

To Celebrate or not to Celebrate...that is the Question

by Asma bint Shameem

Some of us celebrate it with great devotion and diligence, while some of us are against it with an equally great vengeance. Some say it is our religious duty while others say it is nothing but bid'ah.

People argue about it. Families split up, friends forsake each other. And sometimes people literally fight over it and hurt one another. So what is it that I am talking about?

I am talking about celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam), the Mawlid or Milad, as some of us say.

Yes, the 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal came and went. But, ever wondered..... what is the reality regarding the celebration of the birth of our beloved Prophet anyway?

Let's examine the facts.

First of all, whenever a Muslim is faced with a problem or confusing situation, what are we supposed to do? Allaah tells us:

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

Referring it to Allaah and His Messenger means to turn to Allaah's Book and the Sunnah of the Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam).

1. What does the Qur'aan say about the Mawlid?

Nothing. Yes that's right.....NOTHING. There is absolutely nothing in the Qur'aan that tells us to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam). Not one single ayah.

You see, all acts of worship are tawqeefi which means that they are not subject to personal opinion and it is not permissible to do any acts of worship except those which are approved by Sharee'ah. So, for example, I cannot pick a special day or time, say the 22nd of every month, and start celebrating that day as a form of worship. Why? Because there is nothing in the Sharee'ah that permits me to do that. Also, I cannot start praying three raka'ah for Fajr from tomorrow, even if I want to worship Allaah more, because Fajr Salah is only two rakaat as commanded upon us by the Sharee'ah.

And similarly, if there is no order for us to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam), then we don't.

In fact, the Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam) said: "Whoever innovates

anything in this matter of ours (i.e., Islam), that is not part of it will have it rejected." (Bukhaari).

Now someone might argue that we don't celebrate the Mawlid/Milad as an act of worship. So let's see what other evidences we have.

2. What does the Sunnah say about it?

Again, there is nothing in the Sunnah of the Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam) that shows us that the Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam) EVER celebrated his birthday or that of his wives, children, or Sahaabah. There is not a single hadeeth that tells us that he (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam) thought this day was significant enough to celebrate it.

Just think....if there was any good in doing so, wouldn't he would have done so himself and wouldn't he have ordered the Sahaabah to do so? And obviously, it is not possible that he (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam) forgot to tell us about it, Aoodhu billaah!

Did the Sahaabah celebrate the Mawlid/Milad?

The Sahaabah were witnesses to the revelation of the Qur'aan. They had the Prophet right in front of their eyes. They ate, drank, sat, slept, talked, walked, lived with the Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam). If they misunderstood anything or were mistaken, the Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam) immediately corrected them. And thus, their understanding and practice of Islaam was the best.

Yet, when we look at the lives and practice of the Sahaabah, we find that none of them EVER celebrated the birth of their beloved Prophet, whether during his life or even after he passed away.

Not Abubakr, not Umar, not Uthman, not Ali, nor Aaishah, Ibn Umar, Ibn Masud, Talha, Az-Zubair, not a single Sahaabi.

Doesn't that prove anything?

The Sahaabah absolutely loved the Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam). They gave up their homes, families, lives, everything they had... for his sake, in the blink of an eye. Yet this love did NOT promote them to celebrate his birth.

This love translated into the practical application of his teachings and NOT picking the 12th of Rabi-ul-Awwal as a day of celebration

What about the Four Imaams and other Ulama?

Did any of the Imaams – Abu Haneefah, Malik, al-Shaafi'i, Ahmad, al-Hasan al-Basri, do this or command others to do it or say that it was good? No. In fact, it

was not even mentioned during the first and best three centuries. The Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam) said: "The best of mankind are my generation, then those who come after them, then those who come after them.

(Bukhaari, Muslim and al-Tirmidhi).

And if the 'best of mankind' didn't celebrate his birth, then we shouldn't either.

Actually, the celebration of the Prophet's birthday appeared many centuries later. By this time, many of the features of true religion had disappeared and bid'ah had become widespread.

Think about it!

Can it be possible that the Sahaabah, the Imaams and the people of the best three centuries were unaware of the importance of celebrating the birthday of the Prophet or that they were lacking in their love for him? And it was only those who came later who were aware of it or loved him more?!!! How can that be?!!

Actually, dear brother/sister in Islaam, TRUE love of the Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam) is shown and proven by following the guidance that he brought. So follow his Sunnah to the best of your ability and don't fall into innovated forms of worship.

"Say (O Muhammad): 'If you (really) love Allaah, then follow me, Allah will love you and forgive you your sins. And Allaah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful. (Aal `Imraan 3:31)

And remember the words of the Prophet (Sal Allaahu Alaiyhi wa Sallam) when he said:

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