



REGARDING THE CELEBRATION OF
THE PROPHET'S BIRTHDAY

THE Mawlid

Loving and Respecting the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ)
Between the Sincere Following of The Companions
(رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ) and the Hypocritical Innovation of the
Batini Ismaili Shiites of 4th-6th Century Egypt

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OF THE PROPHET'S

Mawlid



Loving and Respecting the Prophet (ﷺ) Between
the Ikhlaṣ (Sincerity) and Ittibā' (Following) of the
Companions (رضي الله عنهم) and the Nifāq (Hypocrisy)
and Ibtidā' (Innovation) of the Bāṭinī Ismā'īlī
Shi'ites of 4th-6th Century Egypt

Prepared by
Abū 'Iyaad Amjad Rafiq

Title: Regarding Celebration of the Prophet's Mawlid

Author: Abū Iyaad̄ Amjad Rafiq



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1st Edition (1.8) Rabī al-Awwal 1436H / December 2014CE.

ISBN: 978-1-64136-528-4

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Published by:

Salafi Publications

472 Coventry Road

Small Heath

Birmingham B10 0UG

United Kingdom

t. 0121 773 0003

e. admin@spubs.com



www.salaf.com

www.bidah.com

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Transliteration Table

Consonants

ء	'	د	d	ض	ḍ	ك	k
ب	b	ذ	dh	ط	ṭ	ل	l
ت	t	ر	r	ظ	ẓ	م	m
ث	th	ز	z	ع	'	ن	n
ج	j	س	s	غ	gh	ه	h
ح	ḥ	ش	sh	ف	f	و	w
خ	kh	ص	ṣ	ق	q	ي	y

Vowels

Short	ـَ	a	ـِ	i	ـُ	u
Long	ـَـ	ā	ـِـ	ī	ـُـ	ū
Diphthongs		ـَوُ	aw	ـَيُ	ay	

عَزَّوَجَلَّ

The Mighty and Majestic.

صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

May Allāh make good mention of His Prophet in the highest company and grant him safety.

عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ

Peace be upon him.

رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ

Allāh be pleased with him.

Note: It is impossible to translate the Qur'ān into any other language whilst retaining its full range and depth of meaning. Hence, all verses from the Qur'ān cited in this work, whilst providing an accurate enough rendition of the basic meaning, remain limited due to the limitations of the English language and are unable to convey fully what is in the original Arabic.

Introduction

All praise is due to Allāh, the Lord of the Worlds, and may the ṣalāt and salām be upon His Final Messenger. To proceed:

Much debate regarding the subject of the Mawlid has taken place and continues to take place. The confusion regarding this subject returns back to the lack of clarity about what precisely is the nature of the innovation (bid'ah) that the legislation of Islām, the Sharī'ah, has prohibited and warned against. The dispute is between a) the People of Tawhīd and Sunnah who worship none but Allāh alone and who worship Him only through what He legislated and who respect and venerate His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) only through what He ordered and permitted, and b) the Shī'ites who introduced birthday celebrations three centuries after the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and then the Ṣūfīs who inherited this practice from them and spread it in the Muslim nation after the sixth century hijrah. Birthday celebrations have their origins among the ancient Egyptian polytheists and tyrant kings who believed in magic and astrology and they cannot be found in the Sharī'ah or Sunnah of any Prophet ever sent by Allāh (عز وجل).

In this work, we establish seven important foundations which no Muslim is able to deny and on the basis of those foundations, the various arguments which are presented to argue for the celebration of the Mawlid are evaluated. The scholars of Tawhīd, Sunnah and Āthār have written extensively on this subject and our work draws upon their writings, so may Allāh reward them with a great reward for aiding the Sunnah and purifying it from what is ascribed to it of innovations for which Allāh sent down no authority.

Abū 'Iyaad Amjad Rafiq

9th Rabī al-Awwal 1436H / 31st December 2014CE

The Prophet's Companions and Their Enemies

The Companions and Loving the Prophet (ﷺ)

No Muslim will dispute that those greatest in their love of the Prophet (ﷺ) were his Companions (رضي الله عنهم). They were the ones upon whom revelation came down and Allāh's praise of the Believers in the Qur'ān is primarily upon the Companions for their faith, support and aid of the Messenger. Showing **love** (*maḥabbah*) and **veneration** (*ta'zīm*) of the Prophet through **following his Sunnah** (*ittibā'*) and **referring judgement to him** (*tahākum*) is from the greatest of obligations of the religion without which faith is neither valid nor complete. The Companions were the greatest to exemplify these four qualities and after all the Prophets and Messengers, they are the best of the people of the Earth. The evidences for loving and respecting the Prophet are abundant in the Qur'ān and Sunnah. Allāh (عز وجل) said:

الَّتِي أَوْلَىٰ بِالْمُؤْمِنِينَ مِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ

**The Prophet is more worthy of the believers
than themselves (33:6).**

Loving the (ﷺ) is from the greatest obligations in the religion and is a foundation of the religion as stated by Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah¹ This love is not merely a slogan but a true and real love that is demonstrated with the heart, tongue and limbs. It is not permissible to fall short from the obligatory love due to the Prophet (ﷺ) and nor to exaggerate by departing from his Sunnah and doing things he has prohibited or not commanded. The Prophet said (ﷺ), "None of you truly believes until I am more beloved to him than his own father, his son and all of mankind."² Love of the Prophet (ﷺ)

¹ Refer to *al-Radd 'alāl-Akhnā'ī* (p. 231) and *Majmū' al-Fatāwā* (10/56).

² Related by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

is a matter of the heart whose signs and evidences are displayed outwardly in speech, action and behaviour. From the greatest of signs of this love are the following:

1. Believing in Whatever He Informed About. To believe in the *khobar* (report, information) of the Prophet (ﷺ) in everything that he informed about of the unseen and seen, the past, present and future, the world, the barzakh and the hereafter. This is because he is the truthful, and whatever he informed his ummah from His Lord is true and real.

2. To Follow Him (Ittibā') and Obey His Command and Restrict Oneself To His Sunnah. This is from the greatest of signs of loving the Prophet (ﷺ) and is from the easiest of what distinguishes genuine, sincere love from what is besides it. The texts in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah in this regard are plentiful and abundant, and the Prophet severely warned against opposing his Sunnah and from innovations in the religion and we shall mention some of that in this treatise.

3. Judging to His Sunnah and Sharī'ah in Disputes. This is also from the greatest signs of genuine, pure love, that a believer refers all disputes back to the Sharī'ah and authentic Sunnah of Allāh's Messenger. Many people will judge to the opinions of their school of thought or to fabricated and weak narrations or to isolated (*shādh*) opinions and they will rely heavily on the statements of the latecomers from the 7th century and beyond and abandon the earlier generations closer to the era of Prophethood and closer to right guidance and at the head of them are the Companions. Judging to the Sharī'ah of Islām and to the Prophetic Sunnah is to make interpretations of the texts only through what the Companions knew and understood. Departing from their understanding and implementation is a clear and open sign of deviation because in the Qur'ān, Allāh (ﷻ) made following their way from guidance itself.

4. Respecting (Tawqīr) and Venerating (Ta'zīr) the Prophet. Ibn Taymiyyah said about Ta'zīr, "It is a comprehensive term comprising his support and shielding him from every harm" and Tawqīr, "It is a comprehensive term comprising everything in which there is serenity (sakīnah) and repose (ṭum'anīnah) of honoring and revering and that he should be treated with such honoring, ennoblement and veneration which keeps him from being removed from the limits of respect."³ From the signs of respecting the Prophet is not to raise one's voice over his and not to put oneself ahead of the Prophet, meaning his command, his Sunnah and his Sharīah and also to be abundant and frequent in sending ṣalāt upon him. The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "*The miser is the one who when I am mentioned does not send ṣalāt upon me.*"⁴

5. Defending his Sunnah. The Companions were the best and truest examples of defending the Sunnah and of sacrificing with their selves, wealth and children, in times of ease and hardship and their biographies are the greatest illustrations of this. When that which the Prophet (ﷺ) had informed of splitting and the appearance of the sects, it was the Companions who preserved the Sunnah and conveyed it to the Successor (Tābi'īn). It was from the Companions that those after them learned about standing in the face the deviants and innovators such as the Khawārij, Rāfiḍah and Qadariyyah. The Companions rejected innovations in belief and worship and they transmitted what they knew of the Sunnah. The preservation of the religion was at their hands due to their transmission of the Sunnah and rejection of what opposed it from the innovations. A person's love of the Prophet (ﷺ) remains only a claim and cannot be genuine without following their way.

³ *Al-Ṣārim al-Maslūl* (p. 422).

⁴ Reported by Aḥmad and al-Tirmidhī and declared ṣaḥīḥ by al-Albānī in *Irwā' al-Ghalīl*.

This is how the Companions loved and respected the Prophet (ﷺ) and there was no calamity greater upon them than the passing away of the Prophet. Despite that, they preserved and protected the religion by conveying it with care and precision to those who came after them. However, there appeared enemies of Islām, such as 'Abdullāh bin Saba' al-Yahūdī whose subversive activities led to splitting and innovations and from the manifestation of those activities were the appearance of the Khawārij and the Rawāfiḍ (commonly, the Shi'ah). The Shī'ite movements became a magnet and refuge for every external enemy of Islām who desired evil for it and its people.

The Enemies of the Companions

Those greatest in their enmity to the Companions are the **Rāfiḍāh Shī'ah**. Their enmity towards the Companions is a veil for their enmity towards the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) himself and his message of Tawḥīd. Those from amongst the Persians, Magians, Jews and others who harboured enmity because their nations, cultures and civilizations had been dominated by Islām adopted the face of Shī'ism as a means to conceal their disbelief and their evil intentions. Their aim was to bring harm to Islām, its people and its lands by gaining the trust of the Muslims and working to acquire power in their lands. They strove to corrupt the affair of the Muslims in both the worldly and religious affairs.

These movements were known as the **Bāṭiniyyah** and they were responsible for much of the political turmoil in the Muslim lands during the 'Abbāsīd rule in the second to the sixth century hijrah (8th to 12th centuries CE). Their names are known as the **Qarāmiṭah, Mazdakiyyah, Ismā'iliyyah, Nuṣayriyyah, 'Ubaydiyyah, Rāwandiyyah, Buwayhiyyah, Khurrāmiyyah**. They used the veil of Shī'ism to deceive the Muslims into thinking they were lovers of Ahl al-Bayt. They managed to set up their own states in North Africa, Bahrayn, Shām,

norther Irān and elsewhere and spread their poison. Worship of saints, veneration of tombs and many major innovations especially amongst the Şūfis have their origins with these enemies of Islām who came through the door of Ismā'īlī Shi'ism. These people desired to undermine the Sharī'ah of Islām and replace it with heretical doctrines and practices which they invented as a means of taking the Muslims away from the Islām known to Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī (رضي الله عنه) and the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) to what they fabricated and spread amongst the Muslims.

From those affairs which the Muslims have been put to trial with is the celebration of birthdays which is not known in any Sharī'ah of any Prophet and nor to the Arabs in their Jāhiliyyah prior to Islām. This practice was introduced into Islām by the **Ismā'īlī Shi'ites** known as the **'Ubaydiyyah** who imitated the Christian Copts of Egypt and set up celebrations for the birthdays of 'Alī, Fāṭimah, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (رضي الله عنه) and added the celebration of the Prophet's (صلى الله عليه وسلم) birthday as a means of deceiving the Sunnī Muslims whom they ruled over in fourth century hijrah Egypt. At the same time, they would curse and revile the Companions of Allāh's Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

These historical facts documented in the history books are unknown to most people who have been deceived into believing that celebrating the Prophet's birthday is virtuous and sanctioned by Islām, despite the fact that celebrating birthdays is not known in any revealed Book, in the Sharī'ah of any Prophet and nor was it a known custom amongst the Pagan Arabs in the days of Jāhiliyyah.

Birthday celebrations have their origins and practice with the greatest disbelievers, polytheists and tyrants upon the Earth such as Pharoah⁵ and Ptolemy⁶ and are connected to magic, astrology and the

⁵ In Genesis 40:20-22 it is mentioned that the Pharaoh would celebrate his birthday and organise great feasts for his subjects.

casting of horoscopes. They were unknown to the Prophets of Banī Isrā'īl and unknown in the legislations which Allāh revealed to them. Likewise, the early Christian Church, for the first three hundred years at least, never celebrated birthdays until the era of Constantine the Pagan Roman Emperor in the fourth century CE who merged what was already, by that time, a gross distortion of the clear message of Jesus (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) with Paganism, its symbols and customs. It was the Ismā'īlī Bāṭinī Shī'ite hypocrites and disbelievers who entered this practice among the Muslims three centuries after the era of the Companions of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).

In this treatise, we investigate the issue of the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), its origins and history in detail. Its contents will give the confused Muslim a firm understanding by which he can distinguish between what comprises genuine love of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and the methods of its outward manifestation that are acceptable to Allāh (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) and what amounts to an innovated expression of love which is rejected by Allāh (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) even if it is accompanied with the loftiest of intentions, claims and slogans. We start our treatise with seven foundations which no Muslim can reject and which must be agreed upon before any discussion of the issue of the Mawlid is even entered into.

⁶ He is among the ancient Egyptian kings for whom horoscopes were made by astrologers. Their birthdays were considered very important for future well-being and prosperity.

1. The Evidence for Love of the Prophet (ﷺ)

Many of the people of the Earth from the various religions opposing Islām claim love of Allāh (ﷺ) and despite the feeling of love and sincerity in their hearts, the devotion and the apparent righteous deeds they perform, they have been judged to be disbelievers whose actions are vain and will be nullified in the hereafter, amounting to nothing but scattered dust. Allāh (ﷺ) said:

وَقَدْ مَنَّآ إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَعَلْنَا لَهُ بَاءً مَّنشُورًا ﴿٢٣﴾

And We shall turn to whatever deeds they did, and We shall make such deeds as scattered floating particles of dust. (25:23).

This is because they do not follow Islām and the legislation of Allāh but follow desires and their claims of sincerity and love for Allāh are contradicted by their rejection of Tawhīd and their failure to believe in the Prophet (ﷺ) and to show compliance and submission to the command of the Prophet (ﷺ) who is the last and final messenger.

In a like manner, there are many within Islām who ascribe to the Prophet (ﷺ) and claim to love him and respect him, however they will be turned away by the Prophet (ﷺ) from the Hawd (drinking pool) on the Day of Judgement and their actions will not be accepted because they opposed the Prophet's Sunnah (ﷺ) and claimed to show respect and veneration for him through ways and means he prohibited and condemned. For an action to be valid it must be done with sincerity and it must be commanded in the Qur'ān or the Sunnah and these are the two conditions without which no act is acceptable to Allāh (ﷺ): Sincerity (ikhlaṣ) and following the Sunnah of the Messenger (Ittibā').

Allāh (ﷺ) made clear the criterion for genuine, correct love of Him and of His Messenger (ﷺ) and it is indicated by the statement of Allāh:

قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ

Say if you do love Allāh, then follow me. Allāh will love you and forgive you your sins. (3:31).

The Tābiī, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110H) said, “A people claimed to love Allāh, then Allāh tested them with (the revelation of) this verse.”⁷ The test in this verse is making ittibā‘ (following) the Prophet’s Sunnah. Thus, everyone who followed and imitated the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) in his belief, speech, action, worship and dealings will have passed the test. And everyone who opposed the authentically reported Sunnah and followed opinions or what the intellect deems good or relied upon weak and fabricated ḥadīths to suit his tastes and desires, then he has not passed the test and is not one who truly loves Allāh and His Messenger. His claimed love is lacking to the extent of his distance from the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) even if he protests otherwise with his tongue.

A person’s love of the Messenger (ﷺ) is displayed by his conviction in the Tawḥīd of Allāh which is the core of the message of the Prophet (ﷺ): That none has the right to be worshipped but Allāh alone. Thereafter, performing the remaining four pillars, the prayer, fasting, obligatory charity and the pilgrimage. Then other obligations such as acquiring knowledge of the rulings required to worship Allāh correctly, righteousness to parents and good behaviour with one’s neighbour and so on. One imitates the Prophet (ﷺ) in worship, behaviour and manners, restricting himself to his Sunnah, because Allāh is not worshipped except through what He legislated, and that is only known through the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ).

⁷ Related by Ibn Kathīr in his tafsīr.

All of this is from the manifestation of the love of Allāh and His Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) which is legislated by Allāh and acceptable to Him. Further, we have been commanded to leave controversies and stick firmly to the Prophetic Sunnah. The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, "Whomever amongst you lives for long will see much controversy, so you must stick to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly-guided Caliphs."⁸

Once the above is clear, there are two ways towards the Prophets and Messengers: The ways of the Jews towards their Prophets, that of neglect and opposition to them, differing with them, oppressing them and killing them. And the way of the Christians who exaggerated and displayed love for 'Īsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) through whims, desires and innovations for which Allāh sent down no authority. The Muslim takes the middle path between these two. He aids, supports, loves the Messenger but only through what Allāh legislated of statements and actions. Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) said:

فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ
 أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾

So they who have believed in him, honored him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him - it is those who will be the successful. (7:157)

The light mentioned in this verse is the light of revelation, the legislation of Allāh, it is the Book and the Wisdom, the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. Thus, it is not possible to believe in, honour, support and follow the Messenger except through strict adherence to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

Up to this point, most people will not disagree, since everyone will claim they are following the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. However, as we

⁸ Related by Ibn Mājah and it is ṣaḥīḥ. Refer to *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah* (1/32).

proceed to outline historical facts and address the arguments, it will become clear that only one party is following the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and the other is pretending to follow the Messenger (ﷺ) whilst opposing the Messenger and then appealing to “good intentions” and weak and flimsy evidences to justify this opposition.

Allāh legislated affairs through which the Prophet is mentioned, remembered, loved and honoured, the greatest of which is the obligation of obeying him and following his Sunnah. Further, he is mentioned in both the āzān and the iqāmah, within the prayer itself where ṣalāt (good mention), salām (safety peace), raḥmah (mercy), and barakah (blessing) are invoked for him. Likewise, it is legislated to ask Allāh to grant him the intercession (shafā'ah) following every āzān. Whenever his mention is made, it is legislated for person to send ṣalāt upon him. This mention and remembrance of the Prophet is daily and constant and through this Allāh (ﷻ) has raised his mention:

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ ﴿١﴾

**And We have raised high your
remembrance. (94:4).**

In his tafsīr of this verse, Imām al-Ṭabarī (d. 310H) relates from Qatādah who said, “Allāh has raised high his remembrance in the world and the hereafter. There is no sermon-giver or one who bears witness in tashahhud or one who prays except that he proclaims within it, ‘I bear witness that none is worthy of worship but Allāh and I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allāh.’” And the likes of this is also related from Mujāhid. In addition, sending ṣalāt and the salām upon the Messenger is from the best of good deeds. Allāh (ﷻ) said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

Indeed, Allāh confers ṣalāt upon the Prophet, and His angels
[ask Him to do so]. O you who have believed, ask
[Allāh to confer] ṣalāt upon him and ask
[Allāh to grant him] peace. (33:56).

And the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, “Whoever sent ṣalāt upon me once, Allāh will send ten upon him due to it.”⁹ So these affairs are legislated and are part of the means through which the Messenger is loved and honoured, and they are legislated at all times and are from the completion and perfection of the Sharī‘ah. Allāh was not unmindful of legislating for his servants that by which the remembrance, honour and respect for His Messenger is preserved and maintained in the most complete of ways.

Alongside this, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also forbade from exaggeration in his status, “Do not exaggerate with respect to me as the Christians exaggerated with respect to ‘Īsā ibn Maryam. For I am a slave, so say, [about me] ‘The slave of Allāh and His Messenger’.”¹⁰ He also said, “Beware of exaggeration (ghuluww) in the religion, for those who came before you perished because of their exaggeration in religion.”¹¹ Exaggerating in the status of the Messenger as is done by the Ṣūfīs through innovated ways – and some of them even ascribe divine qualities to the Messenger – is evidence of deliberate opposition to the Messenger and lack of genuine love for him and it is the way of the Christians who profess love for ‘Īsā (عليه السلام) but do not restrict themselves to what he commanded and forbade.

⁹ Reported by Muslim, Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah through Abū Hurayrah.

¹⁰ Reported by al-Bukhārī.

¹¹ Reported by Aḥmad, al-Nasā’ī, Ibn Mājah and Ḥākim from Ibn ‘Abbās.

The Prophet (ﷺ) reprimanded a man who said, “Whatever Allāh willed and what you willed” by saying, “Have you made me a rival for Allāh? Say, ‘What Allāh willed alone’.”¹² And another said to him, “O our chief, the son of our chief and the best of us and the son of the best of us” and he said in return, “O people! Upon you is piety and let not Shayṭān misguide you. I am Muḥammad bin ‘Abdullāh, Allāh’s slave and messenger. By Allāh, I do not love that you should raise me above my position which Allāh (ﷺ) has granted to me.”¹³ And Anas bin Mālīk (رضي الله عنه) said, “No one was more beloved to them [the Companions] than Allāh’s Messenger (ﷺ) and whenever they saw him they would not stand because they knew of his dislike of that.”¹⁴

Further, the Prophet also prohibited exaggeration in worship. Al-Bukhārī reports from Anas bin Mālīk (رضي الله عنه) that three men came to the homes of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) asking about his worship and upon being informed they said, “Where are we compared to the Prophet (ﷺ) for his past and future shortcomings have been forgiven.” One of them said, “As for me I shall pray the whole night from now on.” Another said, “I will fast continuously and not avoid any fast.” And the third one said, “I shall avoid women and never get married.” So the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) came to them and said, “Are you the ones who said such and such? By Allāh, I am the most fearful and pious of you with respect to Allāh but I fast [some days] and do not fast [on others], I pray and rest and I marry women. So whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not from me.” In this ḥadīth it is clear that turning away from the Sunnah can also take place through exaggeration in worship and attempting to attain higher levels of piety and righteousness through ways and means which in themselves are correct (prayer and fasting) but in which there is excess, extremism, exaggeration.

¹² Related by Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad and al-Bayḥaqī in *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*.

¹³ Related by Aḥmad in *al-Musnad* (no. 12573).

¹⁴ Reported by al-Tirmidhī (no. 2754).

☞ **1st Point of Agreement:** It is obligatory to love Allāh and the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). There is only one criterion for this love and it is to make ittibā' of the Messenger (ﷺ). This means to strictly follow his Sunnah, not to abandon it and nor deviate from it to something else. The misguidance of the one who claims that there is a way to love Allāh and His Messenger through other than what He revealed is plain and clear. Just as the misguidance of those who think that exaggerating in the status of the Prophet (ﷺ) is part and parcel of loving him is plain and clear. And just as the misguidance and deviation from the Sunnah of the one who exaggerates in worship is also clear. Venerating the Prophet (ﷺ) is only by fulfilling his command, avoiding his prohibition and adhering to his guidance. This is the criterion of true and genuine love. Within his Sunnah and the legislation he brought is the correct way to love, respect and honour him in the way that Allāh (ﷻ) is pleased with, loves and accepts.

2. Did the Companions, Successors or Imāms Celebrate the Mawlid?

It is unanimously agreed upon by the entire ummah that the practice of the *mawlid* (birthday celebration) was not known to the Companions, the Successors, the Four Imāms or any of the Imāms from the Righteous Salaf of the first three centuries of Islām and that it is a *bid'ah* (innovation), something newly introduced into Islām. There is no dispute on this matter, absolutely.

Imām Tāj al-Dīn al-Fākihānī al-Mālikī (d. 734H) said, "I do not know for this mawlid (celebration) any basis in the Book, nor the Sunnah and nor has its practice been narrated from any one of the Scholars of the Ummah who are the followed leaders in the religion holding fast to the ways of the predecessors."¹⁵

Imām 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Bāz said, "The Messenger (ﷺ) did not do it [the mawlid celebration], nor his rightly-guided Caliphs, nor those besides them from the Companions - may Allāh's pleasure be upon them - nor the Successors who followed them in goodness in the virtuous generations. And they are the most knowledgeable of people of the Sunnah, and most perfect in their love for the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) and following his legislation than those who came after them."¹⁶

Even those who support the mawlid acknowledge this fact. Al-Sakhāwī (d. 902H) acknowledges, "The foundation for performing the noble mawlid has not been transmitted from the Righteous Salaf in the first three virtuous generations."¹⁷ Yūsuf al-Rifā'ī, a Ṣūfī, said,

¹⁵ *Al-Mawrid Fī 'Amāl al-Mawlid* (Maktabah al-Ma'ārif).

¹⁶ In *Hukm al-Ihtifāl bil-Mawlid al-Nabawī* within *Rasā'il Fī Hukm al-Ihtifāl bil-Mawlid* (1/57).

¹⁷ Cited by Mullā 'Alī al-Qārī in *al-Mawrid al-Rawī Fil-Mawlid al-Nabawī* (p. 12).

“People gathering to hear the story of the noble Prophetic mawlid is an affair that was introduced after the era of Prophethood. Rather, it did not appear until the beginning of the seventh century.”¹⁸

Those who prohibit the celebration of the mawlid and those who permit or enjoin it are all agreed on this matter, as is clear. There is no dispute that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) did not command the Companions with this practice. Had it been an obligatory (*wājib*) or recommended (*mustaḥabb*) action it would have been reported widely from the Companions and it would have been mentioned in the speech and writings of the four Imāms and evidence for its legitimacy (as an act that is *wājib* or *mustaḥabb*) would have been conveyed from them and would be abundantly mentioned in the books of tafsīr, fiqh and ḥadīth authored in the second and third centuries hijrah in a similar way that the prayer, zakāh, ḥajj, the two ʿĪd prayers and other major symbols of Islām have been related and spoken of within these works. However, all of that is absent and does not show up in the literature until many centuries after the era of the Righteous Salaf. Rather, it does not show up until after seven centuries at least.

❦ **2nd Point of Agreement:** It is not possible for the reader to deny this historical fact that celebration on 12th Rabī al-Awwal was unknown to the Companions, Successors, Four Imāms and the Righteous Salaf as a whole who were the best and most virtuous of this ummah without dispute. As such it is a newly-invented matter.

¹⁸ *Al-Radd al-Muḥkam al-Manī* (p. 153).

3. The Religion is Perfect and Complete

Allāh (ﷺ) said:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

This day have I perfected your religion for you and have completed My favour upon you and have approved Islām as a religion for you. (5:3).

Allāh (ﷺ) also said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الرَّسُولُ بَلِّغْ مَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ وَإِنْ لَمْ تَفْعَلْ فَمَا بَلَغْتَ رِسَالَتَهُ

O Messenger, announce that which has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. (5:67).

Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah, the followers of the ḥadīth and āthār, the followers of the Righteous Salaf believe that the religion was perfected and completed during the lifetime of the Messenger and that the Messenger (ﷺ) conveyed it entirely without leaving or omitting a single thing. This belief is founded upon their knowledge and conviction that he fully conveyed the message and fulfilled his trust. The Messenger (ﷺ) said, "Allāh did not send any Prophet except that it was a duty upon him to direct his ummah to every good he knew for them and to warn them from every evil he knew for them."¹⁹ And he (ﷺ) said, "By Him in whose hand is my soul. I have not left anything which brings you closer to Paradise and distances you from the Hellfire except that I have commanded you with it and I have not left anything which distances you from Paradise and brings you closer to Hellfire except that I

¹⁹ Reported by Muslim from the ḥadīth of 'Abdullāh bin 'Umar.

have prohibited you from it.”²⁰ And Abū Dharr (رضي الله عنه) said, “The Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) died and he did not leave a bird flapping its wings in the sky except that he mentioned knowledge to us regarding it.”²¹ And one of the pagans came to Salmān al-Farsī (رضي الله عنه) and (mockingly) said, “Your Prophet teaches until even the toilet manners?” And Salmān proudly and unashamedly replied, “Yes. He has prohibited us from facing the qiblah when relieving ourselves, that we should clean ourselves with the right hand or that we should clean ourselves with less than three stones or that we should clean ourselves with bones or filth.”²²

In light of these texts, the celebrator of the mawlid is saying - through his action and not necessarily his tongue - that Allāh (عز وجل) and the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) were not truthful when they made these statements and that something which the Muslims were in need of in their religion was not made clear to them and was not commanded by Allāh and His Messenger. Ibn al-Māʿjishūn relates that he heard Imām Mālik (d. 179H) say, “Whoever introduced an innovation into Islām, considering it something good, he has claimed that the Messenger was treacherous to his duty of messengership,” then he recited, “**This day have I perfected your religion for you**” (5:3) and then said, “Whatever was not from the religion then cannot be considered from the religion today.”²³ Alongside Imām Mālik, neither Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150H), Imām al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204H) nor Imām Aḥmad (d. 241H) knew anything about the celebration of the mawlid.

²⁰ Reported by al-Ṭabarānī, al-Bayḥaqī and Ibn Abī Shaybah and refer to *al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (no. 1803).

²¹ Reported by Aḥmad in al-Musnad (5/153), al-Ṭabarī in his tafsīr (11/348), Ibn Ḥibbān in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* (1/267) and al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Muʿjam al-Kabīr* (2/155-156).

²² Reported by Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī and others.

²³ Imām al-Shāṭibī in *al-ʿIṭisām* (taḥqīq, M. Salmān, Maktabah al-Tawḥīd, 1/62).

Thus, it is clear that attempting to justify the celebration of the mawlid and ascribing it to the religion is tantamount to reviling the Messenger (ﷺ) and claiming that he did not explicitly and clearly direct his ummah to celebrating the mawlid with clear unambiguous words - as he did with respect to ʿĪd al-Fiṭr and ʿĪd al-Aḍḥā for example - and thereby left his ummah in confusion over the issue, leading them to fight and argue and accuse each other of misguidance, or even disbelief. Further, it is a revilement of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī (رضي الله عنهم) and all of the Companions who failed to see the alleged evidence for the mawlid in the Qurʾān and the Sunnah and failed to bring it out for the ummah to practice by leading them with example.

☞ **3rd Point of Agreement:** Whoever claims that Allāh did not complete and perfect the religion of Islām but left it deficient such that it requires improvements and additions through the customs and habits of the pagans such as celebrating birthdays to enable people to respect and love the Messenger (ﷺ) in a way that Allāh did not mention and His Messenger did not mention, and through that, get closer to Allāh and to Paradise has uttered disbelief (kufr). This is because he has reviled Allāh and has rejected an explicit verse in the Qurʾān which states that Islām has been perfected and Allāh's favour has been completed. Likewise, whoever claims that the Messenger did not convey everything which the Muslims need to get closer to Paradise has reviled the Messenger (ﷺ) because he has made takdhīb (rejection) of the Messenger in what he informed us: that he did not leave us anything which brings us closer to Paradise except that he informed us of it.

4. The Prophet Expressly Forbade Innovations in the Religion

If one genuinely and truthfully believes that the religion was completed and perfected and that the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) conveyed everything needed by the Muslims to get closer to Allāh and to enter Paradise, then it is binding that he also genuinely and truthfully believes that innovations in **matters of worship**, in matters alleged to bring one closer to Allāh and to Paradise, are expressly forbidden and are futile. These two matters are fundamentally tied and cannot be separated. If you believe the religion is complete and perfect and that the Messenger fulfilled his trust and conveyed everything needed to get closer to Allāh, you must also believe that innovations in the religion pertaining to worship which are alleged to bring one closer to Allāh are ḥarām and are a revilement upon the Messenger and his integrity and upon the perfection of his message.

Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) said:

فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾

So let those beware who dissent from the Prophet's order,
lest fitnah strike them or a painful punishment. (24:63).

And He (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) also said:

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ وَنُصَلِّهِ ۖ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿١١٥﴾

And whoever opposes the Messenger after guidance has become

**clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers²⁴ -
We will give him what he has taken and drive him into Hell,
and evil it is as a destination. (4:115).**

The Prophet (ﷺ) said as related by al-Irbād bin Sāriyah (رضي الله عنه), “I have left you upon clarity. It’s night is like its day. No one deviates from it except that he is destroyed. Whomever amongst you lives for long will see much controversy, so you must stick to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly-guided Caliphs.”²⁵ The Prophet (ﷺ) also said as reported by ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), “Whoever introduces into this affair of ours that which is not from it will have it rejected”²⁶ and also, “Whoever does an action that is not in accordance with our affair will have it rejected.”²⁷ And Jābir bin ‘Abdullāh reports that the Prophet (ﷺ) would say in his sermons, “To proceed: Indeed, the best speech is the Book of Allāh and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad and the worst of affairs are the newly-invented matters, every newly-invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance, and every (instance of) misguidance is in the Fire.”²⁸

Whatever was not religion in the time of the Companions cannot be considered from the religion today as has preceded from the statement of Imām Mālik. ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd said (رضي الله عنه), “Follow and do not innovate, for you have been sufficed, and every innovation

²⁴ The one who celebrates the mawlid takes other than the way of Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī and the Companions as a whole who are the Believers referred to in this verse.

²⁵ Related by Ibn Mājah and it is ṣaḥīḥ. Refer to *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah* (1/32).

²⁶ Reported by al-Bukhārī.

²⁷ Reported by Muslim.

²⁸ Reported by al-Nasā’ī, al-Ājurri and al-Bayḥaqī. And it is also related by Imām Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* with the wording, “To proceed: Indeed, the best speech is the Book of Allāh and the best guidance is the guidance of Muḥammad and the worst of affairs are the newly-invented matters and every innovation is misguidance.”

is misguidance.”²⁹ Imām al-Dārimī reports in his Sunan the incident of Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) who upon seeing a group of people sat in the mosque in circles performing collective dhikr went to the house of ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) to inform him. When ‘Abdullah came out of his house, Abū Mūsā told him what he saw and they both went to the mosque. The men explained that they had pebbles and were counting tasbīh, tahlīl and takbīr upon them. ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd said, to them, “You better count your sins! I guarantee that nothing of your good deeds will go to waste [if done correctly]. Woe to you O ummah of Muḥammad, how quickly you go to destruction! These are the Companions of your Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) who are abundant, these are his garments which are intact, these are his vessels still unbroken. By Him in whose Hand is my soul, either you are upon a religion better in guidance than the religion of Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) or you are opening the door of misguidance.” They said, “By Allāh O Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, we intended nothing but good.” He said, “How many people intend good but never reach it.”³⁰ In this amazing narration which has so many benefits, good intentions were not enough to justify the innovated way (wasīlah) they used in performing dhikr because in its details and form, it was innovated and had no basis in the sharī‘ah, even if the original act, dhikr, is from the loftiest of acts of worship. Sayyid bin al-Muṣayyib saw a man praying more than two rak‘ahs after the time for Fajr prayer had entered through the breaking of dawn and prohibited from that. The man said, “O Abū Muḥammad, Allāh will punish me for prayer?” He said, “No, but he will punish you for opposition to the Sunnah.”³¹

These two narrations from Ibn Mas‘ūd who is from the great scholars amongst the Companions and Ibn al-Muṣayyab who is from the great

²⁹ Reported by al-Lālikāī (1/96) and al-Marwazī in al-Sunnah (p. 28).

³⁰ Al-Dārimī in al-Sunan (1/68-69), Abū Nu‘aym in al-Ḥilyah and others.

³¹ Reported by al-Bayḥaqī in *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* (2/466), al-Khaṭīb in *al-Faqīh wal-Mutafaqqih* (p. 147), al-Dārimī in his Sunan (1/116).

scholars from the Successors are an unsheathed sword against those who justify opposition to the Sunnah by claiming that they are doing nothing but remembrance (dhikr) and prayer (ṣalāt) and so on.

Everyone who claims love of the Prophet (ﷺ) and does not restrict himself to the details in the Prophetic Sunnah with respect to the details of acts of worship, wilfully opposing it after knowledge has come to him, is a liar in his claim even if he bears witness to what is in his heart of love and sincerity. Whoever has genuine, true inward love of the Messenger (ﷺ) will show outward compliance with the Sunnah of the Messenger by necessity, as a sign of his truthfulness in his love. He will abandon everything which he knows is not from the Messenger (ﷺ) and was not practiced by his Companions.

❧ **4th Point of Agreement:** This automatically follows from the 3rd point, the agreement that the Prophet (ﷺ) explicitly and expressly and repeatedly warned against innovation (bid'ah) in the religion and that innovations in matters of worship that do not have a basis³² in the Sharī'ah clash with the belief in the completion and perfection of the Sharī'ah and belief in the fulfilment of the trust by the Messenger (ﷺ). It is a contradiction to affirm the 3rd point and to contest the 4th point as they go hand in hand. Further, legislated acts of worship must agree with the Sunnah in their details and specifics.

³² After agreeing with this point, those who celebrate the mawlid go on to claim that it does have a basis (aṣl) in the Sharī'ah and then they proceed to bring far-fetched interpretations (distortions) of texts that do not remotely come close to establishing the celebration of the mawlid or have any connection to the subject at all. These doubts are addressed later in this treatise.

5. The Prophet's Birth and Death

The people of knowledge have differed about the birth date of the Prophet (ﷺ). The majority are of the view that he was born in Rabī al-Awwal in the year of the Elephant which is said to be around 570CE but differ as to the specific day. Some say the 2nd, others say the 8th, 10th, 12th or 17th.

As for the day he was born, the Messenger (ﷺ) indicated it was a Monday. When asked about his fasting on Mondays he said, "*That was the day I was born, when I was sent as a messenger, and when it was first revealed to me.*"³³ The Messenger informed only of the day he was born and not the date, month or year. The date of birth was not preserved because it was not known to the Arabs at the time that Muḥammad bin 'Abdullāh al-Qurashī al-Hāshimī would be a mercy to mankind by Allāh's choice and will and also the Arabs were unlettered and the Christian calendar itself was not accurate. So the exact date has not been preserved. Thus, the alleged birth date remains inconclusive. According to research - by working back in the calendar on a weekly basis - it is not possible for the Prophet to have been born on a 12th Rabī al-Awwal that corresponds to a Monday between 569CE-571CE.³⁴

As for the day the Prophet (ﷺ) passed away, it was not forgotten and has been preserved accurately and is agreed upon by everyone unanimously. It is the **12th of Rabī al-Awwal** in the eleventh year of

³³ Reported by Muslim.

³⁴ According to some researchers - given that the Prophet (ﷺ) said he was born on a Monday - the calculations bring it to 2nd Rabī al-Awwal corresponding to 28th April 571CE or 9th Rabī al-Awwal which corresponds to 27th April 571CE. In the year 570CE it is 6th Rabī al-Awwal (28th April) or 13th Rabī al-Awwal (5th May). In the year 569CE it is either 4th Rabī al-Awwal (6th May) or 11th Rabī al-Awwal (13th May). However, these dates cannot be taken with certainty either because of the nature of the lunar calendar and plausibility of error in calculation.

hijrah. The Muslims never suffered a calamity such as the passing away of the Messenger (ﷺ) and hence they never forgot the date. Thus, the reality is that those who celebrate this day are most certainly celebrating the day that the Messenger (ﷺ) passed away and as for their celebration of the birth date, it is but speculation.

The Mālikī scholar, Tāj al-Dīn al-Fākihānī (d. 743H) stated in his work, *al-Mawrid Fī 'Amal al-Mawlid*, "The month in which the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) was born which is Rabī al-Awwal is the very month in which he passed away. Hence, rejoicing therein is not more worthy than grieving therein."³⁵ And Ibn al-Ḥāj (d. 737H) said in *al-Madkhal*, "Most strange it is how they perform the mawlid [celebration] with songs, rejoicement and happiness as has preceded because of his birth (ﷺ) as has preceded in this noble month yet he (ﷺ) passed away in this [very] month to His Lord (ﷻ) and the ummah was struck and afflicted with a great calamity that is not equalled by any other calamity at all. And upon this, crying and much grief is what is required... so look at this noble month, whilst the affair is like this, and they are playing around and dancing and they neither cry nor grieve and if they had done that it would have been closer to the (true) situation."³⁶

It is also known historically that the 12th of Rabī al-Awwal had no special significance to the Muslims and this day would pass like any other day of the year during the era of the rightly-guided Caliphs and right through to the fourth century hijrah in all of the lands of the Muslims. Thus, despite the factors being present for the *mawlid* to be practiced whether during the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ) or after his lifetime - due to the calamitous loss of the Prophet (ﷺ)

³⁵ Maktabah al-Ma'ārif, 1st edition, 1407H (p. 27).

³⁶ *Al-Madkhal* (2/15) through Shaykh Ismā'īl al-Anṣārī in his *Risālah Fī Ḥukm al-Iḥtifāl bil-Mawlid al-Nabawī*.

- it was not done, neither in the era of the Prophet, nor the era of the Companions and Tābi'īn and nor the era of the Righteous Salaf - and this is sufficient evidence that it is not from the religion.

❦ **5th Point of Agreement:** It is established with absolute certainty and has been transmitted through the ummah that the Messenger (ﷺ) passed away on the 12th Rabī al-Awwal in the 11th year of hijrah. However, the Muslims have disagreed on the date of birth.

Note: Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī writes in *Fatḥh al-Bārī* under his explanation of al-Bukhārī's chapter, "History: From where did they commence [the start of Islāmic] history?" and mentions a reason given for the selection of the hijrah as the start of Islāmic history. He said, "And some of them have brought out the suitability of the hijrah being [the starting point] and said: The issues which occurred and which could have been taken as [the starting point] are four: His birth, his [being made a] messenger, his hijrah and his death. They made the hijrah the best option because the birth and being made a messenger are not free of dispute regarding their year [of occurrence].³⁷ And as for the time of death, they turned away from it due to the sadness it brings about. Thus, it remained only with the hijrah."³⁸

Ibn Ḥajar mentioned the reason why the death of the Prophet was not made the basis for the start of the Islāmic calender. The day of the death of the Prophet (ﷺ), 12th Rabī al-Awwal, is a day that brings sadness and grief upon a Muslim. However, people have made it a day for partying, singing, dancing and celebrating alongside all of the unlawful things which take place of free-mixing, such exaggeration (ghuluww) towards the Prophet (ﷺ) that would anger him, wastage of wealth, actions resembling the non-Muslims and what is more, all in disobedience to the Prophet's command.

³⁷ And in the case of the mawlid, the actual month and day of the month too.

³⁸ *Fatḥh al-Bārī* (Maktabah Salafiyyah; 7/268).

6. Who Invented the Mawlid Celebration?

It is now firmly established by the historians that the first group to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (ﷺ) were the **Bāṭinī Ismāʿīlī Shīʿite disbelievers and enemies of Islām** known as the 'Ubaydiyyah who ruled over Egypt from the fourth century hijrah. They deceptively called themselves "Fāṭimiyyah", claiming to be descendants of the Prophet's daughter, Fāṭimah al-Zahrā' (رضي الله عنها) which is a great lie. They were enemies of the people of Tawḥid and Sunnah. As rulers, they were hated and they tried to impose their Shīʿism upon the Sunnīs through the use of force.

Their origins lie in a Persian Magian of Jewish origin known as **Maymūn al-Qaddāh** who is mentioned by Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī (d. 429H) in his book *al-Farq Bayn al-Firaq*. He was a learned Jewish scholar, a philosopher, astrologer and was acquainted with the beliefs of various religions as mentioned by Muḥammad bin Mālik (d. 479H) in his book *Kashf Asrār al-Bāṭiniyyah*. He claimed attachment to Ismāʿīlī Shīʿism and this affiliation continued among his offspring who settled in Morocco (al-Maghrib). They established a city called **al-Mahdiyyah** in Tunisia between 297H to 299H so named after 'Ubaydallāh "al-Mahdi" (d. 322H) who had made his way to Morocco at the request of a Shīʿite leader called 'Alī bin Ḥawshab who had been fighting against the Sunni Muslim state of the Aghālibah for the previous 15-20 years.³⁹ They moved eastwards where they took over Egypt in 362H and then moved into Shām (Syria).

³⁹ There were Arabs, Banī Aghlab from the offspring of Banī Tamīm and they ruled al-Maghrib (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and western Libya) for over a hundred years between 184-296H. Their founder was Ibrāhīm bin al-Aghlab bin Sālim and he took power over Egypt during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd in 184H when the state of the Aghālibah became independent from the 'Abbāsīd state.

Their dynasty ended in 567H when their last ruler was killed by **Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-'Ayyūbī** (صلى الله عليه وسلم) - and the Shī'ites since that time have never ceased to grieve their loss of power and expulsion from Egypt. To this day they revile Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-'Ayūbī and show enmity towards him. When al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn (the Muslim Brotherhood) came to power in Egypt after the revolution in 2011, the Shī'ites of Egypt rejoiced and videos can be found of them reciting poetry addressing Ṣalāh al-Dīn with aspirations of reversing what he had done of humiliating them and kicking them out of Egypt. In 569H two years after their defeat, they plotted against Ṣalāh al-Dīn with the aid of the European Crusaders to have the sons of al-'Āḍid - their last ruler who was killed by Ṣalāh al-Dīn - return to power. Despite the aid they received from the European Crusaders in these plots, they were all apprehended and a large number of them were killed by Ṣalāh al-Dīn.⁴⁰

The historian Shihāb al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Ismā'īl Abū Shāmah al-Maqrīsī (d. 665H)⁴¹ gave an account of the Bāṭiniyyah 'Ubaydiyyah

⁴⁰ Refer to al-Maqrizī's work *al-Sulūk Li Ma'rifat Dawlat al-Mulūk* (1/53).

⁴¹ With the knowledge that the likes of Abū Shāmah praised the action of the mawlid, ascribing it to al-Muzaffar (d. 630H) of Irbil. When one reads their statements, they praised it on account of the charity, good deeds, and atmosphere of happiness that would be present. However, this does not make it lawful in the Sharī'ah. Further, it appears that some of those scholars during the 8th and 9th centuries who praised the mawlid ignored or failed to document that the Bāṭinī Ismā'īlīs were the true originators of the mawlid celebration. For this reason, those who promote the mawlid today are very careful in their choice of words when they say, "The first to celebrate the mawlid **in its current form** was al-Muzaffar of Irbil..." acknowledging, in a concealed, tactful way, that they do know who the actual originators of this bid'ah were. However, it is not in their interests to point this out. Further, the contradiction of these same scholars in that period who spoke of it as a good bid'ah show their inconsistency and contradiction when at the same time they refute other innovated actions of worship such as Ṣalāt al-Raghā'ib as is mentioned later, indicating that they have no consistent principle to

in Egypt in his work *al-Rawḍatayn Fī Akhbār al-Dawlatayn*.⁴² He mentions how the last ruler of the Bāṭiniyyah known as al-ʿĀḍid was killed and Egypt was freed from humiliation in the year 567H when Ṣalāh al-Dīn defeated and expelled the ʿUbaydiyyah. He proceeded to give a historical account of how the Bāṭiniyyah ʿUbaydiyyah came to power. He said, “The father of ʿUbayd was from the offspring of al-Qaddāh, the Magian (fire-worshipping) heretic and it is said that that ʿUbayd’s father was a Jew from the people of Salamyah in Shām and he was an iron-monger. The name of ʿUbayd was Saʿīd but when he entered al-Maghrib (Morocco) he took the name of ʿUbaydullāh and claimed he was an ʿAlawī Fāṭimī and then claimed a lineage that was not correct... then he took power (over the area) and called himself the Mahdī and he built the city of al-Mahdiyyah in Tunisia and it was ascribed to him. He was a vile heretic (zindīq khabīth) and enemy to Islām, openly proclaiming Shiʿism, using it as a cover and was eager to end the religion of Islām.”⁴³ He killed a large group of the jurists, ḥadīth

return back to in what determines something to be a good bidʿah or an evil bidʿah - it’s just a matter of opinion (raʾī).

⁴² Printed by Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, Lebanon, 1422H. Refer to 2/139 onwards on the section on the Bāṭiniyyah and their political state in Egypt.

⁴³ From their evils, in what is related from them, were claims of knowing the unseen, claiming prophethood and divinity, erecting tombs over the dead for their veneration and worship, ordering their subjects to prostrate to their rulers and ordering them to revile the Companions. They would hang the severed heads of donkeys on the doors and on other animals and then write the names of the Companions over them. They would also kill the scholars of the Sunnah. The ʿUbaydiyyah would exaggerate in their rulers such as their founder, ʿUbaydullāh al-Mahdī and even raised him to the level of a deity who knew the unseen or whose a sent messenger. They forced the people to follow the doctrines of the Rāfiḍah and sought to kill everyone who opposed that. They made it unlawful to give verdicts upon the madhhab of Imām Mālik (رحمته الله) and anyone who opposed this would be punished or killed. They would even parade the one they killed in the marketplaces and announce, “This is the recompense of the one who inclines to the madhhab of Mālik.” They would invalidate the Sunnah and institute bidʿah to replace it. One of their rulers, al-Ḥākim bi Amrillāh, claimed to be Allāh in 408H and was assassinated shortly thereafter in 411H. He also tried to abolish the zakāh in

scholars and the righteous people and his intent was to totally remove them from existence so that the world would remain like animals, enabling him to corrupt their beliefs and misguide them, **“But Allāh will perfect His light, even if the disbelievers detest it.”** (61:8). His offspring proceeded upon [the same course], making their affair open when the chance allowed them, otherwise they would conceal it. Their callers were dispatched to the various lands and would misguide whomever they were able to misguide of the servants. This tribulation remained with Islām from when their state was first erected until its very end and that was between Dhūl-Hijjah 299H to 567H. During the days [of their rule] the Rāfiḍah increased and took power. Taxes were imposed upon the people and then other [rulers] followed their example. They corrupted the beliefs of many factions who resided in the mountainous regions in Shām and likewise the Hashāshīn [Assassins, in Northern Iran], they were of the same type (as these ones). Their callers were able to influence these [mountainous] people in a way that they were not able with others because of their weak minds and their ignorance. The Europeans took over most of the lands of Shām and the peninsula until Allāh granted favour to the Muslims through the [emergence of the] house of al-Atābikī and presented the likes of Ṣalāh al-Dīn. So they returned the land [back to the Muslims] and ended this state’s domination of the servants. They were fourteen successive rulers. Three of them were in Africa, and they are the ones titled al-Mahīd, al-Qā’im and al-Manṣūr. Eleven of them were in Egypt and they are the ones titled, al-Mu’izz, al-‘Azīz, al-Ḥākīm, al-Zāhir, al-Mustanṣir, al-Musta’lā, al-‘Āmir, al-Ḥāfiẓ, al-Zāfir, al-Fā’iz and al-‘Āqid. They claim nobility yet their lineage traces back to a [fire-worshipping] Magian or a Jew, and this became well-known even

400H and tried to alter rulings pertaining to the Ḥajj and other symbols of Islām. The ‘Ubaydī rulers would also employ Jewish and Christian ministers - as they were allied with the Jews and Christians against the Muslims - and these ministers would oppress and harm the Sunnī Muslim subjects by working against their interests. These affairs and more are documented about them in the history books.

amongst the common-folk. As a result they began to say “Dawlah Fāṭimiyyah” (the Fāṭimid State) and “Dawlah ‘Alawiyyah” (the ‘Alawite State) whereas in reality it is a “Dawlah Yahūdiyyah” (Jewish State) or “Majūsiyyah, Bātiniyyah, Mulḥidah” (Heretical Magian, Bātīnī state). And they used to command the khaṭībs (sermon-givers) to announce this on the pulpits and would write it on the walls of mosques and other places. One of their servants, called Jawhar, who aided them in conquering the lands of Egypt and building the city of Cairo for al-Mu‘izz (one of their rulers), he wrote a long sermon within which he said, ‘O Allāh send ṣalāt upon your servant and friend, the fruit (thamrah) of Prophethood and the scion of the descendants of the guiding al-Mahdiyyah,⁴⁴ Abū Tamīm al-Imām al-Mu‘izz li Dīnillāh,⁴⁵ the Chief of the Believers, just as you have sent ṣalāt upon his pure forefathers and his chosen predecessors from the rightly-guided leaders.’ The cursed enemy of Allāh has lied, for there is no goodness in him and nor in all of his precedessors and nor in his remaining offspring. The pure descendants of Prophethood are innocent of them, may Allāh have mercy upon them and their likes from the first generation. Their lineage and their condition and what they were upon of deception and enmity to Islām has been explained by a group who preceded from the imāms and the scholars, and everyone was cautious of them and would not refer to them except as “Banī ‘Ubayd the (false) claimaints,” meaning they would claim a lineage which they did not possess.” End of quote from Abū Shāmah, the historian.

Ibn Kathīr writes in al-Bidāyah, “In Rabī‘ al-Ākhir of this year (402H) a tract was written in Baghdād comprising revilement and scorn upon the lineage of the rulers (the ‘Ubaydiyyah) and they are the kings of Egypt. They claim they are Fāṭimids but are not so. Their lineage

⁴⁴ A reference to their first state set up in Tunisia.

⁴⁵ This is the ‘Ubaydī ruler who entered and conquered Egypt in 362H.

returns to Dīsān bin Sa'īd al-Khurramī.⁴⁶ A group of scholars, judges, jurists, nobles, notables, ḥadīth scholars, administrators and righteous wrote in that regard. All of them testified that the one who appeared in Egypt and he is Maṣṣūr bin Nizār who took the title 'al-Ḥākīm [bi Amrillāh]'⁴⁷ may Allāh judge destruction, ruin, humiliation, vengeance and extermination upon him - is the son of Mu'idd the son of Ismā'īl the son of 'Abd al-Raḥmān the son of Sa'īd - may Allāh not make him happy. For when he (Sa'īd) came to the land of al-Maghrib, he took the name of 'Ubaydullāh and the title of al-Mahdī... This rejection against their falsehood was common and widespread in the land of the two Ḥarams and when they first appeared in al-Maghrib it was also well known and this prevented them from deceiving anyone with their lie or from anyone being led to believe them in what they claimed. This one who appeared in Egypt [al-Ḥākīm], he and his predecessors are

⁴⁶ The Khurramites were a group that emerged in the fifth century hijrah and they were remnants of the Mazdakians who had fled after Mazdak (d. 528CE) was killed and his rule brought to an end centuries earlier. They adopted Shī'ism and were a radical sect who led a revolt against the 'Abbāsids because they did not want an Islāmic state in Persia due to their desire to perpetuate their Zoroastrian religion and its political dominance in the past. Abū Muslim al-Khurasānī had earlier led revolutions against the Banī 'Umayyah and he was killed during the era of 'Abbāsids. It was claimed that Abū Muslim al-Khurasānī had the spirit of Allāh inside of him, having previously been within Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and 'Alī (عليه السلام). He was a Persian Zoroastrian nationalist. The name "Khurrāmiyyah" is said to be derived from the word "red" because these people would wear red gowns. The Khurramites led a sustained revolt against the 'Abbāsids, taking over the lands ruled by them, dividing them and sharing them upon a Communist, Socialist type ideology. Ibn al-Qayyim (رحمته الله) said, "The worst factions of the Magians who do not affirm a Creator, nor a resurrection, nor the ḥalāl and ḥarām are the **Khurramiyyah**, the followers of **Babek al-Khurramīy**. And upon their doctrine are factions of the **Qarāmiṭah**, **Ismā'īliyyah**, **Nuṣayriyyah** and **Drūziyyah** and all of the **'Ubaydiyyah** who call themselves 'Fātimiyyah.' They are the most disbelieving of disbelievers and do not attach to any religion amongst the religions nor any legislation amongst the legislations." *Ighāthat ul-Lahafān* (2/247).

⁴⁷ He claimed he was Allāh - may Allāh's curse and vengeance be upon him - in the year 408H and he was eventually killed three years later.

kuffār (disbelievers), sinners, debauchers, heretics, zindīqs, invalidators [of Islām], deniers of Islām and they [in reality] believe in the doctrine of the Dualists and the Magians. They invalidated the ḥudūd (prescribed punishments), made permissible sexual relations with those whom it was prohibited, made intoxicants lawful, shed blood, reviled the Prophets, cursed the Salaf and claimed lordship.”⁴⁸

Citing the remaining statements of the historians about them would be lengthy but we will summarize some of their evils:⁴⁹

Ibn Kathīr (d. 774H) explains that they acquired a lot of wealth whilst they ruled over al-Maghrib, Egypt, Shām, Yemen and other places and were the most tyrannical of rulers. So many evils appeared during their rule and the righteous, the scholars and worshippers diminished. As a result of their rule, the Christians, Drūze and Ḥashīshiyah multiplied in number and the European Crusaders took control over the entire coastal regions of Shām. They also killed hordes and nations of people about which only Allāh knows, they took the women and children of the Muslims captive in ways that cannot be defined and described and they also plundered the wealth of the Muslims in a like manner. **Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī** (d. 403H) described them as a people proclaiming Shi‘ism but concealing pure disbelief and he described ‘Ubdayllāh “al-Mahdī” as a vile Bāṭinī who desired to end the religion of Islām, to eliminate the scholars and jurists so that he can misguide the creation and that his offspring after him took the same course, that they made lawful intoxicants and shameless deeds and they spread Shi‘ism (Rafḍ). **Imām al-Ḍahabī** (d. 748H) said that al-Qā‘īm, the son of ‘Ubaydullāh was more evil than his father, a cursed zindīq (heretic) who openly reviled the Prophets and that the

⁴⁸ *Al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah* (Dār Ibn Kathīr, 13/9 onwards).

⁴⁹ Refer to the mulhaq (appendix) to *al-‘Awāsim min al-Qawāsim* of Ibn al-‘Arabī (Maktabah al-Sunnah, 1412H, p. 271 onwards) in the taḥqīq by Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb added by Maḥmūh Maḥdī al-Istānbūlī who cited from these authorities in unveiling the realities of the ‘Ubaydiyyah Bāṭiniyyah.

‘Ubaydiyyah were more harmful to Islām than the Tārtars. **Abū al-Ḥasan ‘Alī bin Muḥammad al-Qābisī al-Mālikī** (d. 403H) said that those killed by the ‘Ubaydiyyah from the scholars and worshippers in order to prevent from them invoking Allāh’s pleasure upon the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) were four-thousand who preferred death than to compromise. **Ibn Khallikān** (d. 681H) said that they claimed knowledge of the unseen affairs and that was well known about them. And **al-Qāḍī ‘Iyād** (d. 544H) said that Abū Muḥammad ‘Abdullāh Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī al-Kizānī (d. 386H) from the Mālikī scholars was asked about the person in Egypt who is forced to enter into the call of the ‘Ubaydiyyah, whether he is to respond or choose death. He said that he is to choose death and that no one is to be excused in this matter because the situation is one in which the Sharīah [of Islām] is being invalidated and abolished.

The mawlid celebration originates with the likes of these Bāṭiniyyah who were disbelievers, enemies of Allāh (عَدُوٌّ), enemies of Islām and enemies of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions (رضي الله عنهم).

The Egyptian historian Taqī al-Dīn al-Maqrīzī (d. 845H) mentions the various days of celebration taken by the Shi‘ites. They would celebrate the birthdays of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), ‘Alī (رضي الله عنه), al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, Fāṭimah and that of the current ruler. He said, “And the Faṭimid rulers (khulafā) used to have days of celebration and festive seasons throughout the year and they are: The season of the year’s peak, the season of the year’s beginning, the Day of ‘Āshūrā, the mawlid (birthday) of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), the birthday of ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه), the birthday of al-Ḥasan and the birthday of al-Ḥusayn (عليهما السلام), the birthday of Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’ (عليها السلام), the birthday of the current ruler, the night of the first of Rajab and its middle (the fifteenth), and the night of the first of Sha‘bān and its middle...”⁵⁰ This is also mentioned by another historian of Egypt

⁵⁰ In *al-Khiṭaṭ wal-Āthār* (Cairo, 1st edition, 1417H, 2/359)

known as Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-‘Abbās al-Qalqashandī (d. 821H) who lists all the gatherings and celebrations that would take place and amongst them is the sitting for the Prophet’s alleged birth date on 12th Rabī al-Awwal. He said, “The Third Sitting: His (the ruler’s) Sitting During the Prophet’s Birthday (صلى الله عليه وسلم) on the 12th of the month of Rabī al-Awwal... And likewise was their affair regarding the birthday of ‘Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (may Allāh ennoble his face) specifically, in the times known to them during the year.”⁵¹

It is the opinion of some that the first of those to innovate this practice from the ‘Ubaydiyyah was Mu‘izz al-Dīn in the year 362H when he entered Egypt.⁵² He is the founder of al-Azhar university which was so named after the title of Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’, which he masculinized to al-Azhar. He was a vile, cursed Bāṭinī Ismā‘īlī Shī‘ite and these celebrations were a means to entice people away from the legislated actions of the Sharī‘ah and towards innovations leading to a superficial attachment to Islām which eventually revolved around veneration of graves and saints as a means of easy salvation.

In their book *al-Mu‘izz Li Dīnillāh*, authors Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, former governor of the University of Asyūṭ (Egypt) and Ṭāhā Aḥmad Sharaf write under the chapter heading, “Gatherings and Celebrations,” the following: “The Fāṭimids operated on the basis of gaining respect from their subjects and adopted this political method in the land of Morocco. Their successors in Egypt exaggerated in establishing celebratory gatherings whose organization they had an aptitude for. They would establish events, especially in the various regions of Cairo. Al-Mu‘izz and whoever came after him from the succeeding rulers would celebrate through the Friday prayer from

⁵¹ in his work *Subḥ al-A’shā* (3/502-503)

⁵² The Egyptian Christian Copts used to celebrate the birthday of ‘Īsā (عليه السلام) in the fourth month of their calendar and these Ismā‘īlī Shī‘ites likely imitated them by setting up birthday celebrations for the Ahl al-Bayt as a display of their apparent love for Ahl al-Bayt.

what we have seen and the two 'Īd prayers and in saying farewell to the military dispatchments. Just as they also used to celebrate the day of 'Āshūrā' and the birthdays of some of their [alleged] leaders such as 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, Fāṭimah al-Zahrā', the daughter of the Messenger and the wife of 'Alī, and the birthday of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. Just as they also used to celebrate other days which distinguished them from the Sunnīs such as 'Īd al-Ghadīr, the birthday of their current ruler and they would also have other celebrations besides these. For example, the 1st of Rajab, the 15th of Rajab, the 1st of Sha'bān, the 15th of Sha'bān and the 1st of Ramaḍān. They would also participate with other inhabitants in their celebrations such as the Conquest of the Gulf, and 'Īd al-Nayrūz (Persian New Year). They would also participate with the [Christian] Copts in celebrating the Epiphany festival and the Maundy Thursday festival and others. We observe a number of things from all of these festivals, from them: That al-Mu'izz Li Dīnillāh was the first who brought all these celebrations to Egypt and he worked to spread them by throwing exquisite banquets to celebrate them. He used to lay out carpets of food in the palace of the khilāfah and also in the mosques. His successors followed the same way after him... The Fāṭimids used to take these celebrations as a means of drawing the citizens towards them and this is why al-Mu'izz would participate with the [Christian] Copts in celebrating the Epiphany festival, Maundy Thursday, Christmas and others... Added to that, al-Mu'izz also used to celebrate the new hijri year, the mawlid of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), the nights of the 1st and 15th of Rajab and the nights of 1st and 15th of Sha'bān and the 1st of Ramaḍān so that the souls of the Sunnīs would not be stirred and he would try to bridge the gap between the foundations of the Sunnīs and the doctrines of the Shi'ites. In a like manner, al-Mu'izz Li Dīnillāh used to employ these exaggerated celebrations for what he had set out to do of spreading the foundational elements of the Ismā'īlī (Shi'ite) way and its doctrines. Hence, he used to celebrate the day of 'Āshūrā' in order to revive the mention of al-Ḥusayn (عليه السلام) and also the birthday of the present ruler. In this way al-Mu'izz took these celebrations as a means

to draw people to himself and to spread the *Ismā'īlī* doctrine.”⁵³ End quote. It should be clarified that the exact date as to when the 'Ubaydiyyah initiated these festivals is unknown and their rule in Egypt lasted just over 2 centuries from 362H to 567H. When al-Maqrīzī mentioned these celebrations in *al-Khiṭaṭ*, he stated, “A mention of the days which the Fatimid rulers used to take as days of celebration and seasons in which the subjects were given increase and showered with favours.”⁵⁴ Thus the exact date of the invention of the Mawlid celebration is not known.

From those who affirm these historical facts about the origin of the mawlid celebration are the former muftī of Egypt, Shaykh Muḥammad bin Bakhīṭ al-Muṭṭī (d. 1354H)⁵⁵ and Shaykh 'Alī Maḥfūz (d. 1361H)⁵⁶ who was another major scholar from al-Azhar in Egypt.

⁵³ *Al-Mu'izz Li Dīn Allāh Imām al-Shī'ah al-Ismā'īliyyah* (Maktabah al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1367H), pp. 284-287.

⁵⁴ In *al-Khiṭaṭ wal-Āthār* (Cairo, 1st edition, 1417H, 2/347)

⁵⁵ In his book *Aḥsan al-Kalām Fīmā Yata'allaq bil-Sunnah wal-Bid'ah min al-Aḥkām* (1329H, Jamāliyyah, Egypt) Shaykh al-Muṭṭī writes, “And from that which has been invented (newly-introduced) and about which questions have increased are the birthdays (mawālid). So we say: The first to introduce them in Cairo, were the Fāṭimid rulers, and the first of them was al-Mu'izz Li Dinillah, he advanced from al-Maghrib (Morocco) to Egypt in Shawwāl of 361H, and reached the port of Alexandria in Sha'bān of 362H. He entered Cairo with seven [days] remaining of the month of Ramaḍān in that year. They then innovated six birthday (celebrations): The Prophet's birthday, the birthday of the chief of the believers, 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, the birthday of Sayyidah Fāṭimah al-Zahrā', the birthday of al-Ḥasan and the birthday of al-Ḥusayn and the birthday of the presently serving ruler. These birthday (celebrations) remained as customs until they were invalidated by al-Afḍal, son of the chief of armies whose father was the chief of armies and had come from Shām to Egypt during the rulership of al-Mustanṣir Billāh upon his invitation to him.” (pp. 59-60).

⁵⁶ In his book *al-Ibdā' Fi Maḍārr al-Ibtidā'* (Maktabah al-Rushd, 1421H) Shaykh 'Alī Maḥfūz writes, “The Fourth Chapter. Regarding the Birthday Celebrations and the First to Introduce Them. It is said that the first to introduce them in Cairo where the Fāṭimid rulers in the fourth century and

These celebrations were later taken up by Sunnī rulers who had been affected by Ṣūfism⁵⁷ in the 7th century hijrah some of whom would spend lavishly on such celebrations. It is reported that in the year 625H, the ruler of Irbil, al-Muzaffar Abū Sa'īd al-Kawkabūrī al-Turkmānī, celebrated the mawlid and it is mistakingly believed that he was the first to initiate this practice. These celebrations - aside from being wicked innovations from the enemies of Islām - comprised a lot of oppositions to the Sharīah such that even those who considered it a good practice⁵⁸ declared it unlawful in the presence of these oppositions.

6th Point of Agreement: The first to innovate and practice birthday celebrations of the Ahl al-Bayt inclusive of the Prophet (ﷺ) were the descendants of the fire-worshipping Magians or Jews who were enemies to Islām, enemies to the Prophet (ﷺ) and enemies of

they innovated six birthday celebrations: The Prophet's birthday, the birthday of Imām 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib (رضي الله عنه), the birthday of Sayyidah Fāṭimah al-Zahrā (رضي الله عنها), the birthday of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn (رضي الله عنهما) and the birthday of the presently serving ruler. These birthday (celebrations) remained as customs until they were invalidated by al-Afdal, son of the chief of armies. Then they were brought back in the rulership of al-'Āmir bi Aḥkāmillāh in 524H after the people had forgotten them. The first to introduce the Prophetic Mawlid in the city of Irbil was the king, Muzaffar Abu Sa'īd in the seventh century and the practice of the mawlid has continued to this day of ours. The people have taken liberties regarding it and have innovated everything their souls have desired and with which the devils from men and jinn have inspired to them." (p.231).

⁵⁷ There is a strong connection between Shi'ism and Ṣūfism and many of the doctrines and practices found with the Ṣūfis have their origins with the Shi'ites.

⁵⁸ This is an erroneous view since the birthday celebration in its foundation is an evil innovation in Islām and on that count alone it is unlawful - and as for the evils that are found in these celebrations such as free-mixing between men and women, wastage of wealth, exaggeration in the status of the Prophet (ﷺ) and statements of shirk where divine qualities are given to the Prophet - then all of that is a burden of sin on top of the burden of sin for the original innovation behind all of this evil.

the Companions and to the people of the Sunnah. They were hypocrites, disbelievers who desired to undermine and destroy Islām. They killed the Sunnī jurists, ḥadīth scholars and righteous and forcefully imposed their Shīism and their innovations on to the masses. They would celebrate the festivals of the Persians and Christians. They adopted the veil of Shīism and to please the Sunnī masses they added the celebration of the Prophet's mawlid in addition to celebrating the birthdays of Ahl al-Bayt. They used this as a means of drawing people to them and to their Ismā'īlī Shīite doctrines.

7. All Disputes Must Be Referred Back to Allāh and His Messenger

This is a Sharī'ah principle, that all disputes between the Muslims must be referred back to Allāh and His Messenger and not the saying of anyone else. This is part and parcel of love for Allāh and His Messenger and is a proof that a person's love is genuine. Allāh said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَازَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا ﴿٥٩﴾

O you who believe! Obey Allāh and obey the Messenger, and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allāh and His Messenger, if you believe in Allāh and in the Last Day. That is better and more suitable for final determination. (4:59)

And Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) also said:

وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَحُكِّمُوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ

And in anything over which you disagree - its ruling is [to be referred] to Allāh. (42:10).

And Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) also said:

فَلَا وَرَبِّكَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ حَتَّى يُحَكِّمُوكَ فِي مَا شَجَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ حَرَجًا مِّمَّا قَضَيْتَ وَيُسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٠﴾

But no, by your Lord, they will not have true faith until they make you, [O Muḥammad], judge concerning that over which they dispute among themselves and then find within themselves no discomfort from what you have

judged and submit in [full, willing] submission. (4:65).

Thus, when a matter is differed over - such as our issue of celebrating the mawlid - then it is not permissible to refer this matter to other than Allāh (His Book) and His Messenger (his Sunnah). Only the saying of Allāh and His Messenger is evidence (dalīl) and likewise the consensus (ijmā') of the Companions. Thus, either a person brings a verse from the Qur'an, a ḥadīth from the Prophet (ﷺ) or the consensus of the Companions or he has no proof with him at all.

Whilst the opposer may agree with this point verbally, when it comes down to argument, it will become clear that the one who tries to justify celebration of the mawlid violates this principle, and will rely upon the statements of the later scholars, seven hundred years after the Prophet (ﷺ). And this demonstrates how weak and unstable the situation is for them. Because if they had brought statements from Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, al-Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad from only a century or two after the Prophet (ﷺ) one could say they have done well - and even then, the saying of these four Imāms is not an independent proof in the religion. But when you are seven hundred years out, it proves that desires are being followed in reality.

7th Point of Agreement: It is obligatory to refer all disputes back to Allāh and His Messenger (ﷺ). Whoever rejects this Sharīah principle has opposed and belied the Qur'ān. It is a condition of faith and from the way of the Believers to refer judgement in disputes to Allāh (His Book) and His Messenger (his Sunnah) and to humbly accept the judgement of Allāh and His Messenger when they have determined a matter.

Seven Points of Agreement

We have now established seven points which no Muslim is allowed to contest and which everyone must agree to at least verbally before any further discussion about the alleged proof for the mawlid celebration is entered into:

1. Loving the Prophet (ﷺ) only has one way and that is to follow his Sunnah, obey his command and avoid his prohibition.
2. The Companions, Successor, the Four Imāms and the Righteous Salaf did not know or practice the Mawlid celebration and nor did any revealed text bring their attention to the obligation or commendation of celebrating the Mawlid.
3. The religion is complete and perfect and no belief, statement or action which brings a person closer to Paradise was neglected by the Prophet (ﷺ) or omitted from the Sharī'ah of Islām.
4. The Prophet (ﷺ) warned against every religious innovation through which nearness to Allāh is sought which he did not command, neither in a general sense nor a specific sense. The Companions, Tābi'īn and Salaf amplified this warning and rejected novelties in worship.
5. The Prophet (ﷺ) passed on to His Lord on **12th Rabī' al-Awwal** in the eleventh year of hijrah as a firmly established historical fact. As for his birth date it is inconclusive and not agreed upon.
6. The descendants of the Persian Magians and Jews, the disbelieving Bāṭinī Ismā'īlī Shī'ite hypocrites were the inventors of birthday celebrations in Islām from which is the celebration of the Mawlid. They performed this to deceive the Sunnī Muslims and draw them

into Shī'ism. A couple of centuries later, this practice was encouraged and promoted from within Ṣūfī circles.

7. Dispute about this issue must be referred back to the Book of Allāh and the Sunnah of His Messenger and the consensus of the Companions for judgement and anyone who tries to argue through other than this route is misguided, intending to misguide others. In fact, such a person is threatened in the statement of Allāh (ﷻ):

وَمَنْ يُشَاقِقِ الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُ الْهُدَىٰ وَيَتَّبِعْ غَيْرَ سَبِيلِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ نُوَلِّهِ مَا تَوَلَّىٰ
وَنُصَلِّهِ أَجْهَنًا وَسَاءَ مَا مَصِيرًا ﴿١١٥﴾

And whoever contradicts and opposes the Messenger after guidance has become clear to him and follows other than the way of the believers, We will leave him in the path he has taken and burn him in Hell, what an evil destination. (4:115)

It is important to keep these points of agreement in mind because through them - as we see the argument develop - we will see the reality of those people who claim to love Allāh (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) whilst they are in reality disputants to Allāh and His Messenger. This is because what they say or practice necessitates revilement upon Allāh, His religion, His Messenger, the Companions and the Righteous Salaf as a whole. They claim to believe Islām is complete and perfect and that the Messenger fulfilled his trust, yet contradict this belief in their statements and actions. They claim to love the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) but seek to find every way or argument to justify opposing his command. It will be observed that despite coming to a verbal agreement on all these points at **the start** of the discussion, as we systematically work through their doubts, we will see them blatantly contradicting these points both during and at the end of the discussion.

Thus, any argument with any person who claims the mawlid celebration is from Islām must not commence until this person has been forced to admit and agree to these seven points. Their doubts and arguments must not be listened to nor entertained until and unless they agree to each of these points. This puts them in an extremely awkward and difficult position from the very beginning, forcing them to perceive the weakness of their stance.

Doubts Used to Justify the Mawlid Celebration

Since history cannot be distorted or falsified very easily and there is zero evidence or documentation of the practice of the *mawlid* in the era of the best of generations, the Innovators from the Šūfīs who took this practice from the Shī'ites invented sophistries and distorted some of the texts of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah in their attempts to legitimize this practice brought into Islām by the Bātinī Ismā'īlī Shī'ite disbelievers. Just as they also rely upon the statements of some of the later Scholars, after the 7th century hijrah, who mentioned the mawlid in a praiseworthy light.

In the way that they argue for this practice, a blatant contradiction emerges. First, they are forced to acknowledge it is a bid'ah in the religion. Second, to get around this, they claim it is a **bid'ah ḥasanah** (good innovation). But then, thirdly, they try to use certain ḥadīths as proof for the mawlid. This contradicts their first argument that it is a bid'ah ḥasanah. If there are genuine proofs for the mawlid then it would not be a bid'ah ḥasanah, but a legitimate Sunnah practice and it would fall into the ruling of mustahabb or wājib through textual evidence. Hence, the contradiction is apparent.

Thus only one method can be used to argue, not both at the same time. It either has specific evidence in the revealed texts in which case it is a legislated action, obligatory or commended. Or it is a bid'ah ḥasanah. We will take this issue up in the next section.

The Two Contradictory Paths

As has preceded, those who argue in favour of the celebration of the *mawlid* have two contradictory methods of arguing for it.

The first path is taken by those who are honest enough to admit that celebrating the *mawlid* is indeed an innovation (*bid'ah*) not known by the Righteous Salaf of the first three centuries of Islām. Upon this, they can only argue for it through the route of claiming that there is *bid'ah ḥasanah* (good innovation) in the religion. Hence, they bring arguments to justify this concept. Thereafter, they are able to argue indirectly for the *mawlid*. This is an indirect argument not a specific, direct argument.

The second path is taken by those who claim there is evidence for celebrating the *mawlid* in the Sunnah, whether in a general or specific sense. Those who argue using this method are the dishonest ones. This approach is also contradictory and incompatible with the first approach. It is used by those who distort the texts in horrendous ways with far-fetched attempts at claiming that a particular text is specific proof for celebrating the Prophet's birthday. When one looks at these texts, upon the simplest of reflections one can see that that they have no connection whatsoever to the issue of celebrating the *mawlid* and are just attempts at deceiving the ignorant due to bankruptcy in actual evidence.

Most often you will find people using both approaches. When one fails they will try the other, indicating their contradiction and bankruptcy in evidence. If it is claimed that there is evidence for it in the Sunnah, then it cannot be a *bid'ah ḥasanah*, since whatever has proof from the Sunnah is either recommended (*mustahabb*) or obligatory (*wājib*) and does not enter into the realm of *bid'ah*.

Illustration of Contradiction and Confusion

Muḥammad ‘Alawī al-Mālikī, a well known Sūfī who called to invoking and seeking help and deliverance from dead saints. He wrote, “Celebrating the mawlid, even though it was not present in the era of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) - and thus it is an innovation - but it is a good [innovation] because it comes under sharī‘ah evidences and comprehensive principles.”⁵⁹

First, we have an acknowledgement that it is indeed a bid‘ah and unknown to the Prophet and his Companions and the Salaf. But then he declares it a good innovation. Here, it has to be established that the concept of good bid‘ah as it relates to matters of worship and getting closer to Allāh through innovated matters of worship is legitimate. This is discussed further below and it has already been agreed upon that this is futile and is a revilement upon the religion, there is no such concept in Islām. It was not taught by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) or known to the Companions that something was left which the Muslims needed to become closer to Allāh, rather this clashes with the texts.

Next, al-Mālikī says, justifying why it is good, “because it comes under *sharī‘ah evidences* and comprehensive principles.” And here is the contradiction. If it comes under Sharī‘ah evidences then it will have the ruling of either recommended (mustaḥabb) or obligatory (wājib) in the Sharī‘ah and it would not be spoken of as **an innovation**. Imām al-Shāṭibī (d. 790H) spoke of this contradiction and the relevant quote from him will appear shortly. What al-Mālikī and those like him have fallen into is to confuse between: a) the wasā’il (ways and means) that help fulfil clearly defined objectives (maqāṣid) whose rulings in the Sharī‘ah are recommended or obligatory and b) innovations in matters of devotion and worship.

⁵⁹ Ḥawl al-Iḥtifāl bil-Mawlid (p. 19).

To illustrate, building schools or hospitals for education and public health, both of which are recommended and compiling the Qur'ān into a single book for preserving Islām which is obligatory are from the first type, they are not sought in and of themselves but are **ways and means** by which something already known to be recommended or obligatory in the religion is fulfilled. As for gaining nearness to Allāh by celebrating the mawlid, this is sought as an act of worship in and of itself and it has no basis in any text, neither in a general sense and nor a specific sense. Building schools and hospitals come under the general Sharī'ah principles of the necessity of education and preserving life. Compiling the Qur'ān comes under the obligation of preserving the religion itself. Education, preserving life and preserving the religion are clearly defined objectives in the Sharī'ah. Schools and hospitals are simply the ways and means to achieve these objectives and take the same rulings. Loving and respecting the Messenger (ﷺ) is also a Sharī'ah objective. However, the Sharī'ah has provided all the ways and means (wasā'il) to fulfil it, because this affair and others like it are not subject to human intellect or desire.

The point here is that either you have to prove that the concept of bid'ah ḥasanah in novel forms of worship and getting closer to Allāh is valid and true and proven by the texts after which you can indirectly prove the mawlid celebration to be legitimate as a means, so this is one approach. Or you have to argue that celebrating the mawlid is recommended or obligatory by virtue of evidences in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. In this case, the label of bid'ah would not even come into it. However, you cannot combine both approaches.

The explanation of this is elaborated upon in more detail in the sections to follow on bid'ah ḥasanah and the erroneous and self-defeating approach of dividing bid'ah (innovation) into the five rulings of *ḥarām* (unlawful), *makrūh* (disliked), *mubāḥ* (permitted), *mustahabb* (recommended) and *wājib* (obligatory).

The Quick, Definitive, Decisive, General Answer

The quickest and easiest refutation of all the doubts simultaneously is simply to say that if the Qur'ānic verse or Prophetic ḥadīth or general Sharī'ah principle which they claim is a proof for establishing the mawlid is in fact so and is as they claim it is, then Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī and the rest of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) would have preceded them in it as they read these revealed texts, memorised them, understood them and knew every ruling they contained before anyone else. And no one is more eager for goodness than them and more loving of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) than them and more understanding of the speech of Allāh and His Messenger than them.

Therefore, this practice of celebrating the mawlid, along with its alleged evidences would have been conveyed to us just like every other act of worship has been conveyed to us and it would have found its way in the speech, writings and works of the scholars of fiqh, tafsīr and ḥadīth in the second and third centuries hijrah. Just like we see that the two 'Īd celebrations and all the rulings pertaining to them have been transmitted and are found in the books of fiqh, ḥadīth, tafsīr and sīrah and in the speech and writings of the scholars of jurisprudence from the Salaf. Since that is completely non-existent for the mawlid and does not show up in the historical record except at the hands of the Bāṭinī Ismā'īlī Shī'ite disbelievers and descendants of the Magians and Jews during or after 4th century hijrah in Egypt, **it is known by necessity that these texts from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah are being distorted and misinterpreted.**

Hence, it is only one of two affairs: The first, that the Companions, Successors, the Four Imāms and the Salaf neglected a right (ḥaqq) of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and did not become wise to it through the texts in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah which they were aware of. Or the second, that there is nothing in these texts at all which indicates the permissibility of this practice but these texts are simply being

distorted and twisted for the sole objective of justifying something unknown to the Companions, the Successors, the Four Imāms and the Righteous Salaf as a whole.

It is known that it cannot be the first of the two situations and the Innovators will be forced to concede this as they cannot come out openly and revile the Companions in such a way. Thus it is established that every evidence used by the innovators is futile by their own admission. That's the quick and general answer, the undeniable historical facts invalidate the attempted distortion of the texts and it is not necessary to start wrangling about any specific alleged evidence.

Once this is clear, it will then be known by necessity that every single text they bring will involve either a distortion or misinterpretation, or the text will be weak or fabricated. And if they do not bring a text, they will then argue by way of the opinions and statements of the later scholars from the 7th century onwards, and this will falsify their claim of adhering to the Companions and following the understanding of the Righteous Salaf.

Answers to Doubts

As for the doubts, they are very many and at the head of them is a) the claim of their being bid'ah ḥasanah in the religion and connected to this is b) the division of bid'ah into mubāh, mustaḥabb, wājib, makrūḥ and ḥarām. These are indirect methods of justifying the celebration of the mawlid and not specific, definitive arguments for it. These two methods are relied upon because there are no specific evidences for celebrating the mawlid and the other specific, individual arguments used by them are weak, far-fetched and amount to distortion of texts. The intelligent ones amongst them know this. So we will look at these two doubts first in some detail before looking at the specific individual arguments they employ using weak narrations, misinterpretations of texts and appeals to authority and status of the later scholars who erred in this matter.

The Claim of Bid'ah Ḥasanah

This is a broad tactical way used to justify innovations in general and comprises the claim that there is *bid'ah ḥasanah* (good innovation) in the religion. If this can be established, then it can be argued that there is no harm in celebrating the mawlid because it is a praiseworthy bid'ah not a blameworthy one.

Who is More Truthful?

First, this clashes with the point that was agreed earlier. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, “By Him in whose hand is my soul. I have not left anything which brings you closer to Paradise and distances you from the Hellfire except that I have commanded you with it and I have not left anything which brings you closer the Hellfire and distances you from Paradise except that I have prohibited you from it.”⁶⁰ So either Muḥammad ibn ‘Abdullāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم), the final Messenger, sent with the final, complete, perfect religion and Sharīah is speaking the truth or the one who tries to justify the celebration of the mawlid as a means of nearness to Allāh is speaking the truth. Both cannot be speaking the truth at the same time. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, “I have not left anything which brings you closer to Paradise and distances you from the Hellfire except that I have commanded you with it.” The answer is left for the reader.

All Means All

Second, this clashes with the explicit statement of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), “Every innovation is misguidance.” The Messenger described every newly invented matter which has no basis in the religion as evil (sharr) and misguidance (ḍalālah). There occurs in the ḥadīth of Jābir, “The worst of affairs and the newly-invented matters” and in the ḥadīth of al-‘Irbād, “Beware of the newly-invented affairs for every newly-invented matter is an innnovation.” And in the ḥadīth of Ibn Mas‘ūd, “Every

⁶⁰ Reported by al-Ṭabarānī, al-Bayḥaqī and Ibn Abī Shaybah and refer to *al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (no. 1803).

innovation is misguidance.” How can anyone intelligent say that from evil (sharr) and misguidance (ḍalālah) is that which is good (ḥasan) and praiseworthy (maḥmūd)? No intelligent person says this. Further, this is a generalization (that every innovation is misguidance) and unless there is an exception from the speech of the Prophet himself, it is to be left upon its generalization. So where is the exception or the qualification in the speech of the Prophet himself? There is none. ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said, “Every innovation is misguidance, even if the people consider it to be something good.”⁶¹

Third, if it is argued that the word “all” (*kull*) in Arabic is not always absolute and that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) could not have intended every innovation because that would mean ‘Umar’s re-enactment of the Tarāwīh prayer and ‘Uthmān’s compilation of the Qur’ān were reprehensible innovations for which they would be condemned. The answer to this feeble doubt is that is based upon not distinguishing between the **linguistic (lughawiyy)** meaning of the word bid‘ah and the **legislative (shar‘iyy)** meaning and not verifying which of the two the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) intended when he used this word.

Legislative and Linguistic Meanings

So the taḥqīq (verification) in this matter is that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) only ever intended the legislative meaning and not the linguistic meaning when he used the word bid‘ah. As for the linguistic meaning which is, “*a newly-invented thing that has no prior example*” this is general for all things, whether religious or otherwise, whether praiseworthy or blameworthy, since the key underlying concept is *that which has no prior example*. But the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) never intended the word bid‘ah with this purely linguistic meaning, rather he only ever intended it with its special legislative meaning. The proof for this is in the ḥadīth of ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) which defines and explains

⁶¹ Reported by al-Lālikā’ī (no. 126) al-Bayhaqī in *al-Madkhal ilā al-Sunan* (p. 191) and others.

the usage of the word bid'ah, "Whoever introduced into this affair of ours that which is not from it will have it rejected." There are three characteristics of bid'ah in this ḥadīth which explain the reality of the bid'ah intended by the Prophet (ﷺ) in all the rest of his statements:

1. The first is to introduce (*man aḥdatha*) "whoever introduced": This is (*iḥdāth*), introducing, inserting. If we stop here, this remains general and at this point, these words could refer to all innovations, whether religious or worldly, praiseworthy or blameworthy. So to avoid ambiguity the Prophet (ﷺ) clarified further and restricted it only to religious matters in the next few words.
2. The second characteristic is to ascribe it to the religion (*fī amrinā hādihā*) "into this affair of ours": This means ascribing it to the religion (*iḍāfah*). This has now been made specific to the religion and refers to those matters which are ascribed to the Sharī'ah. This excludes all matters of sin and disobedience since no one ascribes these affairs to the Sharī'ah. Just as it excludes all innovations in worldly matters of agriculture, industry, technology and the likes. But some new affairs might have a basis in the Sharī'ah such as building schools or road regulations and so on. To exclude these affairs from being condemned, the Prophet (ﷺ) clarified the issue further in his words that follow next, in the third condition.
3. The third is that which does not have any evidence (*mā laysa minhu*) "that which is not from it": Lacking a Sharī'ah evidence (*adm al-dalīl al-shar'īyy*) in either a) a general sense or b) a specific sense. This means that the bid'ah does not have any general or specific evidence from the Sharī'ah.

As an illustration of evidence in the general sense, the compilation of the Qur'ān into a single book (*muṣhaf*) comes under a non-specific general proof which is *preservation of the religion*. Preservation of the

religion is obligatory (wājib) and this cannot be done except by preservation of the integrity of the Qur'ān. Putting it into a single book is from the ways and means through which this is achieved and the wasā'il (ways and means) take the same rulings as the maqāsid (objectives). So this is excluded from the bid'ah intended by the Messenger because it has a basis in a general evidence.⁶² As for evidence in a specific sense, it is the action of 'Umar in re-enacting the Tarāwīḥ prayer. This has a *specific proof* in the Sunnah, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) performed it for three nights in Ramaḍān but left it out of fear that it might become obligatory and cause hardship to his ummah because revelation was still being sent down. In these two cases, these actions are only bid'ah in the linguistic meaning of the word. No one prior to 'Uthmān put the Qur'ān into a single book. And no one prior to 'Umar brought the people together behind a single imām for the Tarāwīḥ prayer in Ramaḍān after it had been abandoned. *Linguistically*, we can see these actions were innovations but *legislatively*, they are not innovations and not blameworthy. This is because they have a *general proof* in the case of the compilation of the Qur'ān or a *specific proof* in the case of tarāwīḥ in congregation.

⁶² There is no general evidence for birthday celebrations in any sharī'ah revealed by Allāh (ﷻ). If someone was to claim that loving and respecting the Prophet has a general evidence and from the ways and means is to celebrate his birthday, this is rejected because the ways and means of loving and respecting the Prophet have been qualified and explained in detail and were not neglected because this, in and of itself, comprises worship of Allāh because it is taken as a means of nearness to Allāh. But as for putting the Qur'ān into a single book, this is not worship in and of itself but simply one of the wasā'il to achieve a desired Sharī'ah objective. Thus, it was not desired in and of itself, as an act of worship, but was a means to facilitate an obligatory goal. As for birthday celebrations, they are taken, in and of themselves, as nearness and worship and are sought out in the same way that all other legitimate acts of worship are sought out until the impression is given that this action itself is legislated and is wājib or mustaḥabb.

So this completes the definition of bid'ah in the Sharī'ah and it becomes clear that birthday celebrations do not have any general or specific evidence from the Sharī'ah and thus come under the legislative definition of bid'ah, all of which is condemned. It is also on the basis of this ḥadīth of 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها) from where the standard definition of bid'ah has been taken and explained by Imām al-Shātibī (d. 790H). He said, “[The word] innovation (bid'ah) then is an expression of a path taken in religion which is invented and resembles the Sharī'ah and by whose practice exaggeration in worshipping Allāh, the Exalted, is intended.”⁶³ With this definition, worldly innovations such as manufacturing cars, airplanes, washing machines and what is similar are excluded because no one takes them as a path in the religion through which nearness is sought to Allāh.

However many of the later scholars took the mention of the word *bid'ah* in the Sunnah upon its linguistic meaning and thought that unless it is restricted and qualified it would mean that inventions in worldly affairs would be condemned and likewise some of the actions of the rightly-guided Caliphs⁶⁴ would be considered blameworthy innovations. Upon this erroneous notion, they mixed between the linguistic and legislative meaning and then began to classify bid'ah into the well known five categories of rulings to separate them out. This will be looked at in more detail in the next section.

However, at this point, it is clear that the word “all” (*kull*) in the ḥadīths is absolute and unrestricted because the word bid'ah is used only in its legislative sense as made clear by other statements of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and as clearly understood by the Companions

⁶³ *Al-I'tisām* (taḥqīq, M. Salmān, Maktabah al-Tawḥīd, 1/43).

⁶⁴ Such as re-enacting the Tarawīḥ prayer, or the compilation of the Qur'ān or the addition of the first azān for Jumu'ah. These actions actually do have a general or specific basis in the Shari'ah and cannot be considered innovations and thus do not come under the ḥadīth of 'Ā'ishah (رضي الله عنها).

and Successors. Hence, there is no room for this argument. To support this explanation, here are statements of some of the Scholars:

Statements of the Scholars in this Regard

Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī (d. 852) said, “As for innovations (bida‘), it is the plural of innovation (bid‘ah) and it is everything which does not have any prior example. Linguistically, [the word] encompasses what is both praiseworthy and blameworthy. In the usage of the people of the legislation it is specifically for what is blameworthy and if it is used in connection to what is praiseworthy, then it is upon its linguistic meaning.”⁶⁵ Ibn Kathīr (d: 774H) said, “And bidah is of two types. Sometimes it can be a legislative innovation (bid‘ah shar‘iyyah), such as his saying, ‘Every newly-invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance’ and sometimes it can be a linguistic innovation (bid‘ah lughawiyyah), such as the saying of Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb, (رضي الله عنه) about his bringing them together for the tarāwīḥ prayer and their continuance upon that, ‘What an excellent innovation this is’.”⁶⁶ ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Mubārakfūrī says, “For his saying (صلى الله عليه وسلم), ‘Every innovation is misguidance’ is from the concise, profound words (jawāmi‘ al-kalim), nothing exits from them and it is a mighty foundation from the foundations of the religion. As for what occurs in the speech of some of the Salaf of considering some of the innovations to be good, then that is in relation to linguistic (usage of) bid‘ah, not the Sharī‘ah (usage). From (the examples) of that is the saying of ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) regarding the Tarāwīḥ (prayer), ‘What an excellent innovation’.”⁶⁷

Enacting a Good Sunnah

As for the ḥadīth reported by Muslim, “Whoever sets a good precedent (sunnah ḥasanah) in Islām will have the reward for it and the reward of those

⁶⁵ *Fath al-Bārī* (Maktabah Salafiyyah print, 13/278).

⁶⁶ *Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān al-Azīm* (Dar Tayyibah, 1422H, 1/398).

⁶⁷ *Tuhfat al-Aḥwazi bi Sharḥ al-Tirmidhī* (7/366).

who acted upon it without any reduction in their reward,” then when one refers to the full incident, it was said in the context of a delegation of poor people who came and the Prophet (ﷺ) advised the Companions to give charity. A man rushed home and came back with a bag of charity and then his example was followed by others.⁶⁸ The “enactment” here is with respect to an affair that is already legislated, in this case, giving charity, and the man from the Anṣār did something no one else preceded him in. He went home and brought a bag full of money to give in charity. So there is no proof in this ḥadīth for the concept of bid’ah ḥasanah. The meaning of this ḥadīth is

⁶⁸ Here is the full text of the ḥadīth: Al-Mundhir bin Jarīr reported on the authority of his father: “While we were in the company of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) in the early hours of the morning, some people came there (who) were barefooted, naked, wearing striped woollen clothes, or cloaks, with their swords hung (around their necks). Most of them, in fact, all of them, belonged to the tribe of Mudar. The colour of the face of the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) underwent a change when he saw them in poverty. He then entered (his house) and came out and commanded Bilāl (to pronounce adhān). He pronounced adhān and iqāmah, and he (the Prophet) observed prayer (along with his Companions) and then addressed (them reciting verses of the Qur’ān): ‘O mankind, fear your Lord, Who created you from a single being’ to the end of the verse, ‘Allāh is ever a Watcher over you’ (4:1). (He then recited) a verse of Sūrah al-Ḥashr, ‘Fear Allaah and let every soul consider that which it sends forth for the morrow and fear Allāh’ (59:18). (Then the audience began to vie with one another in giving charity.) Some donated a dinar, others a dirham, still others clothes, some donated a measure of wheat, some a measure of dates; till he (the Prophet) said: ‘(Bring) even if it is half a date.’ Then a person from among the Anṣār came there with a money bag which his hands could scarcely lift, in fact, which they could not (lift). Then the people followed continuously (following the example of this man), till I saw two heaps of eatables and clothes, and I saw the face of the Messenger (ﷺ) glistening, like gold (on account of joy). The Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) said: ‘He who sets a good precedent in Islām, there is a reward for him for this (act of goodness) and reward of that also who acted according to it subsequently, without any deduction from their rewards; and he who sets in Islām an evil precedent, there is upon him the burden of that, and the burden of him also who acted upon it subsequently, without any deduction from their burden’.”

whoever set a good precedent in an action that is already sanctioned in the Sharī'ah will have the reward of all those who followed him in his precedent. For example, if man saved a year's savings then travelled to a country to build wells for the poor in the desert-regions and then a group of others followed his example, saving one year of their wealth and travelling to countries to build wells for the poor, then that man will have their reward as well as his own without anything diminishing from their reward for their good deed. There is nothing here that justifies imitating Christians or disbelieving Bāṭinī Ismā'īlī Shī'ite enemies of Islām by performing birthday celebrations whose origins and practice lie with polytheist tyrant kings who were believers in astrology and magic.

A Good Innovation in the Linguistic Sense

Also the statement of 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb in relation to the re-enactment of the Tarāwīḥ prayer, "What an excellent innovation this is", is not a proof because the action had been performed by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) for three nights before he abandoned it out of the fear that it might be made obligatory. So 'Umar **revived** an action that is already from the religion with specific evidence and did not innovate into the religion that which was not from it. His use of the word bid'ah was with a purely linguistic meaning. No one before him had revived this practice after it had been abandoned, he was the first to revive it and his act of revival was labelled a bid'ah in the linguistic sense. The celebration of birthdays does not have any basis in the Sharī'ah at all, fundamentally, unlike the tarāwīḥ prayer in Ramaḍān and giving charity. Rather, it only has a basis in the fabricated and distorted legislations of the pagans and disbelievers and is unknown in Islām and unknown even to the pagan Arabs prior to Islām in the days of Jāhiliyyah.

It should also be noted that many of the Scholars who employ the term bid'ah ḥasanah are referring either to that which has a specific basis in the Sharī'ah like the revival of the Tarāwīḥ prayer or the ways

and means to attain objectives which are *mustahabb* or *wājib* or to worldly affairs that are permissible and hence in reality, their usage of the term “*bid’ah*” is redundant unnecessary and only causes unnecessary confusion. At the same time, many of these scholars also refute innovations in worship that outwardly appear to be good and therefore fall into contradiction, refuting some innovations, but considering others to be good without defining any criterion to decide what is a good *bid’ah* and what is not.

For example al-‘Izz bin ‘Abd al-Salām (d. 660H) speaks against many innovated practices in worship in his *Fatāwā*⁶⁹ such as the practice of raising hands for supplication in those instances that the Prophet (ﷺ) never did so. Likewise he refutes the innovated prayer known as *Ṣalāt al-Raghā’ib*⁷⁰ in his book *al-Tarḡīb ‘an Ṣalāt al-Raghā’ib al-Mawḏū‘ah*. Al-Nawawī (d. 676H) also rejects this prayer though other scholars declared it recommended such as Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643H). Also al-‘Izz bin ‘Abd al-Salām considers it an innovation to offer the reward of one’s deeds to others. Likewise Abū Shāmah (d. 665H) rejects many innovations pertaining to funerals, he rejects *Ṣalāt al-*

⁶⁹ Refert to *Kitāb al-Fatāwā* (Dār al-Ma‘rifah, Beirut, 1406H).

⁷⁰ This is an innovated form of prayer which involves many repetitions of certain *Sūrahs* (*Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*, *Sūrah al-Qadr*) and certain remembrances in twelve rak’ahs at the end of which there are two prostrations (after the *taslīm*). It is supposed to be done on a Friday night, preferably in the month of Rajab, preferably when one has been fasting and performed just prior to breaking one’s fast. This was being practised by the people in the time of al-‘Izz bin ‘Abd al-Salām, and it was found in popular books such as *Iḥyā ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* of al-Ghazālī. So he wrote a tract in refutation of it. Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ had a different view and considered it an acceptable act of worship and so he wrote a defence of it by writing against al-‘Izz’s tract. Al-‘Izz then wrote another response and refuted Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ. Now al-‘Izz was not the only one who rejected it, it was also rejected by Abū Shāmah Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maqdisī (d. 665H), Abū al-Khayr Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Zubaydi (894H), Abu Bakr al-Turtushi (520H) al-Nawawī (d. 676H) and others. Yet some of these also spoke in favour of the *mawlid* - which indicates they do not have a consistent principle with respect to what they claim is a “*bid’ah ḥasanah*.”

Raghā'ib and likewise the prayer on the night of 15th of Sha'bān and rejects sunnah prayer prior to Jumu'ah and despite all of this, he claims the mawlid is a bid'ah ḥasanah. Likewise, al-Ṣuyūṭī⁷¹ (d. 911H) rejects Ṣalāt al-Raghā'ib as an innovation, and also gathering in a place to offer condolences for the deceased and numerous other innovations which others would consider to be bid'ah ḥasanah.

The Criterion For Good and Bad Innovation

The person who claims there is evil bid'ah and good bid'ah must answer the question:⁷² What is the definitive criterion by which a person comes to know the good bid'ah from the evil bid'ah so that he can take the good and leave the evil? If he says, bid'ah ḥasanah (good innovation) is permissible and bid'ah sayyi'ah (evil innovation) is prohibited he has simply gone round in a circle and not said anything. He first makes a claim, that good bid'ah is permissible, and uses the very same claim to prove his claim. This is fallacious reasoning.

If he says bid'ah ḥasanah has no harm but bid'ah sayyi'ah has harm within it, he is asked what he means by harm, whether it is harm of the world only or the world and hereafter, or the hereafter only. If he says the first, there is no harm in the worldly sense, then this means there is no harm if we pray five rak'ahs for dhuhr and four rak'ahs for maghrib and that we make the sujūd before the rukū' and the tashahhud before the fātiḥah and that we fast Sha'bān instead of Ramaḍān and so on. None of this brings harm in our worldly affairs.

But if he says the second or third, that the bid'ah ḥasanah brings no harm in the world and the hereafter or the hereafter alone, then what is a sign and an indication for us that this innovation does or does not bring harm and punishment in the hereafter? This is especially considering that those who practice this innovation are largely

⁷¹ Refer to his book *al-Amr bil-ittibā' wal-Nahī 'anil-Ibtidā'*.

⁷² Refer to *al-Barāhīn 'alā allā Bid'ah Ḥasanah fil-Dīn* (p. 19).

Ash'arīs who do not believe that the intellect is able to determine that which is good (ḥasan) or repugnant (qabīḥ) on its own and that this is only determined by the Sharī'ah.⁷³ So what is the determining criterion that tells us what is a good or a harmful bid'ah? It is here where we see their inability to answer and also the contradiction they fall into. Why is Ṣalāt al-Raghā'ib a harmful innovation but the Mawlid is not a harmful innovation? Everything on the basis of which the first is declared a blameworthy innovation applies equally to the second. So this is clear contradiction on behalf of those who claim there is bid'ah ḥasanah and then declare certain acts of worship which appeared in their time to be from the blameworthy bid'ah. These acts of worship have a greater justification for being accepted as bid'ah ḥasanah than a birthday celebration because these acts have a basis in religion, whereas birthday celebrations have no basis in religion at all, only in the religion of the pagans, magicians and star worshippers.

As for Ahl al-Sunnah, then the criterion is the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. This is what determines that which is Sunnah from that which is bid'ah. It is the statement of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, "By Him in whose hand is my soul. I have not left anything which brings you closer to Paradise and distances you from the Hellfire except that I have commanded you with it and I have not left anything which brings you closer to the Hellfire and distances you from Paradise except that I have prohibited you from it."⁷⁴ And the statement of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said as related by al-Irbād bin Sāriyah (رضي الله عنه), "I have left you upon clarity. It's night is like its day. No

⁷³ The Ash'arīs claim that things are only good or bad after revelation declares them to be so, not prior to that. Hence, fornication and stealing are only bad after the revelation has declared them to be as such. So they negate any role for the intellect in considering things to be good or bad. If this is the case, then how can they determine what is a good innovation or a bad innovation, since this is a religious matter and not an intellectual one. This indicates a clear contradiction in their position.

⁷⁴ Reported by al-Ṭabarānī, al-Bayḥaqī and Ibn Abī Shaybah and refer to *al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (no. 1803).

one deviates from it except that he is destroyed. Whomever amongst you lives for long will see much controversy, so you must stick to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly-guided Caliphs.”⁷⁵ And the Prophet (ﷺ) also said as reported by ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها), “Whoever introduces into this affair of ours that which is not from it will have it rejected”⁷⁶ and also, “Whoever does an action that is not in accordance with our affair will have it rejected.”⁷⁷ Ibn al-Mā’jishūn relates that he heard Imām Mālik (d. 179H) say, “Whoever introduced an innovation into Islām, considering it something good, he has claimed that the Messenger was treacherous to his duty of messengership,” then he recited, **“This day have I perfected your religion for you”** (5:3) and then said, “Whatever was not from the religion then cannot be considered from the religion today.”⁷⁸

So the affair comes back to the revelation. It is this knowledge that tells us good from bad, lawful from unlawful and Sunnah from bid‘ah. It is as if these people⁷⁹ want to depart from the revelation because it reins in their personal desires, feelings, tastes and opinions. They desire to leave the straight path and follow the way of the Christians and Bāṭinī Ismā’īlī hypocrites in superficial, shallow types of respect and veneration such as birthday parties but the Sharī‘ah of Islām and the Prophet of Islām prevent them and restrain them. Their desires and tastes lead them to cling to weak and baseless doubts because

⁷⁵ Related by Ibn Mājah and it is ṣaḥīḥ. Refer to *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah* (1/32).

⁷⁶ Reported by al-Bukhārī.

⁷⁷ Reported by Muslim.

⁷⁸ Imām al-Shāṭibī in *al-I’tisām* (taḥqīq, M. Salmān, Maktabah al-Tawḥīd, 1/62).

⁷⁹ We are referring here to the leaders of misguidance and not the common-folk who are simply blind-followers with sincere intentions. As for their leaders, those who know and understand these matters and who have been made to understand that the latecomers among the scholars erred in this subject, then they desire misguidance and they invent and spread doubts in this regard and also slander and revile those who adhere to the Prophetic Sunnah, claiming they hate the Prophet (ﷺ) as a means of riling up the common-folk against them.

they do not want their desires to be reined in by revelation - and it is here where it becomes clear that the alleged love these people claim for the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Sunnah is highly questionable. It is not valid, correct, genuine love, because if it was, they would venerate and abide by the command of the Messenger (ﷺ) and limit themselves to his Sunnah and not oppose it or go beyond it even a handspan.

Imām al-Awzā'ī (d. 157H) said, "Be patient upon the Sunnah and halt at where the people (before you) halted. Speak with what they spoke, and withhold from what they withheld. Traverse the path of your Righteous Salaf for what sufficed them suffices you."⁸⁰ Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) said, "There will not come upon the people a time except that they will introduce an innovation and will cause a Sunnah to die [continuing like this] until innovations acquire life and the affairs of the Sunnah die off."⁸¹ And 'Umar bin 'Abd al-'Azīz (d. 101H) said, "Halt at where the people (the Companions) halted, for they halted upon knowledge and through penetrative insight they withheld [from matters], and they were stronger [in knowledge and understanding] in unveiling them. And if you say, 'After them such and such occurred' then no one introduced [anything] after them except the one who opposed their guidance and desired to turn away from their Sunnah."⁸²

From the above discussion, the claim of their being bid'ah ḥasanah in the religion has been invalidated.

⁸⁰ Al-Lālikā'ī in *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-I'tiqād* (1/154).

⁸¹ Reported by Ibn Baṭṭāh in *al-Ibānah* (1/350).

⁸² Reported by al-Ājurri in *al-Sharīah* and *Lumu'at al-I'tiqād* of Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī.

Classifying Bid'ah into Five Categories

Connected to the previous method is their reliance upon the speech of some of the later scholars⁸³ who classified bid'ah into wājib, mustahabb, mubāh, makrūh and ḥarām.⁸⁴ This is a self-defeating argument and is simply going round in a circle and involves nothing but a play with words.

First this classification is itself a bid'ah in the religion and it clashes directly with the saying of the Prophet (ﷺ), "Every innovation is misguidance." Imām al-Shāṭibī (d. 790H) said in what is a very important observation and clarification, "This classification is invented and is not indicated by any legislative evidence. Rather, it is self-defeating because the reality of bid'ah is that no legislative evidence points to it, neither from the texts of the legislation nor from its principles. For if there had been that which indicates its obligation (*wujūb*), commendation (*istiḥbāb*) or permissibility (*ibāḥah*) in the legislation, it would not be a bid'ah and the action would enter into the generality of the actions that have been commanded or in which a person has been given a choice. Thus, combining between those matters being innovations and there being evidences that indicate their obligation, commendation or permissibility is attempting to bring together two conflicting things."⁸⁵

Second, if we accept this classification for argument's sake, then the bid'ah which is alleged to be mubāh, mustahabb and wājib relates to

⁸³ Such as the Ṣūfī, Ash'arī al-'Izz bin 'Abd al-Salām (d. 660H) and his student al-Qarāfī who were both refuted in this matter by Imām al-Shāṭibī (d. 790H) in his work, *al-I'tiṣām* (1/313 onwards).

⁸⁴ This classification has been made upon the misconception that the Prophet used the word bid'ah in its broader linguistic meaning. This is incorrect as has preceded. The Prophet was only ever speaking about religious matters - not religious and worldly matters combined.

⁸⁵ *Al-I'tiṣām* (1/321).

the use of ways and means (wasā'il) and attainment of the beneficial interests (maṣāliḥ) and is in relation to things which are already judged to be mubāḥ, mustaḥabb and wājib in the Sharī'ah.

Thus, there can be innovation in matters which are already permissible (mubāḥ) such as food, clothing, drink and habitation. Novel forms in these areas take the same ruling. For example, chips, pizza, lemonade, sneakers, hoodies and mobile homes are all permitted innovations, if we agree with this erroneous terminology for argument's sake. In reality the word bid'ah is redundant, since one would simply say these are affairs which are mubāḥ in the Sharī'ah and they are innovations only in the linguistic sense. These are permitted forms of enjoyment (tana'um) and would not be spoken of as "innovations." There can also be innovation in matters which are recommended (mustaḥabb) such as setting up hospitals, schools, dams, roads and things of that nature which allow Sharī'ah goals to be realized such as health, public safety, education and which are commended (mustaḥabb). Once, more the word bid'ah is redundant, one would simply say these are ways and means (wasā'il) that take the same ruling as the objectives (maqāṣid) they help to fulfil. Then there is innovation in matters which are obligatory such as teaching grammar for the purposes of preserving Arabic or laying down foundations of fiqh or authoring works to refute heresies or putting the Qur'ān into a muṣ-haf in order to preserve it. These are all ways and means (wasā'il) that help to attain Sharī'ah goals (maqāṣid) which are obligatory (wājib).

Thus, the innovation which is said to be mustaḥabb or wājib relates only to the wasā'il (ways and means) of matters which are already mustaḥabb or wājib in the Sharī'ah and in reality, using the word bid'ah in this classification with its linguistic meaning is redundant and self-defeating. These matters were never intended by the Prophet (ﷺ) in the use of the word bid'ah. On the contrary, the speech of the Prophet (ﷺ) is the plainest and clearest it could ever be: He

left no act of obligatory or recommended worship which brings a person closer to Paradise except that he commanded it. Likewise, he warned from every innovation in the religion which is claimed to be good and claimed to bring one closer to Paradise but which he never commanded and which his Companions never understood from the texts and never practiced.

So those affairs which are erroneously labelled as “good bid‘ah” by some of the Scholars either have a basis in the legislation specifically, such as the Tarawīḥ prayer or are matters in which benefit is preserved and realized through broad Sharī‘ah principles - referred to as *al-maṣāliḥ al-mursalah* (matters of open beneficial interest) - and thus, have no connection to the topic of bid‘ah at all. To refer to them as “good bid‘ah” is erroneous and an incorrect label. Their correct label is that they are either an already existing Sunnah which has specific evidence and has been revived or enacted, or they are from the *wasā’il* (ways and means) that are required to attain the *maqāṣid* (objectives) or to put it another way, *al-maṣāliḥ al-mursalah* (open matters of broad beneficial interest) - and all of this is an entirely separate topic to the one of innovation in worship alleged to bring one closer to Allāh. This is made clearer by what follows:

An Explanation of al-Maṣāliḥ al-Mursalah

We find certain rulings in the Sharī‘ah - such as the *ḥudūd*, the prescribed punishments - which are aimed at protecting wealth, life and honour, and which are all beneficial interests considered by the Sharī‘ah. And we also see that there are other interests that the Sharī‘ah has not recognized and has ignored such as the use of alcohol for medicinal purposes or fornication as enjoyment outside of marriage which are unlawful to pursue. This is because their limited, subjective, personal interest, benefit or pleasure is overwhelmed by their broad harm upon society as a whole. So the Sharī‘ah does not consider them as beneficial interests.

However, there are many beneficial interests which do not have any specific evidence from the Book, Sunnah, consensus (ijmā') or analogy (qiyās). Nevertheless, there are universal Sharī'ah principles which indicate beneficial interests beyond what is specifically mentioned and legislated in the texts. This is what is called **al-maṣlahah al-mursalah** (open-ended matter of benefit) and this refers to “a beneficial interest (maṣlahah) that is non-specified, left open (mursalah).” Such beneficial interests do not have specific evidence and are indicated by the spirit of the Sharī'ah and its universal principles such as “that by which an obligation cannot be fulfilled is itself an obligation”, and “there is no harm or reciprocating harm” and “leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt” and “repelling evil comes before actualizing good” and so on.

Thus, the Sharī'ah comprises broad, universal principles through which all future benefits can be incorporated. This is because the nature of human life changes with progress, specific situations may arise and which are not covered or mentioned specifically in the Sharī'ah. This is because the environment, state and condition that the people live in may change from time to time and place to place, and progress takes place in many areas of life, culture, civilization, technology, industry and so on. The issues that come under this are known as *al-maṣāliḥ al-mursalah* and refer to the ways and means used to attain or protect Sharī'ah goals. The Sharī'ah encapsulates all future beneficial worldly interests through its universal principles and this is from its perfection and completion.

To illustrate with an example, a ruler may improve the roads and enforce a highway code and the use of traffic systems and penalties for violations in order to protect life and property, which are desired by the Sharī'ah. It is true this is an innovation, linguistically speaking, but it is incorrect to look at it from this way. In reality it is simply from the wasā'il (ways and means) through which already defined

Sharī'ah goals are attained (such as public safety in this example).⁸⁶ In the same light is 'Uthmān's standardization of the Qur'ān and putting it into a muṣ-ḥaf to attain the Sharī'ah goal of preserving the religion. And as for the institution of the additional ādhān for Jumu'ah by 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) then that is actually from the Prophetic Sunnah, since whatever was instituted by the rightly-guided Caliphs is simply an extension of the Sunnah.⁸⁷ These are affairs which were legislated due to circumstances that were not present in the time of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) but if those circumstances had arisen during the era of revelation, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would have received revelation regarding them. Thus, the additional adhān is not a bid'ah in the religion, but something from the Sunnah itself and all of the Companions accepted this Sunnah.

Sticking to this same point, and this is a powerful argument: If 'Uthmān (رضي الله عنه) identified the need for an additional adhān for a legitimate reason then how come Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī and other Companions did not identify the need for celebrating the Prophet's birthday? And how come we do not find it in the Sunnah of the rightly-guided Caliphs which has Prophetic approval? So all of this discussion shows that there is no such thing as bid'ah ḥasanah in the religion in reality and all we are seeing is the erroneous application of the label of bid'ah ḥasanah to affairs which come under a different subject matter altogether, either to an already existing or previously

⁸⁶ In fact one may argue that it has a basis in the Sharī'ah from the ḥadīth about the branches of faith whereby "removing something harmful from the floor" is a branch of faith. Thus, improving the roads and making them safe has a basis in the Sharī'ah - and this is an argument used by al-Shāṭibī in *al-ʿItisām* as part of his detailed and superb refutation of the five-fold classification of bid'ah presented by al-'Izz bin 'Abd al-Salām and his student al-Qarāfi.

⁸⁷ When the population expanded, the city got larger and habitations became further from the mosque, 'Uthmān instituted an additional call to prayer from the marketplace to give people adequate notification of the approach of Jumu'ah prayer.

practiced Sunnah that was revived or re-enacted after being neglected or forgotten or to a matter of broad public interest (al-maṣlahah al-mursalah).

Summary

The greatest of what is used to justify the celebration of the mawlid is the claim of bid'ah ḥasanah in the religion and one has to be aware of the type and nature of this evidence. It is not a specific Sharī'ah evidence such as the explicit evidences we have for the legislated actions of worship. Because the opponent is forced to acknowledge that the mawlid celebration is innovated and was unknown in the first three centuries of Islām, it is impossible for him to bring a specific evidence. Hence, the evidence is only broad and indirect and it is to establish that there is a concept of bid'ah ḥasanah in the religion and then to argue indirectly that because there is goodness in celebrating the mawlid, it is acceptable in the Sharī'ah. The very nature of this evidence shows how far-removed it is when we compare it to the very clear and direct evidences for the legislated actions in the Sharī'ah.

There is no such concept as "bid'ah ḥasanah" in the religion and it is simply just a play on words. They include within this terms what does not really enter into it to begin with as has preceded. Further, dividing bid'ah into the five rulings of the Sharī'ah is incorrect, innovated, contradictory, meaningless and self-defeating⁸⁸ and there is nothing within it that justifies the celebration of birthdays which are baseless, having neither a general or specific proof, neither in revelation nor even in the practice of the Arabs prior to Jāhiliyyah as this was not from their customs. With this, we have undermined the greatest of what is relied upon in order to justify opposition to the

⁸⁸ Refer to *al-I'tisām* (1/313) onwards for an excellent detailed rebuttal by al-Shātibī in this matter who explains that those who came after al-'Izz bin 'Abd al-Salām and followed him in this classification misrepresented what he actually meant by this classification.

Sunnah and the way of the Companions in loving and venerating the Prophet (ﷺ) and have established that everything erroneously used as an example of “bid’ah ḥasanah” is either:

- a) Something that already takes the ruling of being **mubāḥ** (permissible) in the Sharī’ah such as novel forms and types of food, drink, clothing, habitation and transport.
- b) An action of the Sunnah that was done temporarily by the Prophet (ﷺ) but then left for a reason and was re-enacted or reinstated. The example of this is the Tarāwīḥ prayer. This is a **re-enacted or reinstated Sunnah**.
- c) An action of the Sunnah performed routinely by the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) but over time became neglected or forgotten and was then revived and is therefore a **revived Sunnah** in reality.
- d) An initiative of goodness based upon an already legislated act of worship such as giving charity which someone embarks upon and in which he is followed by others. This is simply called an **enacted Sunnah** or a **good precedent** (sunnah ḥasanah).

To all of the above, you can technically say, “bid’ah ḥasanah”, from a purely linguistic sense because you are either referring to that which has no precedent at all in worldly matters, as in the first category above. Or that which has a precedent in religious matters but was neglected or forgotten and its revival, reinstatement or re-enactment was the innovatory aspect of it, not the actual action itself. Or an initiative of goodness based upon an already legislated good deed.

- e) What is referred to as a **maṣlahah mursalah** - matter of interest in the realisation or preservation of broad Sharī’ah objectives (maqāṣid) such as compilation of the Qur’ān, building schools and

hospitals, making the roads safe, compilation of fiqh and what is similar to them which are either mustahabb (recommended) or wājib (obligatory). These are simply the ways and means (wasā'il) and are not sought in and of themselves but are adopted for the already defined broad Sharī'ah goals they fulfil. Within this context, the similitude of innovating the mawlid celebration is when a person innovates a sixth prayer in the day with the argument we need to express more love and devotion to Allāh and this is a means to that end. This is futile because the Sharī'ah has already legislated the ways, means and limits as to how Allāh is worshipped. Similarly, the Sharī'ah has already exhaustively legislated how one loves, respects and venerates the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). This objective has already been legislated for and has been completed and perfected. There is a difference between this and matters of beneficial interest that relate to the protection of the necessities (ḍurūriyyāt) which are life, wealth, lineage, intellect and honour. All future beneficial interests and repulsion of harms come under broad, universal Sharī'ah principles, indicating the perfection of the Sharī'ah in its universality and applicability to all times. But as for how Allāh is worshipped and how the Messenger is respected, then that has already been completed and perfected for all time, and cannot be added to, as it would entail revilement upon the Sharī'ah and its perfection and would also lead to confusion and distortion of religion.

Hence, there is no category at all that relates to **innovations in worship that bring one closer to Allāh** and every example that is brought to prove "bid'ah ḥasanah" will not escape falling into one of the above categories. We repeat once again, birthday celebrations have no basis whatsoever in any revealed legislation and nor in the practice of the Arabs in Jāhiliyyah prior to Islām and nor after Islām until they were imported by the Bāṭinī Ismā'īlī Shī'ites in Egypt out of imitation of the Christian Copts.

The Remaining Arguments

Once the core argument has been invalidated in accordance with what has preceded there only remain feeble attempts to bring far-fetched evidences. Those who continue to argue the matter will already perceive in their souls that once the core has been invalidated, what remains with them is not strong at all. Their souls know this well and the only thing we are really dealing with is the amount of determination and persistence a person is willing to show in going all the way in using one, some or all of these far-fetched evidences to justify his imitation of the Christians and the disbelieving Rāfiqī Ismā'īlī Bāṭinī Shī'ites of Persian-Magian-Jewish ancestry and abandoning the imitation of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ). So let us look at a selection of these arguments. First, a case study in how their leaders fabricate lies and enter into the most evil type of distortion.

1. A Brief Case Study of the Dream Concerning Abū Lahab to Illustrate How The Şūfī Leaders Lie to the Common-Folk

We have already mentioned that there is no dispute between those who reject the mawlid celebration and those who support it that it was unknown to the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions, the Successors, the Four Imāms and the Salaf as a whole. Even those who wrote on this topic from the later scholars such as al-Şuyūṭī (d. 911H) acknowledge this. However, the Şūfī scholars of today do not fear Allāh and do not shy away from telling blatant lies against the Scholars of Islām, so how would they feel shy from telling blatant lies to their followers. Let us have a look at a clear example and you can analogize for every other alleged evidence they bring through this example. It is ascribed to a Shaykh Dr Muḥammad bin Yaḥyā al-Ninowy though others may also have mentioned it. These are his words: "Al-Bukharī mentions that when the Prophet (ﷺ) was born, Abū Lahab freed his slave in celebration. The same Abū Lahab

who will be in ever-lasting Jahanam is eased of torture and pain every Monday due to his celebration of the Prophet's birth (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ).”

However, when we return to Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī in Kitāb al-Nikāḥ where this alleged statement of al-Bukhārī is found, the chapter heading is titled, “Chapter: “And [forbidden to you] are your milk-mothers who wet-nursed you,” (4:23) and that which is prohibited through lineage is also prohibited through wet-nursing.” So this is the chapter heading and in this chapter al-Bukhārī brings three ḥadīths as evidence to show that marriage becomes prohibited through wet-nursing⁸⁹ just as it is prohibited through lineage. After mentioning the third ḥadīth of Zaynab bin Abī Salamah, al-Bukhārī mentions the statement of ‘Urwah bin al-Zubayr who is a Tābi‘ī (b. 22H, d. 94H) and was born during the khilāfah of ‘Umar bin al-Khattāb. Here is documentation of this report:

١٣٠١

٦٧ - كتاب النكاح

تعرضن علي بناتكن ولا أخواتكن . قال عروة : وثوبية مولاة لأبي لهب وكان أبو لهب أعتقها
فأرضعت النبي ﷺ ، فلما مات أبو لهب أرى بعض أهلها بشر حبيبة ، قال له : ما لقيت؟ قال
أبو لهب : لم ألق بعدكم ، غير أنني سقيت في هذه بعناتي ثوبية .
[الحدِيث ٥١٠١ - أطرافه في : ٥١٠٦ ، ٥١٠٧ ، ٥١٢٣ ، ٥٣٧٢ .]

This statement is not a ḥadīth but al-Bukhārī just mentioned it in passing and it is in mursal form⁹⁰ that, “Thuwaybah was the slave-girl of Abu Lahab and he had freed her and she wet-nursed the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). When Abū Lahab died one of his relatives saw him [in a

⁸⁹ Meaning when one is breastfed by someone else's mother, her children become maḥram for the one who has been breastfed.

⁹⁰ The ḥadīth which is mursal is one in which the Companion has been omitted and it is one of the forms of ḍa'īf (weak) ḥadīth. It cannot be used as evidence because this is knowledge of the unseen and an alleged dream through a report that is mursal (and not an authentic ḥadīth) cannot be used to establish beliefs or acts of worship.

dream] in a very bad state and said, “What have you encountered?” He said, “I have not found any rest since I left you except that I was given to drink in this⁹¹ and that is because of my freeing of Thuwaybah.”⁹²

It is alleged that Abu Lahab freed her due to the birth of the Prophet (ﷺ). Here are the knowledge-based crimes of Shaykh al-Ninowy:

First, this is only a mursal narration from a Tābiī and not a connected narration, it is not an authentic ḥadīth. The mursal narration is a type of weak ḥadīth. Al-Bukhārī mentioned it in passing at the end of the chapter in relation to the main ḥadīths and Ibn Ḥajar explains that this report cannot be used as evidence (see below). **Second**, note how al-Ninowy tries to make it appear as if al-Bukhārī deduced from this report that Abū Lahab celebrated the Prophet’s birthday, “Al-Bukhārī mentions that when the Prophet (ﷺ) was born, Abū Lahab freed his slave in celebration” when there is no such thing in the statement of ‘Urwah itself. **Third**, it clashes with what is said by Ibn Hajar al-‘Asqalānī that Thuwaybah was freed after the hijrah of the Prophet (ﷺ)⁹³ and others relate that she was freed a long time before his birth.⁹⁴ **Fourth**, dreams of those who are not Prophets are not a source

⁹¹ In another report with ‘Abd al-Razzāq (7/477). in his Muṣannaf, it mentions that Abū Lahab pointed to the place between his thumb and remaining fingers.

⁹² Reported by al-Bukhārī (no. 5101). Some of them such as al-Qaṣṭalānī took liberties in adding to this narration that which is not from it, which is the claim that Abu Lahab’s punishment is lightened every Monday for his action of freeing the slave-girl.

⁹³ Refer to *al-Iṣābah* (4/258) and also *Fath al-Bārī* (Maktabah Salafiyyah, 9/145) wherein he says, “But that which is in the [Prophetic] biographies opposes this, that Abū Lahab freed her prior to the hijrah (of the Prophet), and this was after she had wet-nursed him by a very long time.” Refer also to Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr in *al-Istī‘āb* (1/12) and Ibn al-Jawzī in *al-Wafā’ bi Aḥwāl al-Muṣṭafā* (1/106).

⁹⁴ Ibn Ḥajar mentions this view from al-Suhaylī in *Fath al-Bārī* (Maktabah Salafiyyah, 9/145).

of Sharīah rulings in the view of any of the Scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah. **Fifth**, this mursal report also clashes with the Qur'ān, “**And We shall turn to whatever deeds they did, and We shall make such deeds as scattered floating particles of dust.**” (25:23) and “**But those who disbelieved - their deeds are like a mirage in a lowland which a thirsty one thinks is water until, when he comes to it, he finds it is nothing.**” (24:39) and “**The example of those who disbelieve in their Lord is [that] their deeds are like ashes which the wind blows forcefully on a stormy day.**” (14:18). And Ibn Ḥajar himself mentions this after his explanation of this report, he says, “In this [mursal] ḥadīth is and indication that a disbeliever could benefit from righteous action in the hereafter but this opposes the apparentness of the Qur'ān. Allāh, the Exalted said, ‘**And We shall turn to whatever deeds they did, and We shall make such deeds as scattered floating particles of dust.**’ (25:23). And it is responded [to this claim] that firstly, the report is mursal, it was related in this way by ‘Urwah and he did not mention who he narrated it from. Upon the estimation that it is a connected [report] then what is in this report is a vision in a dream, thus there is no proof in it. And perhaps the one who saw it was not a Muslim at the time, since he [al-‘Abbās] did not become a Muslim till afterwards, thus it cannot be used as evidence.”⁹⁵ **Sixth**, there is nothing in this narration which mentions the day of Monday but some of the explainers of al-Bukhārī’s Ṣaḥīḥ mentioned this day in connection to this narration without any evidence - and that’s after our knowledge that this mursal narration of ‘Urwah does not qualify as evidence for any affair of the religion to begin with. **Seventh**, if after all of this it is accepted for argument’s sake that his punishment was lightened due to freeing Thuwaybah because of the birth of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and her wet-nursing the Prophet, then this affair would have been known to the Prophet and despite this, it has not been related from the Prophet that he took his birthday as a celebration, nor from the Companions and nor from the best of generations. Rather, all the

⁹⁵ *Fath al-Bārī* (Maktabah Salafiyyah, 9/145).

narration would indicate is that Abū Lahab rejoiced with the birth of his nephew whom he did not know would be made a Prophet forty years later. So this was purely a worldly thing and has no connection to religion at all. It is natural to rejoice with the birth of one's nephew. That's if we accept this report actually amounts to evidence in the first place. **Eighth**, in his commentary upon this Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī cites from al-Suhaylī who states that it was al-ʿAbbās (رضي الله عنه) who saw Abu Lahab in his dream.⁹⁶ It is known that al-ʿAbbās did not become a Muslim until the conquest of Makkah and hence the vision in the dream occurred a few years before that when Abū Lahab died whilst al-ʿAbbās was a mushrik. Thus, what is being relied upon in reality is the dream of a mushrik (at the time) involving another mushrik and this is made the basis for a legislative ruling in the Sharīʿah! Hence, there is no proof in this mursal narration at all and Shaykh al-Ninowy's fabrication has become clear. These are the types of games these people play with the minds of the common-folk whose raw feelings of love towards the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) are manipulated and used to lead them to misguidance by these evil scholars who lack honesty and integrity.

2. Argument Through Individual Righteous Deeds

Another way to argue through all the good things which are done on the mawlid such as mentioning the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), sending ṣalāt and salām upon him, reading his biography, reciting the Qurʾān and feeding others. Each of these matters are made an independent proof to justify the mawlid. No doubt, these individual actions are all legislated and are praiseworthy in their own right. However, performing them in a manner which is not specified in the Sunnah is an innovation and the Companions condemned those who departed from the legislated kayfiyyah (way, method, mode) in acts of worship.

⁹⁶ *Fath al-Bārī* (Maktabah Salafiyyah, 9/145).

Imām al-Dārimī reports in his Sunan the incident of Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (رضي الله عنه) who upon seeing a group of people sat in the mosque in circles performing collective dhikr went to the house of ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd (رضي الله عنه) to inform him. When ‘Abdullah came out of his house, Abū Mūsā told him what he saw and they both went to the mosque. The men explained that they had pebbles and were counting tasbīh, tahlīl and takbīr upon them. ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd said, to them, “You better count your sins! I guarantee that nothing of your good deeds will go to waste [if done correctly]. Woe to you O ummah of Muḥammad, how quickly you go to destruction! These are the Companions of your Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) who are abundant, these are his garments which are intact, these are his vessels still unbroken. By Him in whose Hand is my soul, either you are upon a religion better in guidance than the religion of Muḥammad or you are opening the door of misguidance.” They said, “By Allāh O Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, we intended nothing but good.” He said, “How many people intend good but never reach it.”⁹⁷ In this amazing narration which has so many benefits, good intentions were not enough to justify the innovated way (wasīlah) they used in performing dhikr because in its details and form, it was innovated and had no basis in the sharī‘ah, even if the original act, dhikr, is from the loftiest of acts of worship. Sayyid bin al-Muṣayyib saw a man praying more than two rak‘ahs after the time for Fajr prayer had entered through the breaking of dawn and prohibited from that. The man said, “O Abū Muḥammad, Allāh will punish me for prayer?” He said, “No, but he will punish you for opposition to the Sunnah.”⁹⁸

And Imām al-Shāṭibī has excellent words in this regard. He said under a chapter heading of **Tahrīf al-Adillah ‘an Mawāḍi‘ihā** (Distortion of Evidence From their Proper Places), “When an evidence is related

⁹⁷ Al-Dārimī in al-Sunan (1/68-69), Abū Nu‘aym in al-Ḥilyah and others.

⁹⁸ Reported by al-Bayḥaqī in *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* (2/466), al-Khaṭīb in *al-Faḳīh wal-Mutafaqqih* (p. 147), al-Dārimī in al-Sunan (1/116).

contextually and it is taken away from that context to another affair to give the impression that the two contexts are one and the same, then this is one of the subtle forms of distorting words from their proper places and refuge is with Allāh. And it is overwhelming in one's opinion that a person who affirms Islām and censures the distortion of words from their proper places does not recourse to this practice brazenly except due to some confusion that befalls him or due to ignorance that hinders him from the truth alongside some desire that blinds him from taking the evidence in the proper way and as a result he becomes an innovator. And the explanation of that is: When the shar'iy evidence requires something [from the servant] in a broad sense from whatever is connected to the acts of worship for example and then the worshipper (mukallaf) brings it in a broad sense⁹⁹ - such as Allāh's remembrance (dhikr), or the recommended nawāfil deeds¹⁰⁰ and what resembles them from those affairs in which vastness is known from their legislator then the evidence supports him from two angles: From the angle of the meaning [of the text] and from the angle of the practice of the Righteous Salaf in this matter. However, if the worshipper performs that act with a specific kayfiyyah (form) or a specific time or specific place or in connection with a specific act of worship and then adheres to that whereby it gives the impression that this form (kayfiyyah), time or place are desired by the legislation but without there being any evidence to indicate as such, then the evidence [in question] is devoid of that meaning for which it is being used as evidence. So when the legislation indicates the recommendation of remembrance (dhikr) for example and then a certain people adhere to its performance collectively in a group with a single voice or in a specified known time

⁹⁹ Meaning that the worshipper performs these actions devoid of any specifications or restrictions or attachments. They are commanded generally and openly and they are performed generally and openly. And the only specifications made with respect to them are those which the Shari'ah itself has made for these actions.

¹⁰⁰ Such as prayer, fasting, charity and so on.

exclusively to other times, then there is nothing in [that text through which] the legislation has presented the recommendation [of remembrance] which indicates this specification which is being adhered to. Rather, within that text is what indicates its opposite¹⁰¹ because adhering to affairs which the legislation did not make binding is such that it causes people to understand that they are legislated, especially when this comes from one who is followed by others and when they are done in the large gatherings of people such as in the mosques. When these actions are given such prominence in this way and are done in the mosques like the other symbols [of worship] [whose practice] the Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) legislated in the mosques and what resembles them, such as the adhān, the two ʿīd prayers, and the rain and eclipse prayers - without doubt, it will be [wrongly] understood that these are affairs from the Sunnah, if they are not understood to be actual obligations. Thus, it ought to be the case that the [broad] evidence used [to justify the specific implementations of those acts] does not indicate them at all. Thus from this angle such actions become introduced innovations. What will indicate this to you is the the persistence of the Righteous Salaf in abandoning these things or in not practicing them whilst they were more deserving of them had they [indeed] been legislated upon the requirements of the principles of [the legislation]. This is because remembrance (dhikr) has been commended in the legislation in very many places until there is not an act of worship whose frequent repetition has been requested more than the frequent repetition of remembrance, such as His saying, the Exalted, **‘O you who believe! Remember Allāh with much remembrance.’** (33:41) and His saying, **‘And seek from the bounty of Allāh and remember Allāh often that you may succeed.’** (62:10) and His saying, **‘O you who have believed,**

¹⁰¹ Meaning, the text mentioned the act broadly, unrestrictedly and the text remains upon this indication and thus clashes with the innovated specifications which have been devised and adhered to merely based upon people’s opinions.

when you encounter a company [from the enemy forces], stand firm and remember Allāh much that you may be successful.' (8:65) - and this is unlike all of the other acts of worship. Also similar to this is supplication (du'ā), for it is remembrance of Allāh and alongside that, they [the Salaf] did not adhere to any specific forms (kayfiyyāt), nor did they restrict it to specific times whereby it would give the perception of specifying worship in those times - except with what the evidence itself specified, such as [remembrance] in the morning and evening and they did not perform such actions aloud (openly) except what the legislation textually stated should be done aloud such as the remembrance during the two ʿīds and what resembles them.¹⁰² And as for what is besides that, they used to persevere in doing it in a low voice and keeping it concealed. For this reason he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said to them when they raised their voices, 'Be merciful to yourselves, indeed you are not calling one who is deaf or absent,'¹⁰³ and what is similar to this. So they did not proclaim openly [with their voices] in gatherings. Therefore, everyone who opposed this foundation has opposed the non-restriction (iṭlāq) of the evidence firstly, because he has restricted it through opinion (raʾī) and he has opposed those who were more knowledgeable of the Sharīʿah and they are the Righteous Salaf, may Allāh be pleased with them. Rather, even the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) would abandon an action whilst loving to perform it out of the fear that the people would act upon it and thereby be made obligatory upon them.¹⁰⁴⁺¹⁰⁵ End of al-Shāṭibī's words.

This is an amazing piece from Imām al-Shāṭibī and it clarifies many things about what constitutes innovation with respect to those acts of worship which have been commanded and left open. They become

¹⁰² Meaning the remembrance done during the days of ʿīd and likewise the talbiyah which is done openly during the Ḥajj.

¹⁰³ Reported by al-Bukhārī (no. 2992).

¹⁰⁴ Referring to the story of the Tarawīḥ prayer, which the Prophet performed for three nights but then abandoned it.

¹⁰⁵ Refer to *al-I'tiṣām* (Maktabah al-Tawḥīd 2/59 onwards).

innovations when they are given specifications through opinion (ra'ī) and not on the basis of the Sharī'ah itself. Thus, these acts of worship such as providing food, giving charity, reciting the Qur'ān - all of which are commendable acts in themselves - they turn into innovations because of the innovated specifications which are given to them and upon which they are performed.

3. The Claim that the Prophet Celebrated His Birthday

This is from the far-fetched claims wherein the text says one thing and the deduction made from the text is something else altogether and is nowhere to be found in the text all. It is claimed that the Prophet (ﷺ) venerated his own birthday by fasting on the day he was born. Muslim reports in his Ṣaḥīḥ that the Prophet was asked about his fasting on Mondays and he replied, "*It was the day I was born and it was the day on which revelation came to me.*"¹⁰⁶

The argument is that fasting is a means of celebration. The answer to this is from numerous angles. **Firstly**, the Prophet (ﷺ) did not fast on the 12th of Rabī' al-Awwal, the alleged date of his birth, but he fasted **every** Monday. Hence, to apply this text to the 12th Rabī' al-Awwal is to criticize the action of the Prophet (ﷺ). in light of what follows. **Secondly**, the Prophet never singled out Monday for fasting, he would also fast on Thursdays, giving the reason that "*The good deeds are presented on Mondays and Thursdays and I love that my action is presented whilst I am fasting.*"¹⁰⁷ Hence, there are additional combined reasons for fasting on Monday (the Qur'ān being revealed, presentation of good deeds) and it is not unique to one affair exclusive to another. **Thirdly**, the Prophet did not add to his fast on Mondays that which is found with the Innovators who oppose his command and engage in parties, celebrations, free-mixing, singing and dancing.

¹⁰⁶ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (no. 2454).

¹⁰⁷ Reported by al-Tirmidhī (no. 747).

Fourthly, and this ends the matter decisively, it is unlawful to fast on the days of ʿĪd. Both al-Bukhārī and Muslim relate from Abu ʿUbayd the mawlā of Ibn Azhar who said, “I witnessed ʿĪd with ʿUmar bin al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) and he said: The Messenger of Allāh (صلى الله عليه وسلم) prohibited fasting on these two days, the day of Fiṭr after your fasting and on the other day [of ʿĪd] you eat from your slaughter.”¹⁰⁸ And in the ḥadīth of Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) who said, “The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) forbade fasting on the day of Fiṭr and the [day] of slaughter.”¹⁰⁹ In light of this, if it is prohibited to fast on a day of ʿĪd, then this invalidates the Prophet’s fast on Mondays from being considered a celebration. And this is after we have already explained that he fasted **every Monday** which proves that singling out his birth date was not his intent. Also, if one was truly acting upon this ḥadīth, he would do the same as what the Prophet did, which is to fast every Monday. When they do not do this, it is a proof that they are lying in their use of this ḥadīth and are twisting and distorting the action of the Prophet in order to do what neither he nor his Companions did but what the disbelieving Bāṭinī Ismāʿīlī Shīʿites invented in order to make fools out of the Sunnī Muslims in their wider agenda of winning approval and recognition from the Sunnīs for their rulership and drawing them towards their Ismāʿīlī Shīʿism.

4. Argument Through Remembering the Prophet and His Teachings, Giving Charity and other Deeds of Goodness

The argument is that in the mawlid celebration the Prophet’s (صلى الله عليه وسلم) biography and his teachings are remembered. This is in fact from the greatest of disrespect to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in that a day is needed to remind a person about the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in which he

¹⁰⁸ Reported by al-Bukhārī (no. 1990) and Muslim (1137).

¹⁰⁹ Reported by al-Bukhārī (no. 1991) and Muslim (827).

and others can sing, dance and recite poetry¹¹⁰ so that his heart can be stirred. It means that the Prophet (ﷺ) has otherwise been forgotten and parties and celebrations are needed to revive remembrance of the Prophet (ﷺ) just like the disbelievers have Mother's Day and Father's Day. This is from the greatest of disrespect and sidelining of the Prophet from the lives of people. Rather, in the perfect Sharī'ah of Islām lies the greatest of remembrance and respect of the Prophet and which suffice a Muslim.

There is no Muslim who prays five times a day except that he mentions the Prophet (ﷺ). When he hears the āzān he mentions the Messenger by repeating the āzān, then he asks Allāh to grant him the lofty station (al-maqām al-mahmūd) which is the permission to intercede on the Day of Judgement. Then in the prayer he sends salām upon the Prophet and asks for mercy and blessings upon him and then asks for ṣalāt upon the Prophet (ﷺ). A Muslim who establishes the prayer does this 1800 times a year at least, just on account of the prayer alone.

Then there are many other instances in which sending ṣalāt and salām upon the Messenger (ﷺ) is legislated and one can refer to the excellent book by the Salafī Scholar, Ibn al-Qayyim, "*Jalā' al-Afhām Fī Faḍl al-Ṣalāt wal-Salām 'alā Muḥammad Khayr al-Anām*"¹¹¹ in this topic. In the third chapter of this book, Ibn al-Qayyim outlines forty-one (41) situations in which it is legislated either by obligation or commendation for a person to send ṣalāt upon the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ). Those who accuse the ones who correctly state that celebrating the mawlid is a bid'ah of hating the Prophet (ﷺ) are indeed liars. On the contrary, those who honour and respect the Prophet by following his Sunnah are the greatest of lovers of the

¹¹⁰ Most of which contains such exaggerations that the Prophet (ﷺ) would be harmed by it.

¹¹¹ Refer to *Jalā' al-Afhām* (Dār 'Ālam al-Fawā'id, pp. 380-520)

Prophet (ﷺ), they are those who remember him the most and are not in need of yearly parties and celebrations for their hearts to be stirred with love. The Sunnah can be observed from them, in their appearance, in their worship and thus the Prophet (ﷺ) is in their lives, on a daily basis. Indeed the Prophet (ﷺ) is only forgotten amongst a people who do not venerate His Sunnah and who do not restrict themselves to it. You will not find the Sunnah in their homes, in their children, in their worship. In fact, you may struggle to find Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī or Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim or the books of the Sunan in their homes, but you will often find the books of the Ṣūfīs with fabrications, exaggerations, distortions and fairy-tale stories all of which provide the lure of cheap and easy salvation and save a person from the hardship and toil of following the Sunnah and implementing it in one's home, in one's appearance, upon one's children and in one's worship and behaviour!

As for the other affairs mentioned: Reading and studying his biography should be part of the curriculum in all Muslim schools and institutions starting from an early age right through to university. As for reciting the Qur'ān, then there ought to be no day except that a Muslim recites his share of the Qur'ān. As for feeding others, it is from charity and acts of charity are done on every day of the year through whatever means each person has at his disposable. Thus, it is from miserliness that Muslims specify a day just for the Prophet (ﷺ) to be remembered and it is an evil type of position to take with respect to the Prophet (ﷺ).

5. The Argument that the Scholars Praised the Mawlid Celebration

Some of the scholars praised the mawlid celebration when it spread during their time and this has been relied upon by the Innovators to justify this innovation of the Christians and Ismā'īlī Bāṭinī Shī'ites. It is here we start seeing violation of the points which were agreed upon earlier in that the point of reference when there is a difference between Muslims is the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and Ijmā'. This is disrespect

to the Prophet (ﷺ). We have differed over a religious matter and they behave as if the answer does not lie with the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. This is a revilement of the Prophet and his message.

First, actions of worship are based upon the principles of legislation (shar‘) and following (ittibā‘) and not upon intellect, opinions and deeming something to be good. No speech stands up against the speech of the Messenger (ﷺ) who said, “*The worst of affairs and the newly-invented matters*” and “*Beware of the newly-invented affairs for every newly-invented matter is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance*” and “*Every innovation is misguidance.*” So when a person is shown the statements of the Messenger (ﷺ) and the abandonment of this practice by Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, the most righteous of this ummah and then the rest of the Companions, and then he comes with the saying of Ibn Hajar (d. 852H) or al-Ṣuyūṭī (d. 911H) or al-Sakhāwī (d. 902H) and others from the latecomers after the 8th century hijrah, he has testified against himself that he is a liar in his claim of loving and respecting the command of the Prophet (ﷺ) and of following his Companions.

Whoever argued by way of the erroneous speech of Ibn Hajar or al-Ṣuyūṭī or al-Sakhāwī and others is claiming that these later scholars are better guided, more erudite, and more loving of the Messenger than than Abū Bakr and ‘Umar and that they identified such goodness that Abū Bakr and ‘Umar were unable to identify as being good for the Muslims in their religion. Alongside our knowledge that the Messenger (ﷺ) said in his farewell sermon as occurs in the ḥadīth of al-‘Irbād, “*Whoever amongst you lives for long will see many controversies, so you must stick to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of my rightly-guided Caliphs, bite onto it with your molars and beware of the newly-invented matters, for every newly-invented matter is an innovation and all innovation is misguidance.*” Thus, the saying of every scholar from the latecomers who praised the practice of celebrating the mawlid is thrown against the wall and abandoned for the saying of the

Messenger. Whoever implies that these latecomers were more guided in this issue than the Companions, the Four Imāms and the Salaf as a whole has revealed that he desires misguidance over guidance and he prefers the way of the cursed Bāṭinī Ismā'īlī Shī'ite descendants of the Jews and Magians over the Prophet of Islām (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and his Companions and is simply using the erroneous views and opinions of the latecomers to justify his departure from the Sharī'ah brought by Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم).¹¹²

Second, whilst there are those who might have considered the mawlid celebration to be good, there are others who did not consider it to be good and who spoke against it and declared it an innovation. From them **Tāj al-Dīn al-Fākihānī** (d. 734H) who authored a short tract on this subject, **Abū 'Abdullāh Muḥammad al-Ḥaffār** (d. 811H), **Ibn al-Ḥāj** (d. 737H) in his book *al-Madkhal* and **Imām al-Shāṭibī** (d. 790H). They are correct because those who praise the mawlid celebration are not able to give a definitive criterion through which the alleged good bid'ah is distinguished from the evil bid'ah and hence, their praise of the mawlid celebration on the one hand, yet condemnation and refutation of innovations in affairs of worship - whose mention has preceded from some of them - is a contradiction and highlights their deficiency in making istidlāl (deduction of evidence) in the religion because they are latecomers and are a far stretch from the Companions, Tābi'īn and the Imāms of the Salaf who surpassed them by far in understanding and in making istidlāl (deducing evidences) from the texts. You will not find such affairs with the great Imāms of

¹¹² This and similar speech is not in reference to the common-people who are deceived and misguided by evil scholars, but to the evil scholars themselves. The common people are simply blind-followers with good intentions and these evil scholars hinder them from the straight path by erecting these innovations and crooked ways on the sideways of the path and then entice the common-people to divert to the left or to the right. Then they cut them off from the path completely once they have enticed them to enter these crooked paths.

the second and third centuries hijrah in whose fiqh (jurisprudence) and istidlāl there is simplicity, clarity and satisfaction. So why do these people leave the Companions and the Imāms of the Salaf, who are praised by the Prophet (ﷺ) and opt for the sayings of the latecomers?

6. Rejoicing with Allāh's Bounty and Mercy

From the far-fetched evidences in their use of the verse:

قُلْ بِفَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَبِرَحْمَتِهِ فَبِذَلِكَ فَلْيَفْرَحُوا هُوَ خَيْرٌ مِمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

Say: 'In the bounty of Allāh and in His mercy - in that let them rejoice; it is better than what they accumulate'. (10:58)

They claim it is proof for rejoicing with the Prophet's birthday. This is a distortion of the verse and making it carry a meaning which it does not carry from near or far. Acting upon an angle [of interpretation of a text] which is not established from the Righteous Salaf is not accepted from whoever comes after them with the claim that the text [in question] indicates this practice.¹¹³

Imām al-Shāṭibī (d. 790H) said, "Often you will find the people of innovation and misguidance seeking evidence through [the texts] of the Book and the Sunnah and making them carry their doctrine and expressing [their evidence] through ambiguous [generalized] passages - presenting this to the common folk - whilst they think they are upon something and there are many examples of this."¹¹⁴ As for the explanation of this verse, then the Companions understood it to mean Islām (faḍl) and the Qur'ān (rahmah) by which Allāh guided the people. This is related from Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) and Qatādah

¹¹³ Shaykh Ismā'īl al-Anṣārī as occurs in his treatise in *Rasā'il Fī Ḥukm al-Ihtifāl bil-Mawlid al-Nabawiyy* (Dār al-Āṣimah, p. 466).

¹¹⁴ Refer to *al-Muwāfaqāt* of al-Shāṭibī (3/71) through the previous reference.

and al-Ḥasan [al-Baṣrī] and Mujāhid. And others related it the other way around, the Qur'ān is the bounty and Islām is the mercy and from them is Ibn 'Abbās (رضي الله عنه) and Zayd bin Aslam and others.¹¹⁵

And as for the meaning of “**in that let them rejoice**” then it refers to the disbelievers with the meaning that let them rejoice with Islām and the Qur'ān that has been revealed to them, it is far better than the wealth that they accumulate. So this verse was addressing the Pagans of Quraysh. It is therefore established that there is nothing in this verse at all and it is another very far-fetched attempt to argue for innovation. Further, they must name one Companion, one Successor, one of the Four Imāms or any of the Imāms of the Salaf who understood this verse in this way and who deduced evidence from it for celebrating the 12th of Rabī al-Awwal. And when this is not found, then it is a clear distortion of this verse.

Also, the bounty and mercy is in the Prophet being sent as a Prophet and Messenger when he reached the age of forty and this is established in the saying of Allāh, “**And we did not send your (arsalnāka) except as a mercy to all of mankind.**” (21:107). The mercy in this verse is attached to sending (*irsāl*) and not birth (*wilādah*). And in the Sunnah, the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) referred to him being sent (*ib'āth*) as a mercy and did not refer to his birth as a mercy. Abū Hurayrah reports that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, when asked to make *du'ā* against the pagans, “Indeed I was not sent (*ub'ath*) as one who curses, but I was sent (*bu'ithtu*) as a mercy.”¹¹⁶ Thus, the bounty and mercy is in the sending (*irsāl*, *ib'āth*), which is being made a Prophet and Messenger and all of this is tied to his message and teaching, which is that of Tawḥīd. This is what the Companions rejoiced with and this is what they used to thank Allāh for.

¹¹⁵ Refer to the tafsīrs of al-Ṭabarī, al-Baghawī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr.

¹¹⁶ Reported by Muslim (no. 4704) and *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (no. 2502).

7. The Companions Sitting Together and Praising Allāh For Guiding Them

What also illustrates how innovation blinds the heart and befores the mind and causes it to see what is not actually there is in another alleged evidence for celebrating the mawlid in the form of the following ḥadīth related by al-Nasāī in his Sunan.

5428. It was narrated that Abū Sa'eed Al-Khudrī said: "Mu'āwiyah, (may Allāh be pleased with him,) said: 'The Messenger of Allāh ﷺ went out to a circle – meaning, of his Companions – and said: 'What are you doing?' They said: 'We have come together to pray to Allāh and praise Him for guiding us to His religion, and blessing us with you.' He said: 'I ask you, by Allāh, is that the only reason?' They said: 'By Allāh, we have not come together for any other reason.' He said: 'I am not asking you to swear to an oath because of any suspicion; rather Jibril came to me and told me that Allāh, the Mighty and Sublime, is boasting of you to the angels.'" (Sahih)

٥٤٢٨ - أَخْبَرَنَا سَوَّادُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا مَرْحُومٌ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْمَزِينِ عَنْ أَبِي نَعْمَانَ، عَنْ أَبِي عُمَانَ النَّهْدِيِّ، عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ مُعَاوِيَةُ [رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ]: إِنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ خَرَجَ عَلَى خَلْقَةٍ - يَعْنِي مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ - فَقَالَ: «مَا أَجَلَسْتُمْ؟» قَالُوا: جَلَسْنَا نَدْعُو اللَّهَ وَنُحَمِّدُهُ عَلَى مَا هَدَانَا لِيُسَبِّحَهُ وَمَنْ عَائِنَا بِكَ. قَالَ: «اللَّوْا مَا أَجَلَسْتُمْ إِلَّا ذَلِكَ» قَالُوا: «اللَّوْا مَا أَجَلَسْنَا إِلَّا ذَلِكَ، قَالَ: «أَنَا إِنِّي لَمْ أَشْتَجِلْكُمْ قَهْمَةً لَكُمْ وَأَنَا أَنَا جِبْرَائِيلُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ فَأَخْبَرَنِي أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يُبَاهِي بِكُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةَ».

First, let's look at what made the Companions to sit down in a circle and what actions they performed. They said, "We have sat together to call upon Allāh, to praise Him for guiding us to His religion and for favouring us through you (the Messenger)." So first, they are making du'ā to Allāh, they are praising Him for the guidance they received and the fact that Allāh honoured them and favoured them by sending them a Prophet who took them out of darkness, misguidance. Nothing here about 12th Rabī al-Awwal or any birthday. They are speaking

about the message brought by Muḥammad, that of Tawḥid, that they were purified, taught the Book and the Sunnah after they had been in misguidance, as if alluding to what Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) has stated in His Book in the following verse,

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٦٤﴾

Certainly did Allāh confer [great] favor upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although they had been before in manifest error. (3:164).

The Messenger brought them the light of Tawḥid and the Sunnah and took them out of darkness, out of the Jāhiliyyah they used to be in, of shirk, worshipping the dead, seeking rescue and aid from others besides Allāh, from burying daughters alive and all the other evils in Jāhiliyyah. This was a great favour and they were expressing gratitude to Allāh, praising Him for guidance and choosing them with this favour that Allāh mentioned and recounted to them in this verse. So it as if they had heard this verse and decided to sit down and be grateful to Allāh. Ibn Kathīr explains this verse with the following: That Allāh sent a messenger to them from amongst themselves, “So that they would be able to speak to him, ask him, sit with him and benefit from him” and then he mentions a series of verses - (30:21), (18:110), (25:20), (12:109), (6:130) - all of which have the import of messengers being sent to people from amongst them as opposed to those who are foreign to them - then he said, “This is greater in conveying the favour [bestowed] in that the messenger is from amongst themselves in that they are able to speak to him and return back to him to understand the speech coming from him, and hence He said, ‘**reciting to them His verses**’ meaning the Qur’ān and ‘**purifying them**’ meaning commanding them with good and prohibiting them from evil so that their souls can be purified from the dirt and filth of that which they

were mixed up in during their state of shirk and jāhiliyyah, **'and teaching them the Book and wisdom'** meaning the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, **'although they had been before in manifest error'** meaning in deviation and clear error that is apparent to everyone."¹¹⁷

And Imām al-Ṭabarī (310H) states that the favour is that Allāh sent to them a Messenger in their own tongue so that they could understand his message and he cites from Qatādah, "Allāh sent His Prophet (ﷺ) to a people who did not know so he taught them and to a people who had no adab (morals, manners) so he taught them adab." Once again in this verse and in all of its explanations by the classical mufasssīrīn - before the bid'ah of mawlid celebration began to spread after the 8th century - is in relation to the sending (irsāl, ib'āth) of Muḥammad as a Prophet and Messenger with the message of Tawḥīd which occurred at the age of forty and has no connection to his birth (wilādah). Then at the end of the ḥadīth the Prophet (ﷺ) mentioned how Allāh boasts about them to the Angels and this is because of their remembrance of Him, thanking Him and praising Him for the favour he bestowed upon them. So their action was worship of Allāh, remembrance of Allāh and gratefulness of Allāh (عز وجل) and was not the celebration of any birthday.

And this is the way of the person of Tawḥīd, he praises and thanks Allāh for the message of Tawḥīd with which He sent His Messenger, to purify the people to instruct them in the Book and the Wisdom (the Sunnah). They see the sending of the Messenger as a huge favour from Allāh and so how do they treat this favour? They praise and thank Allāh, they worship Him alone and only through what He commanded and legislated. They study the Sunnah of His Prophet and restrict themselves to it. Once that is clear, then second, where is there anything remotely related to the 12th Rabī al-Awwal and celebrating a birthday in this ḥadīth? There is no connection

¹¹⁷ Refer to *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Azīm* of Ibn Kathīr.

whatsoever, but this is the way the evil scholars make fools of the common-folk, because the common-folk do not understand that there is an *istidlāl* (method of deducing evidence) that is sound and an *istidlāl* that is falsehood and is from the ways of those who were cursed amongst the People of the Book who twist words from their proper places.

So the Companions praised and thanked Allāh and this is completely different to what these people do, in imitation of the Christians towards ʿĪsā (عَلَيْهِ السَّلَام) and in imitation of the Bāṭinī Ismāʿīlī's towards Ahl al-Bayt whereby they praise and extol the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) to a level where



they attribute divine qualities to him and spend the day and night (of 12th Rabī al-Awwal) partying, singing and dancing with perhaps a token reading from the Prophetic Sīrah. This gathering is to praise and extol and aggrandize the Prophet in a way that he prohibited, “Do not exaggerate with respect to me as the Christians exaggerated with respect to ʿĪsā ibn Maryam. For I am a slave, so say, [about me] ‘The slave of Allāh and His Messenger’.”¹¹⁸ He (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) also said, “Beware of exaggeration (*ghuluww*) in the religion, for those who came before you perished because of their exaggeration in religion.”¹¹⁹

And it is not a gathering like the gathering of those Companions who were grateful for Tawḥīd and the Sunnah which Allāh favoured them with through the sending of the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ). The Ṣūfīs are not grateful for the Tawḥīd brought by the Messenger and his Sunnah

¹¹⁸ Reported by al-Bukhārī.

¹¹⁹ Reported by Aḥmad, al-Nasāʾī, Ibn Mājah and Ḥākim from Ibn ʿAbbās.

because they oppose that Tawhīd and violate it due to their devotion to the saints, invoking them, seeking rescue from them and making their hearts and those of their followers attached to them in ways that exceed the bounds. They oppose the Sunnah and worship Allāh through innovation (bid'ah), through that which He did not legislate. They have with them the mysticism that came to them from other nations, from the Christians, the Buddhists and through Philosophy and Gnosticism. And many of them believe in waḥdat ul-wujūd (unity of existence). Some of them believe that the Messenger is one with Allāh in essence and that the truth and reality (ḥaqīqah) is to become one with Allāh and to perish out of existence (al-fanā) and that this is Tawhīd! So why would they rejoice with the actual teaching of the Prophet (ﷺ) in the matter of Tawhīd as those Companions did when this teaching of strict and pure Tawhīd directly clashes with much of what they believe, profess and do.

8. The Day of 'Āshūrā'

Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī (d. 852H) claimed that the mawlid celebration has an angle from the ḥadīth of Prophet (ﷺ) in which it is mentioned that he came to al-Madīnah and found the Jews fasting on the day of 'Āshūrā'.¹²⁰ He asked them why they were fasting and they explained that it was the day that Allāh caused Pharaoh to drown and saved Mūsā (عليه السلام) and because of that they fast on that day out of gratitude to Allāh (ﷻ). So the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "I am more worthy of Mūsā (عليه السلام) than you" and he would fast that day and commanded others to fast on that day. Ibn Ḥajar's claim that this ḥadīth provides an angle for the mawlid is baseless for a number of

¹²⁰ This is mentioned by al-Ṣuyūfī in *Ḥusn al-Maqṣad Fī 'Amal al-Mawlid* and in it Ibn Ḥajar says, "The foundation for practicing the mawlid is a bid'ah, it is not related from anyone from the Righteous Salaf in the three generations..." Refer to 1st volume of *al-Ḥāwī lil-Fatāwā* (p. 196) and al-Zarqānī mentions it in *al-Mawāhib al-Ladaniyyah* (p. 140).

reasons.¹²¹ Before making this claim, Ibn Ḥajar said, “The foundation for practicing the mawlid is a bid‘ah, it is not related from anyone from the Righteous Salaf in the three generations.” Thus, the first part of his speech contradicts the second part of the speech. This is because the Righteous Salaf did not perform it because of the absence of a text. If no text was understood by them to legitimize celebrating the mawlid, then no such text exists as an evidence. If the interpretation of Ibn Ḥajar of this ḥadīth was correct, we would have seen that interpretation transmitted from the Salaf. But the Salaf never understood that from any text and Ibn Hajar acknowledges they did not practice it. Also there is nothing in the ḥadīth itself that comes remotely close to an intelligible reason for celebrating the Prophet’s mawlid since the Prophet (ﷺ) simply fasted and ordered the Muslims to fast and beyond this, there is nothing else in the ḥadīth.

Note that every other type of evidence is similar to this one. Whether a verse from the Qur’ān, a ḥadīth or a statement from a Companion, it is so broad and general and disconnected from the actual issue of celebrating the 12th of Rabī al-‘Awwal that one wonders how on Earth they managed to make the connection. And it also shows that the later scholars such as Ibn Ḥajar, al-Ṣuyūṭī who tried to justify this innovation were not of the same calibre and grounding as the mujtahid Imāms of the second and third centuries like Abū Ḥanīfah, al-Awzāī, al-Thawrī, Mālik, Shāfi‘ī, Aḥmad and others. Whilst they contributed to Islāmic sciences, may Allāh reward them and have mercy upon them, they are nowhere near the actual pioneers of those sciences in ḥadīth and fiqh who preceded them by centuries and who have far greater fiqh (understanding) and baṣīrah (insight).

¹²¹ Refer to Shaykh Ismā‘īl al-Anṣārī as occurs in his treatise in *Rasā’il Fī Ḥukm al-Iḥtifāl bil-Mawlid al-Nabawiyy* (Dār al-‘Āṣimah, p. 476).

9. The Allegation that the Prophet Performed His Own 'Aqīqah

Also from the baseless evidences is the alleged report that the Prophet (ﷺ) performed his own 'aqīqah!¹²² This is related by al-Bayḥaqī from Anas bin Mālik that the Prophet performed his 'aqīqah after prophethood and al-Ṣuyūṭī attempted to use this as evidence. Imām Mālik declared this report to be from the abāṭil (falsehoods) as cited by Ibn Rushd in Kitāb al-'Aqīqah.¹²³ The narrator of this ḥadīth was Ibn Muḥarrar and he was abandoned by the ḥadīth scholars because he narrated this ḥadīth. Imām Aḥmad said about him "Munkar" and declared him weak.¹²⁴ Ibn Ḥibbān said about him, "He was from the best of the servants of Allāh, save that he used to lie and would not know and he would turn the reports around and would not understand."¹²⁵ And al-Bayḥaqī himself said, "Abdullāh bin Muḥarrar reported a munkar ḥadīth concerning the Prophet (ﷺ) doing his own 'aqīqah."¹²⁶

Shaykh Ismā'īl al-Anṣārī says, after citing the full passage from al-Bayḥaqī, "End of the speech of al-Bayḥaqī to whom al-Ṣuyūṭī referenced that ḥadīth which he claimed to be an angle of evidence for the mawlid practice and al-Suyūṭī behaved badly in that he did not mention the speech of al-Bayḥaqī about the ḥadīth. Rather, he left it out so as to give the impression to the one who reads it that it is worthy of being used as evidence."¹²⁷ Al-Nawawī also says, "This ḥadīth is bāṭil and al-Bayḥaqī said it is munkar."¹²⁸ There are also other statements of al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Mizzī (d. 742H) and al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Zahabī

¹²² Refer to *Rasā'il Fī Ḥukm al-Iḥtifāl bil-Mawlid al-Nabawiyy* (p. 479 onwards).

¹²³ In *al-Muqaddimāt al-Mumahhidāt Li Bayān Mā Iqtadathu Rusūm al-Mudawwanah min al-Aḥkām* (2/15) as indicated in the previous reference.

¹²⁴ Refer to Ibn al-Qayyim's *Tuhfat al-Mawdūd bi Aḥkām al-Mawlūd* (p. 51).

¹²⁵ In *al-Majrūhīn* (2/29).

¹²⁶ *Al-Sunan al-Kubrā* (9/300).

¹²⁷ *Rasā'il Fī Ḥukm al-Iḥtifāl bil-Mawlid al-Nabawiyy* (p. 482).

¹²⁸ *Al-Majmū' Sharḥ al-Muhadhdhab* (p. 330) in the chapter on 'Aqīqah.

(d. 748H) and others to this effect. This is sufficient to invalidate this futile angle of evidence.

10. The Statement of Ibn Mas'ūd: What the Muslims Deem to Be Good is Good with Allāh

Another broad argument is that the scholars have considered it something good and it has been acted upon and in light of the statement of Ibn Mas'ūd (رضي الله عنه), "What the Muslims deem as good then it is good with Allāh and what the Muslims deem as repugnant then it is repugnant with Allāh", it is an acceptable practice.

And the answer to this is that this narration is referring specifically to the Companions in the context of agreeing upon the khilāfah of Abū Bakr (رضي الله عنه). Al-Ḥākim brings this statement of Ibn Mas'ūd, "What the Muslims deem as good then it is good with Allāh and what the Muslims deem as repugnant then it is repugnant with Allāh, for all of the Companions have held the view of Abū Bakr succeeding in rule."¹²⁹ The same is also reported by Ibn Kathīr in *al-Bidāyah wal-Nihāyah*.¹³⁰ And it is also reported by Ibn Baṭṭāh with his chain as follows, "Indeed Allāh looked into the hearts of the servants and found the heart of Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) to be the best of the hearts of His servants and so He chose him for Himself and sent him as a Messenger. Then He looked into the hearts of His servants after Muḥammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) and found the hearts of the Companions to be the best of the hearts of the servants. So He made them ministers of His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) fighting for His religion. So whatever the Muslims hold to be good then it is good with Allāh and whatever the Muslims hold to be evil it is evil with Allāh."¹³¹ After it is established this is referring to the

¹²⁹ *Al-Mustadrak* (3/78).

¹³⁰ *Al-Bidāyah* (10/327).

¹³¹ Related by Aḥmad and al-Ṭayālīsī and refer to *Minhāj al-Sunnah* (1/166) of Ibn Taymiyyah.

Companions, it is clear there is no proof in this statement. For the celebration of the Mawlid on 12th Rabī' al-Awwal never arose in the minds or hearts of Companions because it was not a legislated way to show love and veneration of the Prophet (ﷺ). Further, if the saying of Ibn Mas'ūd was referring to all the Muslims, then all the Muslims have not actually agreed upon the mawlid celebration and it would still therefore not be a proof.

11. That Ibn Taymiyyah Said: The One Who Performs the Mawlid is Rewarded

Then they present the statement of Ibn Taymiyyah (رحمته الله) that some people may be rewarded for performing the mawlid celebration as surmised by the opposers from his book *Iqtidā' al-Ṣirāṭ al-Mustaqīm*. However, this is a misquote of his speech and does not present the full picture of the view of Ibn Taymiyyah on this issue.¹³²

Ibn Taymiyyah said, "Likewise what some people introduce, either out of resemblance to the Christians in (celebrating) the birthday of 'Īsā (عليه السلام) or out of love and veneration for the Prophet (ﷺ). Allāh may reward them for this love and exertion (ijtihād) but not for the innovated (practices) such as taking the birthday of the Prophet (ﷺ) as a celebration, alongside (the fact) that the people have differed concerning his birthday. For this was never done by the Salaf despite the presence of what required it (to be performed) and the absence of anything to prevent it, had it been something good. And if it had been pure goodness, or overwhelmingly the case, the Salaf (رضي الله عنهم) were more worthy of (initiating and performing) it than us. For they were more severe in love and veneration for the Prophet (ﷺ) than us and more eager for goodness. However, the

¹³² Refer to Shaykh Ismā'īl al-Anṣārī's rebuttal of this as occurs in his treatise in *Rasā'il Fī Ḥukm al-Ihtifāl bil-Mawlid al-Nabawiyy* (Dār al-'Āṣimah, p. 513 onwards).

perfection of love and veneration lies in following him, obeying him, following his command, reviving his Sunnah inwardly and outwardly, spreading what he was sent with and striving upon that with heart, hand and tongue. For this is the way of the first of those who preceded in faith from the Muhājirūn and Anṣār and whoever followed them in goodness, Most of those whom you find to be eager for these innovated practices, alongside what they have of good intention and striving (ijtihād) on account of which reward is hoped for them, you will find them (at the same time) slack with respect to the command of the Messenger, with respect to (those commands) which they have been commanded to show eagerness. They are at the same level as the one who embellishes the Qur'ān but does not read it, or he reads it but does not follow it. And also like the one who beautifies the mosque but does not pray in it, or prays in it very little. And like the one who takes the beads and prayer mats as beautification and the likes of these outward decorations which are not legislated and which are accompanied with showing off (riyā), pride (kibr) and preoccupation away from what is legislated to what corrupts the condition of the person who does such things, as has come in the ḥadīth, *'The action of no people turned evil except that they beautified their places of worship.'* Know that from the actions are those which comprise goodness because they comprise various types of legislated affairs but they also comprise evil such as innovation and other than it. Thus, that action is good with respect to what it comprises of the types of legislated affairs and evil with respect to what it comprises of turning away from the religion in its entirety such as is the condition of the hypocrites and the sinners. And this is what the ummah has been put to trial with in the later times. So upon you is two ways: The first of them: That your eagerness should be for holding fast to the Sunnah, inwardly and outwardly, with respect to yourself and those (under your command) who obey you. Inform of what is good (ma'rūf) and show rejection of what is evil (munkar). The second: That you call the people to the Sunnah according to ability. So when you see the one who does this (action) and who will not

abandon it except by turning to something more evil than it, then do not call to him to abandon that evil by doing something more evil than it, or by abandoning an obligation (wājib) or recommendation (mandūb) whose abandonment is more harmful than doing that disliked thing. However, if there are (aspects) of goodness in innovation then provide a substitute for it with legislated goodness according to your ability. This is because souls do not abandon something except for something else. And it is not desirable for a person to abandon goodness except for what is of its like or to what is better than it. For just as those who perform these innovations are censured, having brought something which is disliked, those who abandon the acts of sunnah are also censured..."¹³³

Ibn Taymiyyah explains that the intent of a person can vary, it may be to resemble the Christians in their celebration of the birth of 'Īsā (عليه السلام) in which case it is an unlegislated matter because of this factor of resemblance.¹³⁴ Or it could be because a person loves the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) in which case a person may be rewarded for his inward love that drew him to this innovation but not for the actual innovated celebration itself. Further, in this second situation, Ibn Taymiyyah differentiated between a person who if prohibited from the mawlid celebration would go to something that is more evil than it in which case he is not called to abandon it such that he falls into what is worse than it. But as for the believer who is not like this who is able to know and understand and follow right guidance, then his action is disapproved of and it is obligatory upon him to stick to the Sunnah inwardly and outwardly with respect to himself and those under his

¹³³ *Iqtidā' Širāt al-Mustaqīm* (Maktabah al-Rushd, pp. 619-621).

¹³⁴ This is in fact how the celebration of the Mawlid appeared amongst the Bāṭinī Ismā'īlī Shī'ites in Egypt who mimicked the celebration of Christmas and other days found with the Christians or Persians. They celebrated the birthdays of Ahl al-Bayt as a means of inviting the masses to their Ismā'īlī Shi'ism and also added the celebration of the Prophet's mawlid so as not to alienate the Sunnīs whose misguidance they were intending.

authority. And all of this discussion is after Ibn Taymiyyah establishes in the same passage and elsewhere that this is an innovated practice not performed by the Salaf despite the presence of factors that would have invited them to do it and hence it is judged an innovation that clashes with the guidance of the Prophet (ﷺ) because loving and venerating the Prophet is only through making *ittibā'* and practising and spreading his actual Sunnah. Hence, the use of the speech of Ibn Taymiyyah amounts to both clipping and twisting of his speech.

12. So Much Has Been Authored on the Mawlid

Another line of evidence is that so many authors wrote on the subject of the mawlid. Untrue claims are often found in this line of evidence. From such claims is that the author of *Kashf al-Zunūn 'an Asāmī al-Kutub wal-Funūn* stated that Ibn Kathīr wrote on the topic of the mawlid in numerous works such as *Jāmi' al-Āthār Fī Mawlid al-Nabiyy al-Mukhtār* and *al-Lafẓ al-Rā'iq Fī Mawlid Khayr al-Khalā'iq* and that others mentioned another work *Mawrid al-Ṣādī Fī Mawlid al-Hādī* and so on.

Shaykh Ismā'īl al-Anṣārī responds to this by saying all of this is baseless and incorrect.¹³⁵ After checking *Kashf al-Zunūn* under the letter *jīm* for first book no such work exists for Ibn Kathīr but there is a work for Ibn Nāṣir al-Dimashqī (d. 842H). And as for the second book, under the letter *lām*, that book is also of Ibn Nāṣir al-Dimashqī and the third book also belongs to the same author. As for the actual writings of Ibn Kathīr, then in *al-Bidāyah* one can find a lengthy *sīrah* of the Prophet (ﷺ) and also in his work *al-Fuṣūl fī Ikhtisār Sīrah al-Rasūl* as well as other writings and the issue of the mawlid celebration is not addressed in them. So all of these are mere claims made in order to give support to this *bid'ah* which is no basis in the *dīn* of Allāh. A similar claim is made about al-Sakhāwī who is alleged to have written a work on the mawlid but it turns out that the book in

¹³⁵ Refer to *Rasā'il Fī Ḥukm al-Iḥtifāl bil-Mawlid al-Nabawiyy* (p. 527).

question *al-Tabr al-Masbūq Fī Dhayl al-Sulūk* is simply a book of history to augment an earlier work of Aḥmad bin 'Alī al-Maqrīzī called *al-Sulūk bi Ma'rifah Duwal al-Mulūk* and its subject matter is not on the mawlid itself, it is a book of historical events, even if some matters pertaining to the mawlid are mentioned therein. So in all of this we see attempts to inflate the matter by making it appear as if so many books were written, and so many rulers celebrated it and so many scholars praised this practice and all of this is a sign of bankruptcy in evidence. The abundance of books being written on a subject does not make it from the religion. We already agreed at the beginning that something from the religion is only established through the Qur'ān, Sunnah and Ijmā'.

13. Other Types of Evidences

Because there is no specific evidence in the Sunnah for celebrating the mawlid and everyone with honesty and integrity is agreed that this action is indeed a bid'ah in the religion with no precedence - a large number of weak and far-fetched evidences are brought together to make a large pile so as to impress the onlooker that this practice is from the very foundations of the religion and that whoever opposes it disrespects the Prophet (ﷺ). We shall mention some of these other evidences below and note how these arguments violate the seven agreed upon points that were mentioned at the very beginning of this treatise. They include:

1. That some of the rulers such as Muẓaffar al-Dīn al-Kawkbūrī (d. 630H) of Irbil first celebrated the mawlid (in the early seventh century) and because they were righteous rulers, their action is acceptable. This is invalidated by firmly established evidence that the first to celebrate the mawlid were the Ismā'īlī Shī'ite disbelievers, the offspring of 'Ubayd al-Qaddāh of Persian-Magian-Jewish origin. Further, it is not factually correct that al-Muẓaffar

- was the first to celebrate the mawlid as he was preceded by **‘Umar bin Muḥammad al-Mullā** - a Ṣufī - whose example he followed.¹³⁶
2. That some notable scholars praised the action of those rulers who celebrated the mawlid such as Abu Shāmah (d. 665H) and al-Nawawī (d. 676H) and others.
 3. That Ibn Baṭūṭah (d. 779H) praised Muḥammad bin Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī, one of the judges of Makkah, for his celebration of the mawlid.
 4. That many people have received command from the Prophet (ﷺ) in their dreams to celebrate his mawlid.
 5. That just like birthday celebrations are held for leaders and important figures to remind of them, the same can be done for the Prophet (ﷺ) to remind the people of him. Shaykh Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm Āl al-Shaykh¹³⁷ replied to this by saying that the mention of the Prophet is made in the adhān, the iqāmah, in the sermons, in the prayers, in the tashahhud and also in the ṣalāt upon him at the end of the prayer and in reading the ḥadīths and in following him [in his Sunnah], all of this is loftier and greater than that his remembrance should be a yearly thing. Further, that it is easy for the people who are weak in religion to exaggerate in such veneration [through birthday celebrations] because there is no hardship upon the souls in this and so they make it a replacement for the obligations due from them which bring hardship for them. However, the true and real veneration and respect of the Prophet (ﷺ) is in obeying him in doing what he commanded and keeping away from what he prohibited. Thus, the Righteous Salaf were the most intense of people in

¹³⁶ This is mentioned by Abū Shāmah in *al-Bā’ith ‘alā Inkār al-Bida’ wal-Ḥawādith* (p. 13).

¹³⁷ Refer to *Rasā’il Fī Ḥukm al-Ihtifāl bil-Mawlid al-Nabawiyy* (p. 524).

respecting and venerating the Prophet (ﷺ) but they never spent their wealth in the likes of these affairs. Further, this argument involves making a qiyās (analogy) for the Prophet (ﷺ) and putting him alongside others which is to disrespect him and his lofty standing.

These examples should suffice as a mere illustration of the far-fetched, unrelated evidences which are gathered together to prove the legitimacy of imitating the Christians and the Ismā'īlī Bāṭinī inventors of the mawlid celebration and they have dozens more.

The general aim is to gather lots of very weak and far-fetched alleged evidences, pile them together and to make it appear that the one who denies all this alleged evidence has gone mad. In reality, it is all a mirage and there is not a shred of substance in there. This is very unlike the legitimate acts of worship for which one can quickly bring solid, highly-relevant, specific evidences. The soul is satisfied and convinced immediately. But as for these alleged evidences, one can see their irrelevance and the desperation with which they are gathered, compiled and presented and they affect only the common people who are not equipped with knowledge - many of whom find ease and satisfaction in an Islām that requires only a few days of devotion throughout the year and hence the mawlid celebration appeals to them and the lifestyle they have chosen. As for the leaders at the top, the evil scholars, then the burden is upon their shoulders for misguiding millions towards an affair that has no basis in any revealed legislation, nor the Sunnah of any Prophet sent by Allāh (ﷺ).

Closing Notes

The vast majority of people who celebrate the Prophet's mawlid are the common-people who have been deceived by evil scholars through mountain heaps of shubuhāt (doubts, arguments). But as soon as this mountain is torched it burns to the ground in seconds, because there is nothing of substance in it. They are hindered from the path by doubts and they do not have knowledge of the matters - especially about the origins of the mawlid celebration at the hands of the disbelieving hypocrites and enemies of Islām from the Bāṭinī movements who tried to destroy Islām from within.

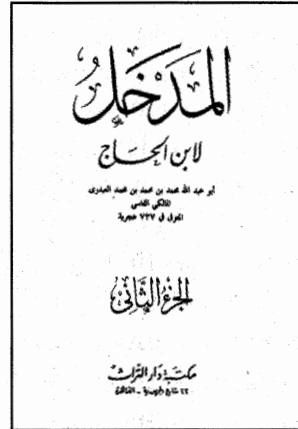
It is important when discussing and trying to guide such people that they are first made to agree upon the important foundations - such as the seven points mentioned at the beginning of this treatise. It is futile to proceed to discuss alleged evidences for the mawlid without getting explicit agreement on those foundations. This makes it easier for them to see that good intentions are not enough in worshipping Allāh and respecting the Prophet (ﷺ). We present in the appendices the fatawā of Mālikī jurists of the 8th and 9th centuries after hijrah regarding the mawlid celebration. Also, some indications of the exaggeration that Muslims have unfortunately fallen into as well as their imitation of the Christians as was prophesied by the Prophet (ﷺ), from the many signs of his truthfulness.

May the ṣalāt and salām of Allāh be upon the Messenger, his Family and Companions.

Appendix 1: Fatawā of Medieval Mālikī Scholars on the Mawlid

Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥāj al-‘Abdarī al-Fāsī al-Mālikī (d. 737H)

In his work, al-Madkhal, he writes, “Chapter Regarding the Mawlid: And from the sum of what they have introduced of innovations - alongside their belief that this is from the greatest [forms] of worship and most manifest of symbols - is what they do in the month of Rabī al-Awwal of the mawlid [celebration] and it comprises innovations and unlawful matters in general.”¹³⁸ He also said, “Most strange it is how they perform the mawlid [celebration] with songs, rejoicement and happiness as has preceded because of his birth (صلى الله عليه وسلم), as has taken place in this noble month yet he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) passed away in this [very] month to His Lord (عز وجل) and the ummah was struck and afflicted with a great calamity that is not equalled by any other calamity at all. And upon this, crying and much grief is what is required... so look at this noble month, whilst the affair is like this, and they are playing around and dancing and they neither cry nor grieve and if they had done that it would have been closer to the (true) situation.”¹³⁹

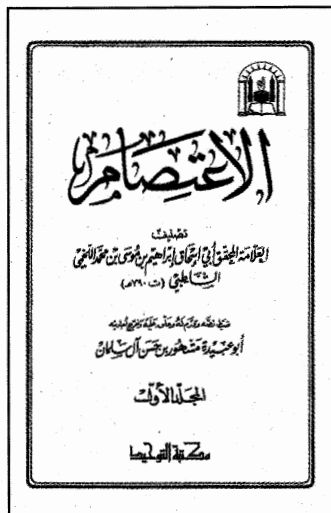


¹³⁸ *Al-Madkhal* (Maktabah Dār al-Turāth, 2/2). Over the next 30 pages or so Ibn al-Ḥāj goes on to vilify all the evil practices done during the mawlid celebration - and his angle is that this month is one where people should be grateful to Allāh for the sending of the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), yet these people have made it full of contraventions, falling into that which is ḥarām and wicked and what leads to evil and sinfulness in so many ways.

¹³⁹ *Al-Madkhal* (Maktabah Dār al-Turāth, 2/15).

Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm al-Shāṭibī al-Mālikī (d. 790H)

Al-Shāṭibī said, “From them (the innovations) is to stick to particular forms (kayfiyyāt, hay’āt) in practice such as performing dhikr in a group with a single voice (in unison) or taking the birthday of the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) as a celebration and what resembles that.”¹⁴⁰ And he said in his fatāwā when asked about making a waṣīyah (legacy) for spending on the mawlid celebration, “As for the first, which is the waṣīyah with a third (of wealth) so that the people can establish [a celebration] on the night of the birthday of the Prophet



(صلى الله عليه وسلم) then it is known that establishing the mawlid [celebration] upon the way that is customary amongst the people is an introduced innovation and every innovation is misguidance. Thus, spending in order to establish innovation is not permissible and the waṣīyah is not to be executed. Rather, it is obligatory upon the judge to annul it and return the third to the heirs so they can distribute it between themselves, and may Allāh make distant those paupers who request that the likes of this waṣīyah should be fulfilled.”¹⁴¹

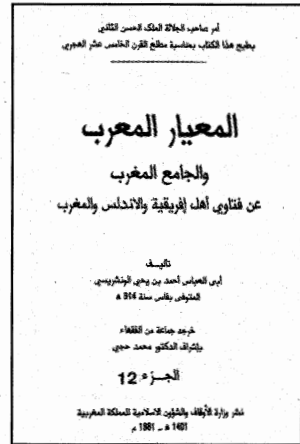
¹⁴⁰ *Al-I'tisām* (1/46).

¹⁴¹ *Fatāwā al-Shāṭibī* (taḥqīq Muḥammad Abū al-Ajfan, 2nd edition, 1406H, pp. 203-204).

Ahmad Ibn al-Qāsīm al-Qubāb al-Fāsī al-Mālikī (d. 778H)

In a compilation of the fatwās of jurists from Africa, Andalūsia and al-Maghrib titled *al-Mi'yār al-Mu'rab*, there occurs, "My sayyid (master) Ahmad al-Qubāb was asked about what is done by the teachers of lighting candles on the birthday of the Prophet and children gathering to send ṣalāt on the Prophet (ﷺ). And some children, who have beautiful voices recite a tenth of the Quran and also recite poetry in praise of the Prophet (ﷺ). Both men and women gather together for this reason."¹⁴²

In the answer, al-Qubāb says, "Everything which you have described are introduced innovations that must be ended. Whoever took part in it, aided in it or strove to keep it going is striving for innovation and misguidance. He assumes through his ignorance that he is venerating the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) by establishing his mawlid whereas he is opposing his Sunnah and committing a prohibited act that the Messenger of Allāh (ﷺ) forbade, doing this openly, introducing [such innovation] into the religion that is not part of it. Had he been truly venerating him in the correct way, he would have obeyed his command and not introduced into religion that which is not from it. He would not have subjected himself to that which Allāh, Most High, cautioned against when He said, 'Let those beware who oppose his command lest a tribulation befall them or a painful punishment inflicts them.' (24:63)."¹⁴³

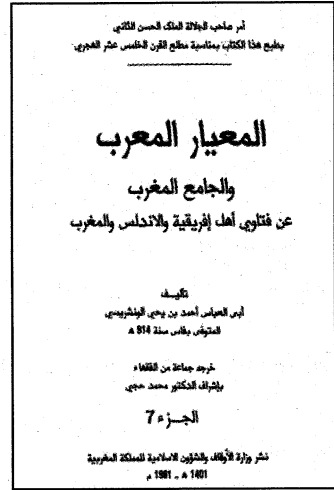


¹⁴² The question continues to mention issues about the teacher's making use of these candles and parents being compelled to buy candles due to the requests of their children.

¹⁴³ Refer to Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad bin Yaḥyā al-Wansharī's (d. 914H) compilation *al-Mi'yār al-Mu'rab* (1401H, 12/48-49).

Muḥammad bin 'Alī al-Ḥaffār al-Gharnaṭī al-Mālikī (d. 811H):

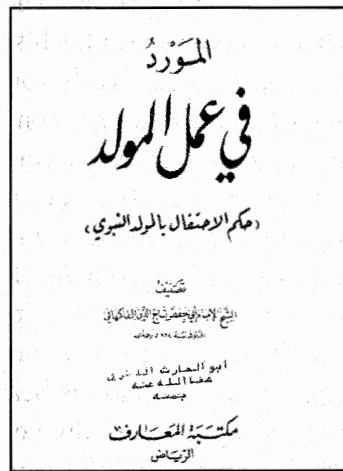
He said, “[Celebrating] the night of the mawlid , the Righteous Salaf - and they are the Companions of Allāh’s Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) - they never used to gather for worship on this night and they would not do anything additional [of devotion] compared to the rest of the nights of the year. This is because the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is not venerated except through the way in which his veneration has been legislated. Venerating him is from the greatest [forms] of nearness to Allāh. However, becoming close to Allāh (جَلْبَلَاةٌ) is only through what he legislated. And the evidence that the Salaf did not used to increase with any additional [actions] over any other night is that they differed about [his date of birth]. So it was said he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was born in Ramaḍān and it is said in Rabī [al-Awwal] and then it is differed over as to what day he was born in - upon four sayings. If there was worship on account of the birth of the best of creation (صلى الله عليه وسلم) on that night whose [following] morning he was born, it would have been known and famous and no differing would have occurred with respect to it. However, no additional veneration was legislated. Do you not see that on the day of Jumu‘ah, the best of the days upon which the sun rises, the best of which can be done on the virtuous day is to fast but the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) prohibited from fasting on the day of Jumu‘ah, alongside the greatness of its excellence. This proves that no worship takes place in a given time or place unless it has been legislated, and what has not been legislated is not to be done. This is because what the latter part of this ummah does not come with is not better guided than which the first part of it came with. If this door was opened, then a people would have come and said that the day of his hijrah to



Madīnah is the day on which Allāh gave strength (honour) to Islām and thus [people ought to] gather therein and worship. And others will say that the night on which he was taken on a journey, on this night such nobility was attained [by him] that cannot be estimated, so worship is to take place therein. Then there will be no limit to this. All goodness lies in following the Righteous Salaf whom Allāh chose for Himself. So whatever they do, we do it and whatever they abandoned, we abandon it. So when this is established, it is clear that gathering together on that night is not required legislatively (shar'an). Rather, he is ordered to abandon it."¹⁴⁴

Tāj al-Dīn al-Fākihānī al-Mālikī (d. 731H) on the Mawlid

Tāj al-Dīn al-Fākihānī is 'Umar bin 'Alī bin Sālīm bin Ṣadaqah al-Lakhmī, and he was spoken of by Ibn Kathīr as "The Shaykh, the Imam, possessor of many sciences." He died in Alexandria in 734H. He has a short treatise called *al-Mawrid Fī 'Amal al-Mawlid*, a fatwā given in response to a question on the mawlid, and within it he stated: "I say and with Allāh is success: I do not know for this mawlid (birthday celebration) any basis in the Book, nor the Sunnah and nor has its practice been narrated



from any one of the Scholars of the ummah who are the followed leaders in the religion holding fast to the ways of the predecessors. Rather, it is an innovation, which was invented by the idlers (lazy ones) and out of the soul's desire through which the devourers (of wealth) enriched themselves - (this) with the evidence that if we consider it in light of the five rulings, we say: Either it is wājib

¹⁴⁴ *Al-Mi'yār al-Mu'rab* (1401H, 7/99-100).

(obligatory), or *mandūb* (recommended) or *mubāh* (permissible), or *makrūh* (disliked) or *muḥarrām* (unlawful). It is not obligatory by consensus and nor is it recommended because the reality of the *mandūb* is "That (whose performance) the Sharīḥ has requested but without any censure for the one who leaves it." But we see that the Sharīḥ has not granted permission for this and the Companions never did it and nor the Successors and nor the religious (devoted) scholars - as far as I know - and this is my answer in front of Allāh, the Exalted if I am asked about it. And it is not permissible that it should be permitted (*mubāh*) because innovating in the religion is not permissible by consensus of the Muslims. Hence, there is not left except for it to be either *makrūh* (disliked) or *ḥarām* (unlawful). In that case, speech regarding it will be in two parts, and in distinguishing between two situations: **The first of them:** That a man practises this with his own wealth for his family, associates and dependents and in this, they do not go beyond merely gathering to eat food in that regard and they do not commit any of the sins. This is what we have described as a detested innovation and as being repulsive since none of the people of obedience from the predecessors performed it, those who are the jurists of Islam, the scholars of the creation, the lamps of the ages and adornment of the places. **The second:** That prohibited matters are entered into it and concerted effort is made (to collect wealth for it) such that one of them gives something and his soul reproaches him and his heart hurts him due to what he finds of the hurt of oppression (in being made to give his wealth), and the scholars, may Allāh have mercy upon them, have said, "Taking the wealth [of others] through (a display of) humility [to make them give] is like taking it with the sword." This is especially the case when [the concerted effort in collection of wealth for this mawlid] is augmented with singing and futile instruments such as drums and flutes and the gathering of men with youths and women singers - either mixing with them (the women) or they (the women) playing an organizational role (without mixing with the men), and dancing with effeminateness and affectation and being engrossed in distraction and forgetting the Day

of Fear. Likewise the women, when they gather together in isolation and raise their voices, those who chant out loudly out of gratification and depart from what is legislated and what is the acceptable norm when making remembrance (dhikr) and reciting (the Qur'ān), being heedless (all the while) of His, the Exalted's saying, '**Indeed your Lord is ever watchful over them**' (89:14). No two people will differ about the unlawfulness of this and nor would any possessor of manhood deem it to be good. It is only with the souls of those with dead hearts and those not devoid of [plentiful] sin and disobedience by which this becomes considered lawful. And I further you [in knowledge] that they consider this to be from the acts of worship, not from the rejected unlawful matters. To Allāh we belong and to Him shall we return, indeed Islām began as something strange and will return as something strange, as it began... All of this alongside the fact that the month in which he (ﷺ) was born is the very month in which he passed away, so rejoicing is not more worthy of grief therein. This is what is obligatory upon us to say, and from Allāh, the Exalted do we ask for good acceptance." End of quote.

Appendix 2: The “Bid’ah Ḥasanah” of Two Rak’ah Mawlid ʿĪd Prayer

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT EID MILAD UN NABI

حیدر آباد عید گاہ میدان میں ہمارے ساتھ شامل ہو


ہم سب سے بڑی عید پر دو رکعت نماز ادا کرے گا

عید میلاد النبی

Eid Prayer
Venue: Mir Alam Eid Gah
Time: 10 am
Date: 12 Rabbil Awwal, 4th Jan

We the Followers of Ahle Sunnah who celebrate Eid Milad on the day our Beloved Prophet was sent to earth would like to pray 2 rakats Eid prayer . The Muftis of Hyderabad are not allowing us, specially Jamia Nizamia and other Ulema who have denied us permission by saying their is no Eid prayer on Milad as it is not mentioned in Quran Hadith or a practice of the Sahaba. These Ulema have turned Wahabi and Gustakh. What is wrong in praying 2 Rakats. Only Shaitan gets angry when you pray. Lets all gather at Eid Gah Hyderabad and pray 2 rakats on Eid Milad the greatest Eid.

Telangana-Hyderabad Eid Milad un Nabi Committee Youth Committee



عید میلاد النبی

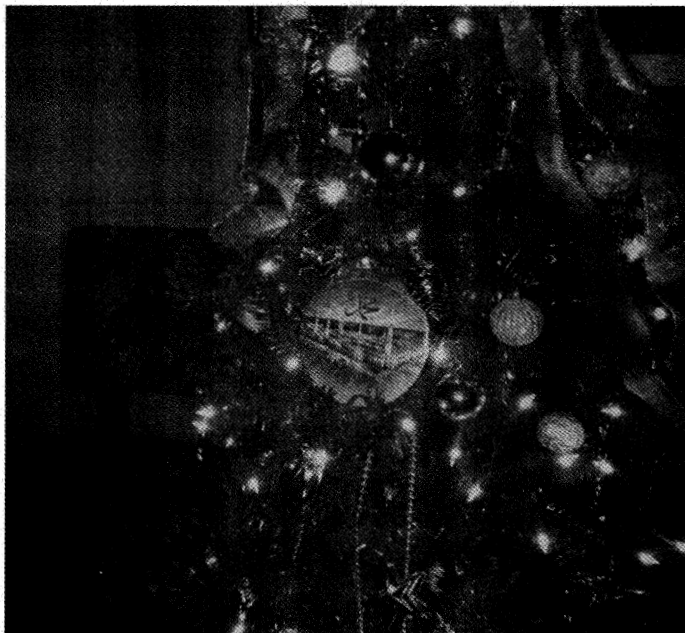
It is not possible for those who argue in favour of the mawlid celebration to convincingly refute the above bid’ah - which is to pray 2 rak’ah ʿĪd prayer for the mawlid celebration just as is done for ʿĪd al-Fiṭr and ʿĪd al-Aḏḥā - without at the same time refuting the bid’ah of their mawlid celebration. This highlights very clearly the evils which arise once the door is opened. If you open the door only slightly to begin with (to allow “good innovation”) then you cannot blame the next person who wants to open the door a little wider. Notice, the argument in the leaflet, “*What is wrong in praying 2 Rakats. Only Shaitan gets angry when you pray.*” And this is with our knowledge that ṣalāḥ is actually legislated. So these people have a sounder argument than those who practice or praise the mawlid celebration but do not allow innovation with respect to acts of worship that have been already

legislated, but are performed with new specifications that have no evidence in the Sharī'ah. This is because the mawlid celebration, fundamentally, in principle (aşlan) is not legislated and is a pure innovation from that angle. If this celebration is permitted, then it is not a blameworthy innovation at all to pray a 2 rak'ah Īd prayer on the alleged day of the mawlid. There is no argument against this at all.

This type of contradiction and foolishness is from the fruits of innovation and leads to distortion of the religion. As for the Salaf, it is undeniable from what has been quoted from them that they bolted the door to innovation and never allowed it to be opened at all. They condemned anyone who even approached the door because of their knowledge that this will lead to alteration (tabdīl) of the religion, the same path that the Jews and Christians took in disfiguring their religion.

Appendix 3: A Mawlid Tree to Rival the Christmas Tree

Decorated the tree for Mawlid El Nabi

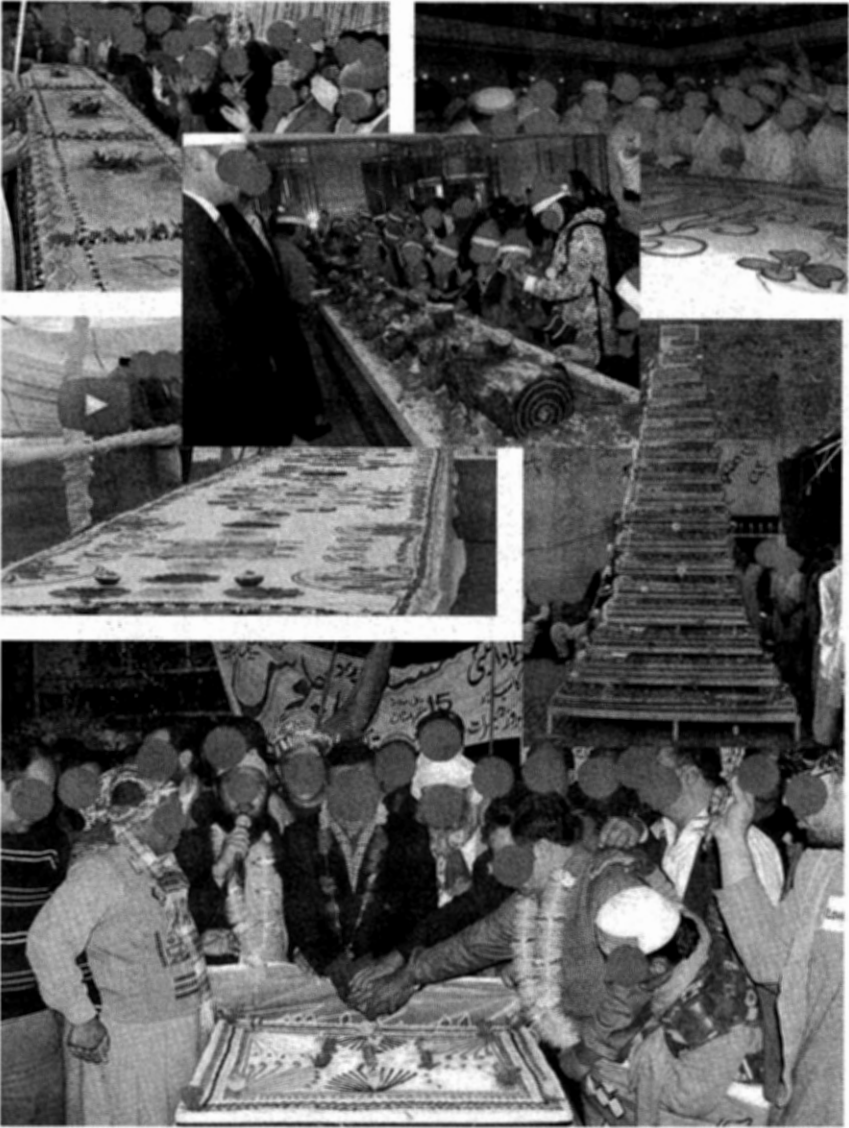


2:09 am · 14 Jan 14

Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī (رضي الله عنه) reports that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said, “You will certainly follow the ways of those who came before you hand span by hand span, cubit by cubit, to the extent that if they entered the hole of a lizard, you will enter it too.” We said: “O Messenger of Allāh, (do you mean) the Jews and the Christians?” He said: “Who else?”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ Reported by al-Bukhārī, (no. 1397) and Muslim (no. 4822).

Appendix 4: The Milād Cake Versus the Christmas Cake



Cakes reaching 2.3 Ton (5000 lbs) for the Milād celebration - in imitation of the Christians - rather, outdoing the Christians.

Appendix 5: Celebrating Mawlid in Iraq

Upon the publishing of an initial version of this book online a twitter response was received in which pictures of Mawlid celebrations in Baghdad were presented:

Abu Iyaad @AbulyaadSP · 17h

Concerning into the History and Practice of the Mawlid (80 page e-book): Please Spread! bidah.com/?yhmknkbt pic.twitter.com/rioJC5FPph

← 113 ★ 73 ...

View photo

The Amman Message @TheAmmanMessage · 3h

@AbulyaadSP #Baghdad's Sunni district of Al-Adamiyah celebrating #Mawlid2015 #mawlid1436 pic.twitter.com/VoS1C0Gidl #LoveMuhammad



9:34 AM - 3 Jan 2015 · Details

← 113 ★ ...

Collapse

First, we ask Allāh to aid and support the Muslims in every place by guiding them and directing them to the Islām known, understood and practiced by Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī (ﷺ) and all of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم), in belief, worship, methodology, morals, manners and dealings - for it is that Islām and only that Islām that leads to genuine unity and honour. And the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) commanded us in the famous ḥadīth of al-Irbāḍ bin Sāriyah (رضي الله عنه),

“Whomever amongst you lives for long will see much controversy, so you must stick to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the rightly-guided Caliphs.”¹⁴⁶

Second, the intent behind this twitter post is to demonstrate - through images and numbers - that people are celebrating and honouring the Prophet (ﷺ) on the streets and that this somehow is honorable and noble. Had this been correct and had this been a legislatively acceptable way of manifesting and expressing love and respect for the Prophet (ﷺ) then the Muslims would have been leaders of the world today and they would have honour, nobility and success because Allāh (ﷻ) said:

فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ الَّذِي أُنزِلَ مَعَهُ
 أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾

So they who have believed in him, honored him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him - it is those who will be the successful. (7:157)

The success mentioned here is the success of “those who rejoice with the goodness of this life and the next and who are saved from the evil [of these two abodes] because they brought the means of success.”¹⁴⁷ However, it appears that despite millions upon millions showing this apparent respect and honour for the Prophet (ﷺ) over the passing of the last few centuries through the routes of celebration, party, song and dance - an alleged means of success - their calamities and woes have only increased and they are not leaders and successful ones of the world despite the promise of Allāh in this verse. So either Allāh broke His promise or this alleged form of honouring and respecting the Prophet (ﷺ) does not please Allāh and was never sanctioned by Him or His Prophet. **Third**, The Prophet (ﷺ) said,

¹⁴⁶ Related by Ibn Mājah and it is ṣaḥīḥ. Refer to *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Ibn Mājah* (1/32).

¹⁴⁷ Refer to *Tafsīr al-Sa'dī*.

“Allāh did not send any Prophet except that it was a duty upon him to direct his ummah to every good he knew for them and to warn them from every evil he knew for them.”¹⁴⁸ And he (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said, “By Him in whose hand is my soul. I have not left anything which brings you closer to Paradise and distances you from the Hellfire except that I have commanded you with it and I have not left anything which brings you closer to Hellfire and distances you from Paradise except that I have prohibited you from it.”¹⁴⁹ So either the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) commanded Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ) and all of the Companions (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمْ) to come out on the streets of Madinah to distribute sweets, rejoice, sing and dance in order to celebrate his birthday or he commanded them to follow what was revealed to him of the Book and Wisdom (the Sunnah):

لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ
وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِنْ كُنُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٦٤﴾

Certainly did Allāh confer [great] favor upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves, reciting to them His verses and purifying them and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although they had been before in manifest error. (3:164).

And the pagan Arabs, though they had been in manifest error in Jāhiliyyah, never used to celebrate birthdays; it was a custom unknown to them. **Four**, it is obligatory upon organizations involved in relief work to direct people to that in which **true and real success lies** and not to perpetuate the deception of large numbers and what the majority do and nor to compromise and dissolve the Islāmic aqidah to the lowest possible common denominator so as to win the approval of every sect possible so as to build large numbers to create the false hope and impression that Muslims are united - when

¹⁴⁸ Reported by Muslim from the ḥadīth of ‘Abdullāh bin ‘Umar.

¹⁴⁹ Reported by al-Ṭabarānī, al-Bayḥaqī and Ibn Abī Shaybah and refer to *al-Silsilah al-Ṣaḥīḥah* (no. 1803).

beneath the surface their hearts are disunited and cut to pieces due to sectarianism and bigotry - all of which returns back to innovated beliefs, practices and methodologies. This is not the correct methodology and is not pleasing to Allāh (ﷻ) despite its allure. The apparent benefits of this doomed approach are only ever short-lived and superficial as is clear to anyone with intelligence and the least amount of acquaintance with the reality of the Prophet's message. **Five**, the Companions in the streets of Madīnah were more knowledgeable and Allāh-fearing than the Sunnī crowds in the streets of Baghdād or any other city - may Allāh guide us and them. ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd said (رضي الله عنه), “Follow and do not innovate, for you have been sufficed, and every innovation is misguidance.”¹⁵⁰ The Companions never knew anything from these novelties, but they honoured the Prophet (ﷺ) by honouring and carrying his message without negligence or extremism and without taking away from it or adding to it. **Six**, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110) said, “A small amount of action in accordance with the Sunnah is better than a great deal of action in bid‘ah”¹⁵¹ and had organizations with influence positioned themselves and their call in light of these statements of the Companions and their students, there would be real tangible blessings and benefits - those that will never result from superficial, token-gesture birthday celebrations that were never entertained by the Companions, the best of mankind. Imām Mālik (d. 179H) said, “Whoever introduced an innovation into Islām, considering it something good, he has claimed that the Messenger was treacherous to his duty of messengership,” then he recited, “**This day have I perfected your religion for you**” (5:3) and then said, “Whatever was not from the religion then cannot be considered from the religion today.”¹⁵² **Seven**, when the Muslims take the Companions as their role-

¹⁵⁰ Reported by al-Lālikā‘ī (1/96) and al-Marwazī in al-Sunnah (p. 28).

¹⁵¹ *Al-‘Itisām* of al-Shāṭibī (Maktabah al-Tawhīd, 1/135).

¹⁵² Imām al-Shāṭibī in *al-‘Itisām* (taḥqīq, M. Salmān, Maktabah al-Tawhīd, 1/62).

models in faith, belief, practice, obedience and submission and shun everything not known to the Companions of religious practice, then the hypocritical, pretentious make-believe unity will dissolve and true unity and honour will arise by Allāh's permission.

Bibliography

In addition to materials previously written for **bidah.com**, numerous works were relied upon in preparing this treatise and are listed below:

1. *Al-I'tiṣām* of al-Shātibī (Maktabah Tawḥīd).
2. *Rasā'il Fī Ḥukm al-Iḥtifāl bil-Mawlid al-Nabawiyy* (Dār al-'Āṣimah, 1419H) and it is a compilation of numerous treatises which include the next five entries:
3. *Al-Mawrid Fī 'Amal al-Mawlid* of Imām Tāj al-Dīn al-Fākihānī.
4. *Ḥukm Iḥtifāl bil-Mawlid al-Nabawī* of Shaykh Muḥammad bin Ibrāhīm Āl al-Shaykh.
5. *Ḥukm Iḥtifāl bil-Mawlid al-Nabawī* of Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz bin Bāz.
6. *Al-Radd al-Qawiyy 'alā al-Rifā'ī wal-Majhūl wa Ibn 'Alawī wa Bayān Akhṭā'ihim fīl-Mawlid al-Nabawī* of Shaykh Ḥamūd al-Tuwayjurī.
7. *Al-Qawl al-Faṣl Fī Ḥukm al-Tawassul bi Khayr il-Rusul* of Shaykh Ismā'īl al-Anṣārī.
8. *Al-Iḥtifāl bil-Mawlid al-Nabawiyy Bayn al-Mānī'īn wal-Mustaḥsinī* of Shaykh 'Abdullāh bin 'Abd al-'Azīz al-'Anqarī .
9. *Al-Iḥtifāl bi Dhikrā al-Mawlid al-Nabawī* of Rā'id Āl Ṭāhir.
10. *Ḥukm Iḥtifāl bi Mawlid Khayr al-Anām* of Shaykh Muḥammad Alī Ferkous.
11. *Dalā'il Maḥabbat al-Rasūl (صلى الله عليه وسلم) Bayn al-Sunnah wal-Bid'ah* of Aḥmad al-Ṣawiyyān.

Ibn al-Qayyim (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) said:

The people of Islām are strangers amongst mankind. And the believers are strangers amongst the people of Islām. And the people of knowledge are strangers amongst the believers. And the people of the Sunnah who separate it from the desires and innovations, they are strangers. And those who call to it and have patience upon the harm of the opposers, they are the severest of them (all) in strangeness. However, they are the people of Allāh in truth. There is no strangeness for them (in reality), (rather) their strangeness is only in relation to the majority about whom Allāh (عَزَّوَجَلَّ) said, **“If you were to obey most of those upon the Earth they would misguide you from the path of Allāh”** (6:116). So the ones (mentioned in the verse) are (the real) strangers to Allāh and His Messenger and their strangeness is the deserting (type of) strangeness, even if they are well-known and pointed towards.

Madārij al-Sālikīn (3/186).

