The Validity of Celebrating Mawlidu-Nabawi Shareef

In Islam

إحياء المولد النبوي الشريف

للفقير إلى رحمة ربه

محمد العقيلي

By
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بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحمَْـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَ الصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلاَمُ عَلََ رَسُوْلِِِ
الكَرِيْمِ

Bismillahi Rahmaani Raheem
Wa Salaatu wa-Salaamu ala Rasulihi-I Kareem

إِحْيَاءُ المَوْلِِ النَّبَوِيِّ الشَّرِيفِ
إحياء المولد النبوي الشريف
“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.”¹ He is Allah’s most blessed Prophet and the Seal of His Messengers ﷺ upon all of whom be peace. Even our faith إيمان cannot be complete unless we always testify to that fact in every Salat prayer five times a night and day, and our faith is null unless we love him more than our father, mother, family and even our selves. Furthermore, our supplications to our Lord and prayers will not be answered unless we begin by celebrating His praises, followed by invoking our Lord the Supreme Most Exalted to shower His utmost blessings, Salawaat صلوات upon the best of His creation, our intercessor and leader on the Day of standing up for Judgment, our Master, the Holy Prophet Muhammad upon whom be peace

¹ Quran 48:29
and thus, fulfillment of our supplications Du’a are halted unless joined with conveying Salawat blessings upon Allah’s Messenger ﷺ and upon his blessed family and companions.

All praises are due to Allah, our Lord, Cherisher and Sustainer. I testify that there is no Divine Lordship except that of Allah, sole in His Sovereignty and He has no associate or partner, and I testify that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger. Our Lord, shower Your blessings upon our Master Muhammad ﷺ and upon his family and companions as You blessed our Master Abraham and his family, surely You are Supreme in praises and Majestic in Your endowments.

My dear brothers, sisters and children, Allah ﷺ is our Lord and Creator as well as He is our Sole Guardian and Cherisher. A small community of believers like ours today should not merely look at the outer characteristics of Allah’s Messenger ﷺ such as his traditional clothing or his compassionate but strict dealing with the character of some Arab bedouins who visited him from time to time; or the dress code of the dwellers of the Arabian Peninsula over 1500 years ago, consisting of sirwal and qamees
for personal comfort. It will certainly be more beneficial to try to emulate his most beautiful character and the way he adhered to the guidance of his Lord and to learn from the Sacred Quran that was revealed to him. That will be certainly more praiseworthy by our Lord.

Should a believer feel uncomfortable in pursuing the essence of knowledge and prefers to simply perform the basic obligatory pillars of Islam, this will be correct and it is not new. Abu Huraira narrated that an Arab bedouin came to Allah's Messenger upon whom be peace and asked: "Tell me something if I do it I enter paradise." Allah's Messenger replied: "Adore Allah and associate nothing with Him, uphold the prescribed daily Salat prayers, give the due alms tax, and fast the month of Ramadan." The man said: "I swear by Him Who maintains my soul in His Presence, I will add nothing to that." Once the man left the gathering, Allah's Messenger commented: "Whoever is pleased to see one of the dwellers of paradise then look at that man."²

² Sahih Bukhari #1333
The above prophetic narration indicates clearly that a Muslim may feel comfortable with limiting his adherence on the path to the basic tenets of Islam. When the man realized that he could not comprehend the depth of knowledge conveyed by Allah's Messenger ﷺ, he asked for leave in a most polite way and embraced the basics. Therefore, should someone feel more comfortable in praying alone, or sitting in the Mihrab of a mosque or at home to read the Holy Quran by himself, or to pray to his Lord for his personal needs privately, this is certainly a rewarding practice, even though congregational pursuit of the same is surely more rewarding.

Abdullah bin Omar ﷺ may Allah be please with them both, used to say: "To shed a single tear in fear of Allah is more rewarding than one thousand supererogatory *nafl rak'a* of *Salat* prayers." The story of the Burda cloak of Allah's Messenger ﷺ he placed on Imam Al-Busiri in a vision is certainly a most magnificent miracle that cured the Imam's paralysis when he saw Rasul Allah ﷺ in his dream. The repercussion of the renowned poem known as Al-
Burda by Imam Al-Busiri is recited by millions of Muslims throughout the world for past centuries.³

I participated a few times at the occasion of celebrating the Prophet's birthday, Mawlidu-n-Nabi  in reciting the famous complex one thousand verses of Al-Burda by Imam Al-Busiri, the depth of the classical Arabic verses may mystify even the ascetic. However, during these celebrations, some Arabs who may have limited knowledge in traditional classical use of the language also join the celebration to win the blessings of paying tribute to Allah's blessed Messenger  upon whom be peace. A special Divine Grace descends upon the believers during such occasion for the mere attending of the event.

Here is a lesson both humans and angels can learn from. Abu Huraira  narrated that Allah's Messenger  said: Allah has malaa'ika ملائكة angels who roam the roads soliciting the company of Ahlu Zikr أهل الذّكر, people celebrating Allah's praises. Once they find such a gathering, they call out to each others: "Come. Here is what you are looking

³ Al-Būsīrī 1211-1294, Alexandria, Egypt
for." Later on, their Lord asks them, and He knows best: "What are My servants saying?" The *malaa'ika* angels reply: "They are celebrating Your praises, thanking You and glorifying You." "Have they seen Me?" Allah ﷺ asks, they reply: "We swear to Your Holy Name, they have not seen You." Allah ﷺ then says: "Then what if they should see Me?" The *malaa'ika* angels reply: "They would be more in love with You, their glorifications, gratitude and praises of You will be more intense." Allah ﷺ then asks (and He knows best): "What are they soliciting?" The *malaa'ika* angels answer: "They are seeking Your paradise." He says: "Have they seen it?" The *malaa'ika* angels reply: "They did not, we swear to Your Holy Name our Lord, if they had seen it, their pursuit of it would then be more intense and their hope to live therein will be greater." "What are they asking protection against?" Allah ﷺ asks, the *malaa'ika* angels reply: "Against hellfire!" He says: "Have they seen it?" The *malaa'ika* angels reply: "No, they have not seen it, we swear to Your Holy Name our Lord." Allah ﷺ says: "Then what if they see it?" The *malaa'ika* angels reply: "Should they see it, they will run harder to escape from it, and they will be more afraid of it." Allah ﷺ then says: "You be the
witnesses that I have forgiven them." One of the malaa'ika angels says: "There was so and so (waiting) there, and he is not one of them. He only came and waited to get something." Allah  reply: "They are the companions; whoever sits with them shall never suffer." (Sahih Bukhari) ⁴

Our Lord  joined by the heavenly malaa'ika angels initiated the eternally continual blessings upon His most blessed Prophet , and He commanded the believers to participate in conveying the regards of Salawaat perpetually as well, saying: “Indeed Allah is continuously endowing the Prophet with His Grace, and His angels too; they are constantly invoking Allah's blessings on him. O believers! Invoke Allah's blessings on him, and adhere openly to his precise guidance without any reservation.” ⁵

إِنَّ اللَّـهَ وَمَلاَئِيكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ۚ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

My dear brothers, sisters and children, it came to my knowledge that some young Muslims in this

⁴ Sahih Bukhari vol. 8 pages 86-87
⁵ Quran 33:56
town have lately used an insulting term against their brothers who celebrate the most blessed birth of Allah's Messenger ﷺ upon whom be peace, calling such events "pagan" and propagating incorrect information among other youth, telling them that to celebrate the Prophet's birthday is a pagan practice, not knowing perhaps that the word pagan in the English language means to intentionally insult someone who does not believe in the Bible or in the Quran. To use such terms with the intention of belittling another Muslim who is keen to celebrate the birth of Allah's blessed Messenger ﷺ upon whom be peace, out of love, does not portray the quality of a pious Muslim, and it will be better to refrain from labeling others with names that do not qualify a believer.

Our Lord ﷻ says: “O believers! Let no group of individuals make fun of another group of individuals who are perhaps better than them, and no women should make fun of other women who maybe better than them, and do not belittle, defame or disparage the character of one another, and do not call each others names. How evil it is to carry a bad name once one becomes a believer and
whoever does not repent [from engaging in such conduct] then such are the unjust people." 

Millions of Muslims across this planet love Allah's Messenger ﷺ upon whom be peace, and they should. Thousands of such celebrations take place across the five continents, and hundreds of mosques celebrate the same in Canada as well, each according to their own ethnic traditions. In Morocco for example, the entire country hold a three days holiday to celebrate the Mawlidu-Nabi ﷺ. Most Muslim countries celebrate the event in recognition of the Holy Prophet's role in building this nation of believers, being our intercessor on the Day of Judgment (Qiyama). That is the Day when all people who have already met with their trials in this down world, and who will now have to stand before their Lord and Creator ﷺ for their final judgment in the hereafter. One should wonder as to which group of

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6 Quran 49:11
Muslims will not be looking for the shafaa’ā intercession of Allah's Messenger ﷺ, which individual or group of people think that they have done enough good for themselves to the point that they can depend exclusively on their own efforts and records of good deeds to win paradise and the eternal life of happiness in the proximity of their Lord ﷻ. Therefore, let no believer deceive himself with respect to his personal contributions to his own salvation, never object to Allah’s Will, and may Allah سبحانه وتعالى keep us all guided His Way.

Celebration of Mawlidu-n-Nabi ﷺ Upon Whom Be Peace

Here are few views and opinions Muslims regard as acceptable in explaining common benefits one draws from participating in this celebration:

In Ibn Taymiyya's Collection of Opinions⁷ he stated: "To honor the birthday (Mawlid of Allah's Prophet ﷺ) and to hold it as a seasonal event, some people do that, and they will receive therefrom a

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⁷ Majma' Fatawi Ibn Taymiyya, Vol. 23, p.163 – Central Library of Damascus, Syria
great reward because of their good intention in honoring Allah's Messenger ﷺ."

"فتعظيم المولد واتخاذه موسمًا قد يفعله بعض الناس ويكون له فيه اجر عظيم لحسن قصده تعظيمه لرسول الله ﷺ."

In another opinion stated in Ibn Taymiyya's Collection of Opinions "Majma' Fatawi Ibn Taymiyya,"8 he was asked about fuqara فقراء, people of the path gathering in a mosque to invoke Allah’s praises (Zikr) and reading from the Quran. Their intention is free from any display of ostentatiousness, showiness or solicitation of recognition; rather they do that to draw closer to Allah’s acceptance. Is such (practice) permissible or not? He replied: “All praises are due to Allah. To congregate for the purpose of reading the Quran, invoking Allah's praises (Zikr) and praying (Du'a), soliciting Allah's favors is a praiseworthy act, (Arabic: hasan and mustahab).

وسئل رحمه الله عن الفقراء يجتمعون في مسجد يذكرون ويقرأون شيئا من القرآن ثم يدعون وليس قصدهم من ذلك رياة

In his book, *Ad-Durar al-Kamina fi ‘ayn al-Mi’a ath-thamina*, Al-Hafiz Ibn Hajr Al-‘Asqalaani quotes Ibn Kathir in reference to celebrating the Birthday of the Prophet ﷺ saying: “The night of the birthday of Allah's Messenger (Mawlid-u-Nabi ﷺ) upon whom be peace, is a noble, blessed and a holy night; a night of bliss for the believers, pure, radiant with lights, and its eminence is most reverent.”

Ibn Kathir, in the last days of his life also wrote a book titled “The Birthday of Allah's Messenger”⁹ where he spoke of the permissibility of celebrating the Mawlidu-Nabawi Shareef ﷺ.

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⁹ Central Library of Damascus, Syria
Other traditional Islamic celebrations include the Night of the Nocturnal Journey "Isra wal-Mi’raaj" and the Night of Power "Laylatul-Qadr" stated in the Holy Quran. Ibn Qayyim in his book al-Badaa'i\(^\text{10}\) said: “Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyya was asked, which night is more exalted: Laylatul Qadr or Laylatul Israa’? He replied: “Laylatul Israa’ honors the Prophet and Laylatul-Qadr honors the Umma (nation), etc,…”

والقال إبن حجر في رسائله: "وسُئِلَ شيخ الإسلام إبن تيمية عن ليلة القدر وليلة الإسراء أيهما أفضل؟ فأجاب بأن ليلة الإسراء أفضل في حق النبي وليلة القدر أفضل بالنسبة للأمة...

Imam Suyuti in his book Husnu Maqasid fi ‘Amal al-Mawlid wrote\(^\text{11}\): “The reason for gathering for tarawih prayers is Sunna and qurba (soliciting nearness to our Lord)... Similarly, we say that the reason for gathering to celebrate the Mawlid is mustahsan (praiseworthy) without doubt…”

قال الإمام السيوطي في في كتاب حسن المقصد في عمل المولد، أصل الاجتماع لصلاة التراويح سنة وقربة... وكذلك

\(^{10}\) Al-Badaa'I, Vol. 3 page 162

\(^{11}\) Husnu Maqasid fi ‘Amal al-Mawlid p. 54
**About Singing Na'at Poetry, Durud Shareef and Salawaat**

Ibn Hayyan narrated in his book of *Sahih* that a woman came to Allah's Messenger ﷺ upon whom be peace and said: “I had vowed that should Allah bring you back safely, to play the drum in your presence.” He ﷺ replied: “Fulfill your vow.”

روى ابن حبان في صحيحه أنَّ امرأة أتت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فقالت يا رسول الله إنني نذرت إن رذك الله سالمًا أن أضرب على رأسك بالدف. قال: أوفي بذرك.

Anas bin Malik ﷺ narrated that on the Day of Khandaq, Allah's Messenger ﷺ upon whom be peace sang: “My Lord, life is truly living in the hereafter, O Allah honor the Supporters (of Medina) and the Emigrants (of Mecca).”

روى البخاري ومسلم عن أنس بن مالك رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله ﷺ كان ينشد يوم الخندق الله لا عيش إلا عيش الآخرة فأكرم الأنصار والمهاجره...
Hassaan bin Thābit al-Ansāri was once singing when Omar came by and said to him: “Are you singing at the Mosque of Allah’s Messenger?” Hassaan replied: “I recited poetry when someone better than you was here.” Omar kept quiet. Hassaan then turned to Abu Huraira and asked: “I ask you by Allah, did you not hear Allah’s Messenger pray (for me): “O Allah! Fulfill my prayer. O Allah, strengthen him with the Holy Spirit.” Abu Huraira replied: “Indeed I heard him.”

Muslims started celebrating the Mawlidu-Nabawi Shareef nearly three hundred years after the passing of Allah’s Messenger upon whom be
peace. Since then, hundreds of fatwa opinions of renowned Muslim scholars of this Umma nation all consented to the validity of celebrating the Prophet’s birthday ﷺ and all the scholars proclaimed it by worshiping Allah ﷻ alone and that Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and Messenger. Such renowned Muslim scholars include: Shaykh Al-Islam Imam Ibn Hijr al-‘Asqalaani, Al-Hafiz As-Suyuti, Al-Hafiz as-Sakhawi, Ibn ‘Ashir Al-Maliki, Ibn Marzooq, and among the contemporary Muslim scholars Ulama, Shaykh Sa’id al-Hawwa, and Shaykh al-Qaradawi among others. Their respected opinions are sufficient for all Muslims to adhere to, and no further personal opinions or false allegations should be spread across our community or create division among the Muslims.

Since celebrating Mawlidu-Nabi ﷺ upon whom be peace is a way to share knowledge of His blessed life Seera سيرة, to narrate short quotes about his life and Message to a new generation of Muslims, to recognize his status as the Seal of Allah's Prophets and Messengers upon all of whom be peace, and to obey Allah's Command: “(O Prophet,) it is surely We Who sent you as a witness, a carrier of glad tidings, and as a warner. So that you (the believers)
may believe in the Divine Sovereignty of Allah and in His Messenger whom you should honor, acknowledge his reverent station, and exalt his praises morning and evening.”

To share such knowledge with others is a daily duty of every Muslim, and particularly on the day of 12th of the month of Rabi’ul Awwal, the most magnificent day in our perception that allowed for the Divine Message to reach us, to honor Allah’s Messenger ﷺ and to acknowledge his reverent station, while supplicating the Divine blessings of Salawaat and Durud Shareef on him is exalting his praises morning and evening. Whoever reads the above Quranic verse in Arabic correctly can see that there is only good in celebrating Mawlidu-Nabi ﷺ upon whom be peace, and it is certainly an act of obedience to Allah’s command in the Holy Quran.

Anyone who says that Monday the 12th of the month of Rabi’ul Awwal is like any other day of the year may need to continue his pursuit of Islamic

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13 Quran 48:8-9
education. On this subject, Imam Bukhari quoted in his Sahih reference to the mother of the believers Aisha, may Allah be please with her, that when (her father) Abu Bakr was at his death bed, he asked her: “What day did Allah’s Messengerﷺ die?” She replied: “On Monday.” He said: “What day is this?” She replied: “Monday.” Abu Bakr then said: “I beseech Allah the Supreme and Most Exalted to show me His Kindness between now and this night.” Aisha said: “He died that night (before sunrise), and he was buried by Tuesday evening.”

Expressing joy and happiness at the event of celebrating Mawlidu-n-Nabi ﷺ was even rewarding for his uncle Abu Lahab who freed a slave servant when she reported to him the birth of his nephew that Monday the 12th of the month of Rabi‘ul Awwal, and yet, Abu Lahab died as a non-believer.

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14 Sahih Bukhari, the Book of Funerals, Hadith #1321
On this subject, Imam Bukhari in his book *Sahih Bukhari* quotes Ibn Kathir: “When Thawbiyya (the slave girl) reported to him the news of the birth of his nephew, the uncle rejoiced extremely and freed her at once. When his brother Al-ʻAbbas ﷺ saw him in a dream (after his death), he asked him about his condition, Abu Lahab replied: Nothing good except for the drink I receive because of this,” pointing to a small silver ring he wore on his thumb, he added: “By freeing Thawbiyya.” As-Suhaili noted that Abu Lahab said to his brother Al-ʻAbbas ﷺ in that dream: “Nothing is comforting since I left you, except that my sufferings are lessened every Monday.”

وفي كتاب البداية لإبن كثير قال: أول ما أرضعته ثوبية مولاة عمه أبي لهب، وكانت قد ٍبشرت عمه بميلاده فاعتقها عند ذلك. قل هذا لما رآه أخوه العباس بن عبد المطلب بعد ما مات في المنام ورآه في شر حاله، فقال له: ما لقيت؟ فقال: لم ألق بعدكم خيراً، غير أنني سقيت في هذا، وأشار إلى النقرة التي في الإبهام، بعناقتي ثوبية.” وأصل الحديث في الصحيحين. وذكر السهيلي أن أبو لهب قال لأخيه العباس رضي الله في المنام: "ما

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15 ‘Amdatu-l Qari by al-ʻAyni
Invoking Salawaat Prayers upon Allah’s Messenger ﷺ

Abu Dawud in his book of Sunnan reported that Abu Huraira ﷺ narrated that Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said: “Whoever greets me with Salaam, Allah returns my soul to me so that I return his regards.”

Hence, when such a being of a unique stature among Allah’s creations enjoys a continuous Salawaat by his Lord ﷺ along with the blessings of His malaa’ika angels, as well as an entire umma nation of believers, Muslims need not to limit their participation in such universal events, as in our Lord’s saying: “O believers! Invoke Allah’s

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16 Sunan Abu Dawud, Hadith #2041, also in Musnad Imam Ahmad Hadith # 10827, Al-Baihaqi in his book As-Sunanu’l Kubra, Hadith #10050, At-Tabarani in his book Al-Mu’jam, Hadith #3092, and other references.
blessings on him, and adhere openly to his precise guidance without any reservation.”  

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\[ \text{يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا} \]  

(٥٦)

Therefore, celebrating his birthday is certainly part of acknowledging his reverent station, honoring him and exalting his praises for those who feel that way. On the other hand, it does not befit the character of a good Muslim to call his brother in faith with expressions such as pagan or polytheist (mushrik) for holding such blessed events among others in obedience to Allah's command and as an expression of love for Allah’s beloved Messenger ﷺ. Such blasphemous allegations and name calling will certainly meet with great repercussion from one’s Lord and Supreme Judge ﷺ.

Life of the Prophets after their Death

Anas bin Malik ﷺ narrated that Allah’s Messenger ﷺ said: “All the Prophets are alive in their graves, performing Salat prayers.”  

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References:

١٧ Quran 33:56  
١٨ Abu Dawud
Messenger also reaffirmed that Hadith following his Nocturnal Journey of al-Isra’ wal Mi’raaj, saying: “I passed by Moses on the Night of my Nocturnal Journey and I saw him standing up in his grave praying...”


19 Sahih Muslim, Hadith #2375
20 Referenced Hadith (Marfou’)
Abdullah bin Mas‘oud  narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ upon whom be peace said: “Your deeds are presented before me. What is good therein, I thank Allah for it, and what is bad, I solicit Allah to forgive you.”

Therefore, when we are talking about Allah's blessed Messenger ﷺ or about any other Prophet upon all of whom be peace, we need to recognize that such reverent beings have already re-entered the phase of their permanent blissful life in every sense of the word and even prior to the Day of Resurrection. Hence, when some people are not fully acquainted with the subject of life after death and that of the barzakh, it will be more beneficial for them to refrain from offering free comments, and it will certainly be better and more...
rewarding for them to say: “Allah knows best - الله أعلم” and particularly when it comes to the secrets of the blessed life of the Prophets upon all of whom be peace.

On the other hand, there is nothing in Islamic Laws (Shari'a) or in the Sunnah traditions of Allah's Messenger ﷺ that should prevent the Muslims from celebrating the event of Mawlidu-n-Nabi ﷺ as described above. Therefore, since we are all accountable for what we say and what we think, it is necessary for us, young and old, men and women to ascertain the validity of our references and intentions based on the Quran and the noble Prophetic Sunnah traditions before making public comments, and to examine our sermons prior to preaching them to others.

Finally, should some Muslims label celebrating the Mawlidu-Nabi ﷺ as bid'a or innovation, then celebrating the Mawlid is certainly a good innovation سنة حسنة according to a large number of renowned Muslim scholars for centuries and where at this stage of human history, pious Muslims gather to express their love for Allah's Messenger ﷺ and to stand up in support of his Message.
My Lord, shower Your eternal and everlasting blessings upon our master Muhammad ﷺ who is the best of Your creations and the inherent Light of Your Divine Throne, the Seal of all the Prophets and Messengers, and the most exalted and perfect being of your creations. Ameen.

Glory be to You, O Lord of all creations.

*Al-faqir ila Rahmati Rabbihi*
Muhammad al-Akili
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