

249 - Mawlid al-Nabi (the Prophet's birthday)

the question

Why some people accept and some unaccept the celebration of the prophet ()? What is your opinion?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allaah.

There is nothing in the Qur'aan to say that we should celebrate the Mawlid or birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him). The Prophet himself (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) did not do this or command anyone to do it, either during his lifetime or after his death. Indeed, he told them not to exaggerate about him as the Christians had exaggerated about Jesus (upon whom be peace). He said: "Do not exaggerate about me as the Christians exaggerated about the son of Maryam. I am only a slave, so say, 'The slave of Allaah and His Messenger.'"

(Reported by al-Bukhaari). What has been reported is that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) made the day of his birth a day of worship, which is different to celebration. He was asked about fasting on Mondays, and he said: "That is the day on which I was born and the day on which I was entrusted with the Mission or when I was first given Revelation." (Reported by Muslim, al-Nisaa'i and Abu Dawood).

Moreover, we know that the Sahaabah (may Allaah be pleased with them) were the people who loved the Prophet most. Was it reported that Abu Bakr, who was the closest of people to him and the one who loved him the most, celebrated the birthday of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)? Was it reported that 'Umar, who ruled for twelve years, or 'Uthmaan, did

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this? Was it reported that 'Ali, his relative and foster son, did this? Was it reported that any of the Sahaabah did this? No, by Allaah! Is it because they were not aware of its importance, or did they not truly love the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)? No one would say such a thing except one who has gone astray and is leading others astray.

Did any of the imaams – Abu Haneefah, Maalik, al-Shaafi'i, Ahmad, al-Hasan al-Basri, Ibn Seereen – do this or command others to do it or say that it was good? By Allaah, no! It was not even mentioned during the first and best three centuries. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said in a saheeh hadeeth: "The best of mankind are my generation (or my century), then those who come after them, then those who come after them. Then there will come a people who will not care if their testimony comes before their oath or vice versa (i.e., they will not take such matter seriously)."

(Reported by al-Bukhaari, Muslim and al-Tirmidhi). The celebration of the Prophet's birthday appeared many centuries later, when many of the features of true religion had vanished and bid'ah had become widespread.

Thus this celebration became a sign of one's love for the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)? But can it be possible that the Sahaabah, the imaams and the people of the best three centuries were unaware of it, and it was only those who came later who were aware of its importance?! What the Qur'aan tells us is that love of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) is demonstrated by following the guidance he brought. Allaah says (interpretation of the meaning):

"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.

Say: 'Obey Allaah and the Messenger.' But if they turn away, then Allaah does not like the disbelievers." [Aal 'Imraan 3:31-32]

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The first aayah explains that love is just a claim, but the proof of sincerity is following what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) brought. The second aayah reaffirms the importance and necessity of obeying Allaah and His Messenger. Hence Allaah ended the aayah with a very stern warning in which those who refuse to obey are described as kaafirs, and Allah does not love the disbelievers. We ask Allaah to keep us safe from that. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) told us of the danger of not obeying him, and the danger of adding to what he brought. The celebration of Mawlid or his birthday is indeed an addition to what he brought - as all the scholars agree. 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 is a going astray."

(Reported by Muslim and al-Nisaa'i).

We ask Allaah to protect us from bid'ah and to bless us by helping us to follow. Allaah knows best. May Allaah bless our Prophet Muhammad.