be resembling the Christians and not lawful. However, celebrating the Mawlid by fasting, reciting praises of Allah and His beloved (peace be upon him), decorating the house with lights is not resembling another religion.

Ibn Abbas narrates that when the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to Madinah, he saw that the Jews fasted on a specific day; 10th of Muharram. He (peace be upon him) asked the Jews why they fast on that day. They said that the day is of great importance
for us, on this day our Prophet Musa (upon him be peace) was relieved from fir’awn (pharaoh). The Jews expressed their gratitude towards Allah on that specific day by fasting. If it resembled their religion and it was not permissible to celebrate and fast on the same day, the Prophet (peace be upon him) would have prohibited us from doing so. Instead, the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared that celebrating the bounties of Allah, whether it be specific for our Ummah or another Ummah, is encouraged.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

“We have more right (to celebrate the success) of the Prophet Musa (upon him be peace). Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) fasted on that day and also ordered (the companions) to fast on that day” (Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Dawud)

According to another narration a companion objected that this is the way of the Jews and the Prophet (peace be upon him) said we shall fast for two days.

Decorations and using lights is also permissible because it is a way of rejoicing. Nowhere does it say in the Qur’an and Sunnah that one must not decorate or use lights whilst rejoicing. None of our predecessors forbade the use of lights and decorations. This means that it is a bid’ah to say it is not permissible. It is to deem unlawful that which Allah has not made unlawful.

It is the custom of the Muslims all around the world to use lights whilst rejoicing their days of celebration. They are commonly used for weddings by the very people who claim it is a way of the Christians. The fact of the matter is that imitating or resembling the way of another religion or people is not always unlawful.

If the Christians cover themselves with clothes, does it mean Muslims must wonder around naked? If the Christians wear shirts, does it mean it is not permissible for Muslims? If the Christians eat bread and drink black coffee, does it mean the Muslims are not allowed that? If the Christians breathe air, does it mean the Muslims have to find another way to survive?

8. Firstly, the 12th of Rabee’ Al-Awwal is not an established date for the demise of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The scholars of research have quoted different dates and shown that the narrations vary and differ from the 12th of Rabee’ Al-Awwal. Some have said it was the 1st of Rabee’ Al-Awwal, some have said the 2nd, some have said the 10th and one has said the 12th.

Below are the narrations recorded from Al-Bidayah Wa Al-Nihayah.

“Ya’qoob Ibn Sufyan narrates from Yahya Ibn Bukayr. He said that he narrates from Layth. Layth said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away after the first night of Rabee’ Al-Awwal had passed” (Al-Bidayah Wa Al-Nihayah)
The night comes before the day in the Islamic calendar and therefore, after the first night came the first day of Rabee’ Al-Awwal.

“Fadl Ibn Dukayn said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away on Monday the 1st of Rabee’ Al-Awwal” (Al-Bidayah Wa Al-Nihayah)

“Al-Bayhaqi said that we were informed by Abu Abd-Allah Al-Hafiz, he said that we were informed by Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (until the end of the chain) that the first day the Prophet (peace be upon him) felt unwell was on a Saturday and the day of His (peace be upon him) demise was on a Monday after two nights of Rabee’ Al-Awwal had passed” (Al-Bidayah Wa Al-Nihayah)

“Al-Waaqidi and Sa’d Ibn Zuhri said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away on a Monday after two nights of Rabee’ Al-Awwal had passed” (Al-Bidayah Wa Al-Nihayah)

The above narrations show that the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away on the 2nd of Rabee’ Al-Awwal.

“It has been narrated from Abd-Allah Ibn Abbas (Allah is pleased with him) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away on the 10th of Rabee’Al-Awwal” (Al-Bidayah Wa Al-Nihayah)

Finally, the one statement that the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away on the 12th of Rabee Al-Awwal is of Ibn Ishaq. (See Al-Bidayah Wa Al-Nihayah)

From the above narrations one can understand that we cannot say with certain that the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away on such and such a day. Especially the 12th of Rabee’ Al-Awwal for there is only one statement regarding it and eight narrations against it. Yet the ignorant ones continue shouting that the scholars unanimously agree that the 12th of Rabee’ Al-Awwal is the date the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away.

The great Muhaddith Al-Imam Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani in his Fath Al-Bari (Sharah of Bukhari) after a long discussion establishes that the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away on the 2nd of Rabi’ Al-Awwal.

Secondly, even if we suppose the 12th of Rabi’ Al-Awwal is the day that our beloved Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away it does not mean we are not allowed to rejoice that day. This is understood from the following points:

- There is no prohibition in celebrating times of happiness and it is prohibited to grieve or mourn someone’s demise for more than three days. After the demise of the most beloved (peace be upon him) the three days of mourning passed away more than fourteen hundred years before.
Our blessed mothers, the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Um Habibah and Zaynab Bint Juhush have narrated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

“She who believes in Allah and the Day of Judgment, it is not Halal (permitted) for her to mourn the demise of anyone for more than three nights but for her husband. For her husband she shall mourn for four months and ten days” (Bukhari and Muslim)

Al-Imam Jalal Al-Deen Al-Suyooti writes,

“In this month one should express happiness for his birth (peace be upon him) and not express grief due to his demise (peace be upon him)” (Al-Haawi Li-Al-Fatawa)

• The day the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away is a time of happiness for he (peace be upon him) said,

“My life is good for you and my demise is also good for you” (Musnad Bazzar and Al-Shifa of Qadi Ayad)

• The passing away of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is a mercy for the Ummah as Abu Musa Ash’ari narrates that’s the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

“When Allah intends good for an Ummah of His servants, He takes away their Prophet before them” (Muslim, Kitab Al-Fadaa’il)

• The day the Prophet (peace be upon him) passed away is the day he successfully completed his task for which he was sent in this world (peace be upon him).

• It was the day the Prophet (peace be upon him) met with Allah and when a lover meets his beloved it is a time of rejoicing.

• We are the Ahl Al-Sunnah and we believe that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is alive and enjoys provisions from Allah. How dare one say that he (peace be upon him) is dead for Allah says,

“And say not those who are slain in the way of Allah “dead” but they are alive, only you perceive not” (Surah Al-Baqarah, Verse: 154)

Never mind saying they are dead; Allah prohibits the thought of them being dead,

“Think not of those, who are slain in the way of Allah, as dead. But they are alive. With their Lord they are given provision” (Surah Al-Imran, Verse: 129)

Surely the messenger of Allah is alive and provided for in the best of ways for he (peace be upon him) is dearer to our Lord than the martyrs or any other creation.
Abu Darda’ narrates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

“Surely Allah has prohibited the earth from eating the bodies of the Prophets. Therefore, the Prophet is alive and given provision” (Ibn Majah and Mishkaat Al-Masaabeeh)

A similar narration has been narrated by Aws Ibn Aws and recorded by Abu Dawood, Al-Nasa’I, Al-Daarmi, Al-Bayhaqi, Ibn Majah and Mishkaat Al-Masaabeeh.

There are many narrations that establish the fact that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is alive and that he (peace be upon him) tasted death and then his soul was returned. For more narrations one should seek the extensive books written on the topic. Here, I have mentioned enough for a seeker of the truth.

- The Prophet (peace be upon him) mentioned why Friday is a blessed day and mentioned that it was the day Prophet Adam (upon him be peace) was given birth and the day he passed away. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said,

“The blessed (better) day the Sun rises upon is Friday. On this day, Adam (upon him be peace) was born, descended onto earth, his repentance was accepted and he passed away. And on this day, the Day of Judgment will take place” (Abu Dawood and Al-Tirmizi)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) regarded Friday as a day of eid for the believers which is established in a sound narration from Ibn Majah. So, according to the Hadith (for those who follow the Hadith) the day a Prophet was born and passed away is a blessed day and a day of rejoicing even if they both occurred on the same day. It is a day of eid.

9. Every contemporary gathering of the Mawlid does not take place with Haram acts. Until today I have never been to or even heard of a specific gathering in which music and intermingling with the opposite sex takes place. I have heard that such gatherings do take place but never regarding a specific gathering.

To attend any gathering in which Haram acts take place is forbidden whether it be a gathering of the Mawlid or a gathering for learning the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). If people gather to learn the Qur’an and Sunnah and at the same time they are intermingling with the opposite sex and using musical instruments then surely such gathering is condemned by the Shari’ah Law. If such gatherings for teaching the Qur’an and Sunnah become common amongst the people it does not mean gathering for the teachings of the Qur’an and Sunnah should become Haram. The Haram acts will remain Haram and the permissible acts will remain permissible. The Haram acts will always be condemned and teaching the Qur’an and Sunnah will always be encouraged.
In the same way, a gathering of the Mawlid in which Haram acts take place does not mean all Mawlid gatherings should be deemed unlawful. The Haram acts have nothing to do with the Shari'ah law regarding the Mawlid gatherings that take place within the boundaries of Shari'ah Law. Surely we condemn the Mawlid gatherings in which Haram acts of intermingling with the opposite sex and musical instruments take place. Imam Ahmad Raza (Allah is pleased with him) has forbidden both these Haram acts in numerous Fatwas which only he would know who has observed his works and read his Fatawa (Juristic Verdicts). Yet people do not stop accusing the great Imam of permitting such acts.

Therefore, if there are gatherings for the Mawlid which are free from such Haram acts then surely it is encouraged to attend them.

Fortunately I have never come across these most abhorring and shocking evils that take place in some Mawlid gatherings as mentioned in the question. That is a Mawlid gathering which encompasses acts of Shirk with hollow claims of loving the Prophet (peace be upon him). In fact I have never even heard of such. Those who claim such functions take place have never been able to identify such a gathering. They have been challenged many a time by many scholars to show them such a gathering, however they have failed. Muslims do not commit Shirk in Mawlid gatherings.

The reason for this hollow, shocking and abhorring claim from the misguided people is that they do not know what Shirk is. According to them, if one asks other than Allah for help or calls upon other than Allah to have their needs fulfilled, it is Shirk. However, it is a known fact amongst all the scholars that if one asks another for help believing that Allah is the helper in reality and those other than Allah are the means of gaining help from Allah then that is perfectly permissible. Muslims do not seek help from other than Allah believing that they can help without the need of Allah but they seek help believing that they are a means to gain the help of Allah.

Allah says in the Qur’an,

“O those who believe! Fear Allah and seek means to approach him” (Surah Al-Ma’idah, Verse: 35)

Calling upon other than Allah for the fulfillment of one’s needs (believing that the actual helper is Allah) is simply a form of Al-Tawassul which is a practice common amongst the companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Allah orders the believers to ask the prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) for forgiveness of their sins. Surely it is Allah who is the forgiver. So why ask the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) for forgiveness? The answer is, Allah is who will forgive but through the means of his beloved messenger. Allah says,
“And when they do injustice unto their souls, if they come to you and ask forgiveness from Allah and the messenger asks for their forgiveness, surely they will find Allah accepting their repentance and merciful” (Surah Al-Nisa’, Verse: 64)

There are many prophetic traditions which prove the fact that Al-Tawassul was widely practised amongst the companions of the beloved Prophet (peace be upon him). Whenever the companions needed anything they would always ask for it from the Prophet (peace be upon him). They knew that Allah is the one who provides and fulfils their needs. However, they also knew that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the means of Allah in providing and fulfilling needs. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) never prohibited neither condemned his companions for directly asking him their needs but instead he had announced amongst his companions,

“Allah is the provider and I am the distributer” (Bukhari and Muslim)

I shall mention a few traditions which one can understand Al-Tawassul and its permissibility.

Imam Tirmizi mentions a narration from Uthman Ibn Hunayf. He said, A blind person came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and asked him to pray to Allah for cure. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied,

“If you desire, I shall pray (and you will gain your eyesight) and if you desire, be patient and that will be better (more rewarding) for you”

The blind person said

“pray for me”

The Prophet (peace be upon him) ordered him to perform ablution in the best way he can then to perform two units of prayer and finally supplicate to Allah in these words,

“O’ Allah, I ask you and come to you through the means of your Prophet, Muhammad (peace be upon him), the Prophet of mercy. O’ Prophet of Allah, I come to my Lord through you for this need of mine, fulfil it for me. O’ Allah accept his intercession on behalf of me”

The blind person did exactly as ordered by the Prophet (peace be upon him). The narrator of the Hadeeth says that when the blind man stood up after the supplication, he was cured and could now see. (Imam Tirmizi says the Hadeeth is sound. Imam Al-Suyooti says in Al-Tahreer that Imam Bukhari has mentioned this Hadeeth in his Taareekh. Imam Bayhaqi has mentioned it in Al-Dalaa’il Wa Al-Da’waat and said it is sound)

Imam Bukhari mentions a narration from Anas Ibn Malik. He said that when a drought would occur, Umar Ibn Khattab would supplicate to Allah for rain through the means of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) Uncle Abbas Ibn Abd Al-Muttalib in these words,
“O’ Allah, we used to use the means of your Prophet (peace be upon him) and you gave us rain. Now we ask you through the means of the uncle of our Prophet (peace be upon him), give us rain”

Anas Ibn Malik says Allah would give them rain. (Bukhari)

Ibn Hajar mentions more detail on the aforementioned Hadith. He narrates from the son of Umar, Abd Al-Allah. He said, Umar lectured the people. In the lecture Umar said to the people,

“Indeed the messenger of Allah treated Abbas in the same way a child treats his father. Therefore, O’ People, we should follow the way of the messenger of Allah and treat Abbas the way he did. And we should use him as a means to reach Allah” (Fath Al-Baari, the Sharah of Bukhari)

Imam Ibn Sa’d has mentioned a narration from Sulaym Ibn Aamir. There was a drought in Damascus. The Sky was clear. There was no sign of a cloud. Mu’awiyah Ibn Ab Sufyan and the people of Damascus gathered to perform the Salah of drought (in which they ask the Lord for rain). Mu’awiyah sat on the pulpit and asked the people,

“Where is Yazeed Ibn Al-Aswad Al-Jarshiy?”

The people called for him. Yazeed Ibn Al-Aswad appeared. He was coming towards the pulpit slowly taking step after step (he was quite old). Mu’awiyah ordered him to sit on the pulpit. So he did whilst Mu’awiyah sat by his feet. Then Mu’awiyah supplicated. He said,

“O’ Allah, today we bring forth in your court the best amongst us and the most superior amongst us. We bring forth in your court Yazeed Ibn Al-Aswad”

Then he looked at Yazeed Ibn Al-Aswad and said,

“O’ Yazeed, raise your hands in the court of Allah”

Yazeed raised his hands and so did the people. It was not long when a cloud appeared from the west with a breeze. It rained and rained, so much that it became difficult for the people to return home. (Al-Tabqaat of Ibn Sa’d)

There are many more narrations that prove it is perfectly permissible to ask other than Allah for help as long as one believes them to be a means and not the actual helper, for surely Allah is the origin of all help. The misguided people claim to be followers of the great Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal and therefore I shall mention a narration regarding this great Imam, that even he practiced Al-Tawassul.

Imam Al-Nabhani has written that Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal practised al-tawassul through Imam Al-Shafa’i. Upon that, his son Abd Al-Allah was amazed. Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal said,
“Imam Shafa’i is such a great person that he is like the sun for mankind.” (Shawaahid Al-Haq)

10. If the day comes that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has no significance in the life of a believer, he should contemplate his faith. It is a shame to know that many people who attribute themselves as Muslims have the nerve to make such comments without hesitation and yet claim to believe,

“Disrespecting the Prophet (peace be upon him) in any form or way is disbelief”

I wonder what their idea of disrespect is. The very people who will not hesitate in holding gatherings in the name of Easter or Christmas will shout with the top of their voices that it is Haram, bid’ah and Shirk to hold gatherings in the name of the Mawlid. It is beyond the comprehension of my mind.

These people do not celebrate on the day the Prophet (peace be upon him) was born but instead show their hatred towards those who do celebrate. They grieve and express sorrow. As mentioned in the question some people turn their lights off. If that is not expressing hatred then what is it? It is a shame that people hate the day of love. The day our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) came to this world to spread love throughout humanity, these people express hatred. For such people I shall mention the following narration.

“Iblees (the devil) cried on four occasions; when he was damned, when he was fallen (from heaven), when the Messenger of Allah was born and when Surah Al-Fatihah was revealed” (Al-Bidayah Wa Al-Nihayah and Al-Khasaa’is Al-Kubra)

May Allah give us the ability to follow the footsteps of the pious predecessors rather than the footsteps of the devil.

The benefit of celebrating the birth of the Saviour of Mankind (peace be upon him) is the same as the benefit of fulfilling the command of Allah, following the Sunnah of His messenger (peace be upon him), following the footsteps of the rightly guided companions and predecessors. It is the way of the Muslims. It is an act of love for Allah and His bounties. It is an act of love for the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is a sign of a true believer. It is a sign of a loyalty towards Allah and His messenger (peace be upon him). It is a sign of being a follower of the correct Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Jama’ah.

Even a non-believer like Ab Lahab benefits celebrating the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). He is the uncle of the Prophet (peace be upon him) but became an opponent after He (peace be upon him) announced Prophethood. He is the only opponent of the Prophet (peace be upon him) denounced by the Qur’an by name. He and his wife had made it their business to torment the Prophet (peace be upon him). Yet below is an authentic narration from Bukhari which shows that he is rewarded for an act of

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expressing happiness on the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

“When Ab Lahab died, someone from his family was shown him in his dream in a bad state. He asked, what happened to you? Ab Lahab replied, I received nothing good after leaving you besides the fact that I am given water through this with which I freed Thuwaybah” (Bukhari, Kitab Al-Nikah)

This narration is explained by other narrations as mentioned by Al-Allamah Badr Al-Deen Al-Ayni in his Sharah of Bukhari, Al-Imam Ibn Al-Hajar Al-Asqalani in his Sharah of Bukhari and by Al-Imam Jalal Al-Deen Al-Suyooti in his Al-Khasa’aís Al-Kubra and Al-Haawi Li-Al-Fatawa.

Thuwaybah was freed by Ab Lahab on Monday when he received the news of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) from her. He gestured with his finger whilst saying the words to free her. Ab Lahab in the fire of hell; where there is no water and much thirst, is provided with water through that very same finger every Mondays.

This is a matter upon which those who disagree with the Mawlid celebrations should ponder. If a non-believer can benefit from an act of expressing happiness upon the great Mawlid then why can a Muslim not? How can it be impermissible to express happiness for the birth of such a great gift and blessing of Allah? Is it our aim to increase the love we have for the one most Beloved to Allah or is it our aim to decrease that love?

Surely Allah guides whom He wills and misguides whom He wills and it is not upon us but to enjoin the good and forbid the evil.

And Allah knows best!

Answered by:

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