

The Celebration of the Birthday of the Prophet [sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam]

In Light of the Qur'aan, Purified Sunnah, and Historical Facts

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الحمد لله رب العالمين و الصلاة والسلام على رسوله الكريم!

Introduction

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ
لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣١﴾

“Say (O Muhammad sal-Allaahu ‘alayhe wa sallam to mankind): ‘If you (really) love Allaah then follow me (i.e. accept Islaamic Monotheism, follow the Qur’aan and the Sunnah), Allaah will love you and forgive you of your sins, And Allaah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.’” [Soorah Aal-Imraan 3:31]

وَمَا آتَاكُمُ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ
فَانْتَهُوا وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٧﴾

“And whatsoever the Messenger (Muhammad sal-Allaahu ‘alayhe wa sallam) gives you, take it; and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain (from it). And fear Allaah; verily Allaah is Severe in punishment.” [Soorah Al-Hashr 59:7]

The Messenger of Allaah (sal-Allaahu ‘alayhe wa sallam) said:

“I am leaving behind two things, you shall never be lead astray if you hold firm to these two, the book of Allaah, and the Sunnah of His Prophet.” [Muwatta Imaam Maalik, Hadeeth no. 648]

“The celebration of birthdays” in the era of the Messenger (sal-Allaahu ‘alayhe wa sallam) and his noble Companions (radi-Allaahu ‘anhum ajma’een)

There is no doubt or uncertainty that firm belief and affection towards the Prophet (sal-Allaahu ‘alayhe wa sallam) is considered to be from strong belief (Eemaan). Every moment and minute of his life is regarded as a reflective, radiant torch of guidance for our lives. Infact no one can truly be a believer until the love of the Prophet (sal-Allaahu ‘alayhe wa sallam) has preference and precedence over his life, wealth, parents, children, and the whole of mankind.

Surely no Muslim has ever opposed or differed on the above issue. And we also believe that Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthmaan, Ali and all the other Companions (radi-Allaahu ‘anhum ajma’een) loved the Prophet (sal-Allaahu ‘alayhe wa sallam) in the highest degree possible. Their love for him reached the best and highest position ever attained by anyone. They are those referred to in the following ayah:

رَضِيََ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ

“Allaah is pleased with them and they are pleased with Him.” [Soorah Al-Maa'idah 5:119]

We also believe that the manner of love and obedience toward the Prophet (sal-Allaahu ‘alayhe wa sallam) exemplified by the Companions (radi-Allaahu ‘anhum ajma’een) was taught to them by the Prophet (sal-Allaahu ‘alayhe wa sallam), which was the most dignified and elevated in status. On this significant point of ours no true believer, whose love for the Prophet (sal-Allaahu ‘alayhe wa sallam) is true, can disagree or differ.

But unfortunately there are still people today who have introduced and adopted different ways of love for the Prophet (sal-Allaahu ‘alayhe wa sallam) that were not exemplified or practiced by the noble Companions (radi-Allaahu ‘anhum ajma’een).

Such acts include:

- specifying the 12th Rabiul-Awwal for celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (sal-Allaahu ‘alayhe wa sallam);
- illuminating and lighting special kind of lamps;
- hoisting flags;
- marches in the streets;
- feeding and distributing money to the poor and celebrating that day as a holiday;
- making images of the green mausoleum (dome) that is above the blessed grave of the Prophet (sal-Allaahu ‘alayhe wa sallam) at Madeenah; and to stroll and rotate it around the streets and markets;
- forming a congregational gathering in order to send peace and blessings upon the Prophet in a collective audible fashion.

All the above acts are positively innovated acts and are in opposition to the methodology of the Companions (radi-Allaahu ‘anhum ajma’een) and are worthy of being classified to be contrary in comparison to the actions done by the Companions (radi-Allaahu ‘anhum ajma’een).

This is because of the saying of the Prophet (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam):

“Upon you is to cling to my Sunnah and to the Sunnah of the rightly guided caliphs.” [Abu Daawood and Tirmidhee, who graded it Hasan, Saheeh]

It should be evident and obvious to all people that to celebrate the 12th Rabiul-Awwal as the birthday of the Prophet (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam) and to do any of the acts mentioned above, is not regarded as the Sunnah of Allaah's Messenger (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam) nor that of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Rather it is regarded as the Sunnah of the Christians, who celebrate the birthday of Eesaa (alayhis-salaam) on the 25th December.

The Prophet (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam) has commanded us to oppose and differ from the People of the Book, the Jews and the Christians. The Prophet (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam) said:

“Oppose the People of Book (Jews and Christians).” [Musnad Ahmed, Hadeeth no. 2234]

If in reality celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam) was such a rewarding and blessed action, how could it be possible that the Companions (radi-Allaahu 'anhum ajma'een) did not take the opportunity to benefit from such a rewarding act? Why did they deprive themselves from such a blessed action?

It is explicitly clear and accepted by all, that all of the Companions (radi-Allaahu 'anhum ajma'een) were firm and tactful in following the elegant examples of the Prophet (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam).

A historical glance, and its reality, in celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam)

Six centuries of Islaam passed by without any sign of this innovated act. The era of the Companions (radi-Allaahu 'anhum ajma'een) passed, as did the era of the Taabi'een and the period of the great Imaams of Hadeeth and Jurists, not one of them was involved in this innovated action.

This accursed innovation was first perceived and introduced by an extravagant king by the name of Muzafarad-Deen (died 630 A.H.) who employed a scholar to legalize the permissibility of this celebration.

This scholar, by the name of Umar bin Dahiyah (died 633 A.H.), was devoted to worldly pleasures and was paid a reward of one thousand Dinaars for introducing this innovated act in the year 604 A.H (seventh century of Islaam).¹

Now let us examine and analyze the rulings and judgments the ancient researching scholars have made regarding the extravagant king and the worldly scholar.

The great historian Ahmad Bin Muhammad Misree writes:

“Muzafarad-Deen was an extravagant king who would celebrate the Prophet’s birthday. He was the first person who introduced this act.”²

“Also nearly every year he would spend approximately three hundred thousand rupees on this innovated act.”³

Imaam Ibn Katheer has written regarding the innovating scholar Umar Bin Dahiyah that he was a liar. People discarded his narrations and held themselves back from trusting the narrations that he narrated, and for this reason he was extremely humiliated and degraded.⁴

Hafidh Ibn Hajr al-Asqalaani says about Umar Ibn Dahiyah:

“He was very impudent and would insolently speak ill of the great Imaams and the Salaf, he possessed a filthy evil tongue, was extremely foolish, stupid, and arrogant, had a very little deep insight of the affairs of the Deen and was lazy.”⁵

Hafidh Ibn Hajr also narrates Ibn Tujjar’s saying:

“I found that there was a consensus amongst the people regarding Umar Ibn Dahiyah being a liar and his weakness.”⁶

Allaa'mah Abdur-Rahmaan Maghrabee has written in his Fataawa:

¹ Refer to *Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah* of Imaam Ibn Katheer Volume 13 page 144 with reference to Allaa'mah Ihsaan Ilaahi Zaheer's book "The Barailwees."

² *Al-Qawlul-Mutameed Fee Amaleel Al-Mawlid* with the reference of Allaa'mah Ihsaan Ilaahi Zaheer's book "The Barailwees" and also *Raahe-Raast* of Sarfaraz Khan Safdar.

³ Refer to *Dawlul-Islaam* of Imaam Dhahabee volume 2, page 102.

⁴ Refer to *Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah* of Imaam Ibn Katheer Volume 13 page 145.

⁵ *Lisaanul-Meezaan* volume 4, page 296.

⁶ *Lisannul-Meezaan* volume 4, page 295.

“No doubt the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet is an innovation, it was never practiced by the Prophet (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam), nor his Companions the rightly guided Caliphs, and the great Imaams; and nor did anyone of them command that it should be done.”⁷

Allaa'mah Ahmad Bin Muhammad Misree Maalikee says:

“Verily there is a consensus amongst the scholars of the Four Madhabs (Hanafee, Shaafi'ee, Maalikee, and Hanbalee) on this issue. They have condemned the celebration of the Prophet's birthday.”⁸

Verily the scholars of the four madhabs, with a consensus, have condemned the celebration of the Prophet's birthday.

O respectful Muslim! In light of all the above evidence and witnessing of other proofs it should become obvious to every single person that the people of the best generations till the 6th Century of Islaam were not aware of this innovated act. Rather it became known in the 7th century of Islaam due to the efforts of an extravagant king and a worldly innovating scholar.

If after knowing all this, the person still assumes this action to be rewarding, a cause of attaining closeness to Allaah and His Messenger (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam), and an action of love and gratitude, the only cure is to pray that Allaah will guide the person to the Qur'aan and the Sunnah of His Messenger (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam).

⁷ *As-Shar-atul Ilaahiyyah.*

⁸ *Al-Qawlul-Mutameed.*

Is there a consensus amongst the Researching Ancient Scholars of History regarding the birth date of the Prophet (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam)?

Now let us examine, analyze and do some research in to the issue of the day which the people specify for the birthday of the Prophet (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam). Is that in reality the exact day on which the Prophet (sal-Allaah 'alayhe wa sallam) was born?

Imaam Ibn Katheer in his book "*Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah*" has narrated all the differing opinions of the scholars as to whether the Prophet (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam) was born on:

1. 2nd of Rabiul-Awwal.
2. 8th of Rabiul-Awwal.
3. 10th of Rabiul-Awwal.
4. 12th of Rabiul-Awwal.
5. 18th of Rabiul-Awwal.
6. 17th of Rabiul-Awwal.
7. 12th of Ramadhanul-Mubarak.⁹
8. 9th Rabiul-Awwal.

Allaa'mah Mubaarakpooree chose the last opinion in his book "The Sealed Nectar."

Respectful reader! From the above statements you have come to know that the honorable Imaams could not specify an actual birth date for the Prophet (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam). How is it possible that the so-called scholars of today can specify a birth date? What evidence do they refer to? Where as the Imaams, Scholars of History, the Muhadditheen and the ancient researching scholars could not specify a date?

We say in response to those who celebrate the Prophet's birthday, in reality you are celebrating the anniversary of the death of the Prophet (sal-Allaahu 'alayhe wa sallam), the 12th Rabiul-Awwal.¹⁰

May Allaah, Glorified and Exalted be He, give all the Muslims the ability to abstain from all types of innovation and obscenity and guide all Muslims to follow the Qur'aan and Sunnah according to the Understanding of the Noble Companions (radi-Allaahu 'anhum ajma'een). Ameen!

⁹ *Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah* volume 2, page 320.

¹⁰ Refer to *Ar-Rawdul-Aneef Sharah Seerah Ibn Hishaam* volume 4 page 270, *Al-Bidaayah Wan-Nihaayah* volume 5, page 276 and "The Sealed Nectar" page 469.