

MILAAD UN NABI

(Celebrating the Prophet's Birth)
Sallallaahu alaihi wa aalihi waSallam

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

3rd Edition

Articles from the Research of
MUFTI MUHAMMAD KHAN QAADRI

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Milaad un Nabi – a critical analysis

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3rd Edition – Rabi ul Awwal 1428 or March 2007

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Chapter One

Milaad and the Sunnah of the Prophet Upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation

We will mention just three actions of the Prophet upon him be Allah's blessings and Salutations which our Aslaaf (elders) have used as a basis of the Milaad gathering.

1. The Fast of Monday

The Prophet upon him be Allah's blessings and Salutations fasted every Monday.

Syeduna Qataada asked him about this and he replied

'This is the day in which I was born and in which it (Quran) was revealed' (*Muslim, Book of Siyaam*)

Using the above hadith to evidence the Milaad gathering Shaykh Muhammad Alawi Maliki writes that through this action

'he (highlights) the greatness of the day of his birth; the gratitude on it to Allah for the greatest blessing upon him and the Fadhl of his presence being good fortune for all those present. And all this greatness was expressed through fasting. And this too is what the Milaad gathering is - even if it has a different appearance, its purpose is the same – whether it be a fast or distributing food or gatherings for the Dhikr and Salaat upon the Nabi or listening to his honoured Shamaail (characteristics)'

(*Muqaddima, Mawrid arRawaa 9-10*)

In other words, the underlying basis of all these actions is the same, to thank Allah for His greatest blessing.

Shaykh Ibn Rajab Hanbali (d795h) writes that this hadith proves it is Mustahab to fast on the days in which a blessing of Allah is received. And the greatest blessing for the Ummah is the arrival of the Prophet! Upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation

'In it (this hadith) is a signal towards the fact that it is good practice to fast on the days in which Allah bestowed His servants with a blessing. And surely the greatest blessing upon this Ummah is the appearance of Muhammad sall Allaahu alaihi wasallam, his mission and his prophethood just as Allah says 'Undoubtedly Allah favoured the believers when He sent to them the Messenger'. Verily the sending of the Prophet, upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation, is a blessing greater than the blessings of the creating of the sky, earth, sun, moon, wind, night, day, falling of rain, growing of plants etc. Of course these (latter mentioned) blessings are great blessings for all of humanity, even for those who have rejected Allah and His prophet and show ingratitude for them. But with the arrival of the Prophet, upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation all the virtues of this and the next world were completed. Because of him the religion was completed just as Allah had wished it for His servants and whose acceptance would lead to prosperity for the servants in this and the next world. Consequently fasting on the days these blessings were received from Allah is a beautiful deed. And this is part of renewing thanks for the blessing and the day of Ashura is an example of this'

(*Lataaif ul Ma'arif : 189*)

2. Sacrificing an Animal in gratitude in Madeenah

Imam Suyooti writes that he believes the proof of Milaad to be found in the hadith is the Prophet's upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation act in Madeenah of sacrificing an animal, in gratitude to Allah, in happiness of his birth. Some claim this act was

Aqeeqah but Imam Suyooti rejects this by explaining that the Aqeeqah of the Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation had been performed by the Prophet's upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation grandfather Abd'ul Muttalib.

'The Aqeeqah is not repeated so this act of the Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation has to be interpreted as a display of gratitude to Allah for making him the Rahmat ulil Alameen and to make it permissible for his Ummah'
(*Husn ul Maqsad fi Amal il Mawlid 196*)

3. The Fast of Ashura

Bukhaari and Muslim narrate from Abdullah ibn Abbas that when the Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation arrived in Madeenah

'He found the Jews fasting on the day of Ashura so he enquired about it from them. They replied 'This is the day in which Allah received Musa and the Bani Israil upon Firawn and we fast in its honour'
(*Bukhaari & Muslim*)

To this the Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation replied

'We are closer to Musa than you and ordered the fast'
(*Bukhaari*)

In a second narration of Bukhaari the Prophet Upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation said to the companions

'You have more right to Musa than them so fast on it'

When the Imam ul Muhaditheen Hafiz Ibn Hajar was asked about the gathering of Milaad, in its permissibility, he referred to this hadith and said

'The narration of the Sahihain (Bukaari and Muslim) has the rank of Sanad (proof) in the permissibility of the gathering of Milaad'

(*Al Mawrid Ar Rawaa 31*)

It is true! If it is permissible to commemorate the day when Allah favoured Musa and his Ummah, how can it be bid'ah and deviation to show gratitude at that time when Allah blessed this Ummah with the greatest favour, about which even Musa said 'Oh Allah, make me one of his Ummah' And because the Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation is the greatest blessing it is more important and right for this Ummah to show gratitude. This is what Hafiz Ibn Hajar explained in his own words

'This act of the Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation reveals that Allah should be thanked on the day in which His blessing is received or a catastrophe is lifted and He should also be thanked when that day returns. There are many ways of thanking Allah such as worship, prostration, fasting, charity and recitation'
(*Al Mawrid Ar Rawaa 31*)

After this prelude he turns the readers attention to the fact that all blessings have their respective places but

'The greatest blessing of all is the arrival on that day of the honourable Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation'
(*Al Mawrid Ar Rawaa 31*)

An oft quoted objection is

“The celebration of Milaad is similar to (or an imitation of) the acts of the Jews and Christians who celebrate the day of the birth of Isa as an Eid”

To this we respond in the following way:

The above mentioned hadith should have destroyed such an objection because no one knows the Shariah better than the legislator himself! And according to (the reasoning of) these critics the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation should have prohibited fasting on the day of Ashura because the Jews fasted on it. But he did not forbid such similarity in good acts! Instead he ordered a show of greater love and directed the companions to fast! So what room is there for such an objection?

Note that the similarity which Islam forbade is in those beliefs and acts which negate Islam. It is mandatory to refrain from such matters for Allah shall be displeased with anyone who undertakes such similarity.

Further, those aware of the inner secrets of Islam have actually claimed that if the Christians celebrate the day of their Prophets birth then the Muslims should celebrate the day of their Prophets birth with greater fervour! And that this would not be an imitation of the disbelievers but would instead be the living death of satanic forces. Listen to what Imam ul Quraa Hafiz ul Hadith Shaykh Ibn Jazari writes

‘In it (Milaad) is death for satanic forces and life for the believers. And if the Christians take the day of the birth of their Prophet as their greatest Eid then the Muslims have a greater right in honouring the Milaad day of their Prophet’
(*Al Mawrid Ar Rawaa* 29-30)

Another typical objection:

“The birth of the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation happened once and that day has passed. This event does not happen each year so what is the need to commemorate it (each year)?”

The response:

The Prophet’s upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation action described in the above hadith bears witness to the fact that when the day, in which a specific bounty of Allah occurred, returns it is commemorated in gratitude. This is based on the fact that when the Jews revealed that this was the day in which Allah gave salvation to Musa and the Bani Israeel and destroyed Firawn and his nation the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation replied that in future he would also fast and ordered the companions to do so. If it was bid’ah to commemorate this day each year would anyone have been more aware of this than the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation? Rather than forbidding it he established the principle that the day in which a blessing of Allah occurs should be remembered through a show of happiness.

In using this hadith as a basis Shaykh Muhammad Alawi Maliki states

‘The Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation took account of past times in which religious events took place and when those times returned he would honour them by showing happiness in remembrance of the religious event. (This is) for the day became the ‘arena’ for those religious events. The Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation blessed us this principle himself through his actions and words, for

example the Sahih hadith in which he saw the Jews in Madeenah fasting on Ashura and ordered the companions to also fast.’
(*Muqaddima Al Mawrid Ar Rawaa 10*)

All the days that are celebrated in Islam are in reality the remembrance (of something). Take for example the celebration of the Quran’s revelation, it is celebrated each year but the Quran is not revealed each year. Similarly Jumuah is in remembrance of Syeduna Adam, other days include the fast of Ashura, Night of Qadr and Night of Baraa’h! When each of these days return they bring back with them all their blessings, so how blessed is the day of the Prophet’s Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation birth?

Another objection:

It is often said that the 12th of Rabi ul Awwal is the date of the Prophet’s death so it is wholly inappropriate to celebrate Milaad and hold gatherings on that sad day.

The answer to this:

There is disagreement over the date of his passing. We present the statement of Allaama Shibli who concludes at the end of his three pages on this topic

‘It is for this reason that the authentic date of the Prophet’s death is the first of Rabi ul Awwal’

(*Haashia Seerat un Nabi*)

Even if the twelfth is the Prophet’s date of passing there is no scope for objection. The Quran and Sunnah make it clear that both the birth and death of Prophets are sources of goodness for

the Ummah. Syeduna Abdullah ibn Masood narrates the Prophet’s statement

‘My life is good for you all and my death is good for you all’
(*Ash Shifa 1:19*)

On another occasion whilst explaining the death being a source of good the Prophet said

‘When Allah intends to bestow great kindness and favour upon a nation he gives death to the Prophet of that nation and makes him an intercessor and forbearer for them and when He intends the destruction of any nation He punishes and destroys that nation during the apparent lifetime of that nation’s Prophet and through this destruction He brings coolness to the eyes of that Prophet’
(Muslim 2:249)

What a great blessing and favour Allah has bestowed upon this nation by having already made the Prophet it’s intercessor for the events of the Hereafter. It is for this reason that the Prophet explained his passing away as a mercy for the Ummah.

As the above clearly demonstrates that both the birth and passing of the Prophet are a good and blessing, the next question is which is the greater blessing? It is clear and obvious that the birth is the greater blessing for it was because of this that the second blessing occurred.

Imam Jalaaluddin Suyooti made an excellent point that the Prophet ordered his followers to express happiness on the occasion of the birth through the Aqeeqah etc but did not order anything on the occasion of the death, in fact, he forbid mourning and wailing.

‘Sharee principles prove that in the month of Rabi ul Awwal happiness at the birth should be expressed and not sadness at the passing away’
(*Al Haawi lil Fataawa*)

Mufti Inayat Ahmad Kaakorvi writes of the people of the Haramain

‘The Ulama have written that the death should not be mentioned because this gathering is for the happiness of the Milaad and mentioning sadness does not befit this gathering. It is certainly not the practice of the Haramain to mention the events of his passing’

(*Tawaareekh Habeeb e Ilaahi*)

We should reflect that we should only mourn the passing away if the blessings of the Prophet had ended. However, Al Hamd u lillah, they shall will until Qiyaamah and beyond! Today is still part of his era of Prophethood. The whole Ummah today is established upon his mercy and kindness. In other words his passing was not such that it ended his relationship with the Ummah but his blessings continue today and his life now is greater than his worldly life. He hears and sees today just as he heard and saw during his apparent life.

The teacher of the Muhaditheen, Mulla Ali Qaari, explains so brilliantly about his passing away

‘Here it is neither death nor passing but is moving from one state to another’
(*Shara Shifa 1:36*)

You will have noticed that our Imaams have been clear that this is not death but a change so where there is no death what is the mourning for?!

Proof of the Milaad gathering from the narraton of Abbaas

Syeduna Abbaas narrates that he saw Abu Lahab in a dream a year after he died. He was in a very bad state and explained

‘I have had no respite since separating from you except that the punishment is reduced each Monday’

For what reason was his punishment reduced? Inspect Syeduna Abbaas’s explanation

‘Verily the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation was born on Monday. Abu Lahab’s slave girl Thowbiya gave this good news to him and in happiness he freed her. Consequently every Monday Allah reduces his punishment’
(*Fath ul Baari Shar ul Bukhaari 9:145*)

The Ulama conclude from this that if even a disbeliever is rewarded for celebrating the birth of the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation and is not deprived how could a Muslim be deprived (of rewards if he celebrated the birth). Look at the statements of the elders of the antagonists on this matter:

The son of Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhaab Najdi writes with reference to Ibn Jawzi

‘If this is the state of Abu Lahab, the kaafir, in whose criticism a Surah of the Quran was revealed, that he is rewarded for being happy on the night of the Milaad of the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation, what will be the state of the Muwahhid Muslim who celebrates his Milaad?’
(*Muktathar Seera t’ur Rasool 13*)

Mufti Rashid Ahmad Ludhiyaanvi writes

‘If the punishment of a kaafir such as Abu Lahab is reduced because of celebrating the birth of the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation how can any one of the Prophet’s Ummah celebrating his birth and spending per his ability in his love fail to attain the highest of rank’

(Ahsan ul Fataawa 1:347)

Chapter 2

The views of the Great Ulama on the Milaad

The Muhaddith Ibn Jowzi

“From the first of Rabi ul Awwal the people of the honourable Haramain; Egypt; Yemen; Syria and all the Arab cities in the East and West celebrate the gathering of the Mawlid un Nabi upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation. The greatest events in them are the reciting and listening to the (miracles of the) Mawlid. And through these (gatherings) they attain great reward and great success”

(Al Meelaad un Nabi, 58)

Imaam Abu Shaama, the Shaykh of Imam Nawawi

“Amongst the excellent new acts begun in our time in the city of Arbal is the giving of sadaqah and the display of splendour and happiness on the anniversary of the Mawlid un Nabi. (This is an excellent act) because apart from helping the poor it also reveals the love, magnificence and respect for the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation (that exists) in the hearts and is gratitude to Allah for sending His Prophet as a Mercy for all the Worlds”

(Al Baaith Alaa Inkaar ul Bid’a wal Hawaadith p13)

Imaam Al Haafiz Sakhaawi

“In all the great cities Muslims have always celebrated in the month of the Mawlid with great gatherings and increased Sadaqah and good deeds in those nights. In particular the events that occurred at the time of the birth are the subject of these gatherings”

(Subl ul Huda 1:439)

Imaam Jalaaludin Suyooti

“I believe that the acts of the Milaad; the gathering of people; the recitation of the Quran and the narration of the Prophets Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation Seerah and the signs that appeared at the time of his birth are bid’ah hasana (a beautiful innovation) worthy of reward for they are undertaken to show respect and love for the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation and happiness at his birth” (Husn ul Maqsad Fi Amal il Mawlid Fi’l Haawi li’l Fataawa 1:189)

Imam Qastalaani, the commentator of Bukhaari

“The Muslims have always been celebrating with gatherings in Rabi ul Awwal, the month of his birth. They increase Sadaqah and good deeds in its nights, in particular, they attain Allahs mercy through narrating his birth in these gatherings. The gathering of Milaad is proven to bring barakah, particularly that which ensures peace throughout the year. May Allah shower his favour and bounty upon the one who celebrates the Milaad as an Eid and (in doing so brings) affliction upon the one with sickness (of opposition) in his heart” (Al Muwaahib ud Duniya 1:27)

Ibn Taymiyya

“The purpose of those who celebrate the Milaad is either to imitate the Christians who celebrate the birth of Isa or their purpose is solely the love and respect of the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation. If it is for the latter purpose Allah will reward them for this love and effort”

(Iqtidaa Siraat ul Mustaqeem, 294)

In another place he wrote

“If the purpose of the Milaad gathering is the respect of the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation then there is great reward for such a person as I have stated before” (There is no other reason for a person to perform Milaad other than the respect and love of the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation)

(Iqtidaa Siraat ul Mustaqeem, 297)

Hafiz Abu Zar’a Al Iraaqi

“It was asked if the Milaad was Mustahab or Makruh and if any sources or practices existed which could be used as guidance (in this matter). He replied ‘Distributing food is Mustahab at all times so how (great) will it be when it is combined with the happiness of the appearance of the Prophets’ upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation Nur in the month of Rabi ul Awwal. We do not know if the Aslaaf did this but just because we do not know does not make it Bid’ah or Makruh. Indeed, there are many Mustahab acts which were not in the Aslaaf, indeed some of them are Waajib!” (Tathneef ul Aadhaan of Shaykh Muhammad bin Siddiq p136)

Imam Ibn Hajar Makki

“The gatherings of Milaad and Dhikr which take place around us are largely based on good because they contain Sadaqah, Dhikr, Salaat and Salaam upon the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation”

(Fataawa Hadithiya p129)

Mulla Ali Qaari

“All the Shuyookh and Ulama of all countries respect the gathering of Milaad in a way that not one of them refuses participating in them. The reason for their participation is attainment of barakah”
(*Al Mawrid ar Rawaa*)

Imam Naseeruddin (better known as BaaBin Tabaakh)

“When a man on the night of Milaad spends sadaqah and organises the remembrance of sahih narrations which give reminders of Akhirah and all of it is done in joy of the birth of the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation, there is no doubt in its permissibility. There is reward for any one who does this for these good intentions”
(*Subl ul Huda 1:144*)

Imam Jamal uddin Al Kataani

“The day of the Prophets upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation birth is extremely honoured, holy and respected. The Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation is salvation for whoever follows him. Whoever expresses happiness at his arrival protects himself from the punishment of Hell. Consequently expressing happiness on these occasions and spending as much as one can afford is very appropriate”
(*Subl ul Huda 1:144*)

Shaykh Abdul Haque Muhaddith e Dehlvi

“The people of Islam have always celebrated in the month of the Prophets Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation birth with gatherings. In its nights they give sadaqah, show happiness and

in particular the Muslims remember the events that occurred at the time of the birth”

(*Maa Thabata min asSunna p106*)

Shah Walli ullah Muhadith e Dehlvi

“I participated in a gathering of Milaad in Makkah Muazzama on the day of the Prophets upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation birth. The people were sending blessings on the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation and remembering the events that occurred at the time of his birth. I then saw a showering of Nur upon that gathering. I do not know whether I saw that Nur with the physical eye or the spiritual eye. When I concentrated it became apparent to me that this Nur was due to the Angels who are ordered to attend such gatherings. I also saw the mercy of Allah descending with the angels.”
(*Fuyooz ul Haramain 80,81*)

In another place he quotes his respected father Shah Abd ur Raheem Dehlvi

“Every year I would prepare food on the occasion of the Milaad of the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation. However, one year I was unable to prepare food so I only distributed roasted Chick Peas in happiness of the Prophets upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation Milaad. That night I saw the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation in a dream. He appeared very happy and before him were those Chick Peas”
(*Ad Dar ut Thameen 40*)

Molaana Abdul Hayy Lakhnavi

“Those who claim the gathering of Milaad to be a contemptible bid’ah are acting contrary to Shariah”

And about specifying a day and date for the gathering

“There is reward for the gathering of Milaad whenever it is held. People in the Haramain; Basra; Syria; Yemen and other countries, on seeing the moon of Rabi ul Awwal, display happiness and organise Milaad gatherings and read and listen to the Milaad. Furthermore in these countries such Milaad gatherings also take place outside Rabi ul Awwal. Thus one should not be of the opinion that reward for the Milaad gathering is only in the month of Rabi ul Awwal”
(*Fataawa Abdul Hayy 2:283*)

Haji Imdaad ullah Muhaajir Makki

“All the people of the Haramain celebrate the Mawlid. This is proof enough for us. How can the remembrance of the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation be condemned? However the excesses which people have devised, they should not”
(*Shamaaim Imdaadiya 87,88*)

Haji Sahib also reveals his own practice

“The practice of (this) faqeer (pauper) is that he not only participates in the gathering of Milaad but seeing it as a source of barakah himself organises a gathering each year and finds pleasure and joy in it”

(*Faisla Haft Masla p9*)

Mufti Mazhar ullah Mujadidi

“The reciting of the Milaad, as long as it is based on Sahih narrations, and the procession on the blessed 12th, as long as it has no prohibited acts, are both permissible. To call them

impermissible requires proof from Shariah. What proof do the critics have against it? To simply state it is impermissible because the companions of the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation did not celebrate it or organise the procession in this way can not be proof. A permissible act does not become impermissible just because it was not done (before)”

(*Fataawa Mazhari 435,436*)

Allaama Muhammad Siddiq Hassan Khan Bhopaali

“What evil is there if some one who cannot perform the Dhikr of the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation each day vows that for one day each week or month he will sit and perform the Dhikr and read the Seerah? And then he also does not leave the days of Rabi ul Awwal empty and reads the narrations which are proven to be sahih”
(*As Shamaama tu’l Ghabriya min Khair il Mawlid alBariyya 5*)

Chapter 3

Is Milaad only celebrated in the Sub Continent?

It is often said that Milaad, in terms of gatherings and processions, is only celebrated in the Indian Sub continent and nowhere else, in particular, not in the Haramain.

I would plead that this celebration was in fact begun in the Haramain! Just because it is not celebrated there today does not mean that it was never celebrated there. We will now put before you accounts of Milaad celebrations in the Haramain.

By studying the history of the Haramain, in particular, Makkah, we can see the practices of the people of the Haramain.

Visitation (Ziyaarah) of the Prophet's Upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation birthplace

It was the practice of the people of Makkah, on the night of the Milaad, to visit the Prophet's Upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation birthplace in the district of Bani Hashim.

Imam Abu'l Husayn Muhammad bin Ahmad, known as Babin Jabeer Andalusi, (d614h), describes the blessed birthplace in his historic travelogue

'Amongst the sites of Makkah is the Mawlid (birthplace) of the Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation. The dust of that place is honoured in being the first part of this world to have touched the blessed body of the Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation and upon it the mercy for all the Ummah was born. In particular, in the month of Rabi ul Awwal, the house is opened for visits and people visit it in great numbers and attain barakah from it'

(Rihla Ibn Jabeer 90)

He then reveals his own action

'We entered the birthplace of the Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation and placed our faces on its blessed dust for that was the blessed place where this world's most blessed and pure child was born. Through its visitation (ziyaarah) we attained great barakah'

(Rihla Ibn Jabeer 126)

Imam Jamaal ud deen Muhammad bin Jaarillah writes

"On the night of 12 Rabi ul Awwal, after Maghrib prayer, it has been the practice of the Ahl ul Makkah, led by the Qaadhi of Makki (who was a Shaafi), to visit the birthplace in large groups"

(Al Jaame ul Lateef 201)

Shaykh Muhammad bin Alawi Al Hassani writes

"It has always been the practice of the people of Makkah for the Mashaaiikh, grand Ulama and dignitaries to visit the place of the Prophets upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation birth carrying lanterns and candles in their hands"

(Fi Rihaab Bait ul Haraam 262)

On seeing the destruction of the blessed birthplace Muhammad Husayn Haykal Misri writes

"Today it is not just an empty space but is sometimes even used as a resting place for camels. It used to be the most inhabited of all places. Those who had witnessed that spectacle would be shedding tears of blood at the defilement of the Wahhaabis"

(Fi Manzil il Wahi 219)

A gathering of Dhikr would take place at the Birthplace each Monday

Imam Qutbuddin Hanafi (d988), who was the teacher of religious studies in Makkah, describes the practice of the people of Makkah of holding a Dhikr gathering every Monday at the blessed birthplace

“The blessed birthplace is very well known. It is still visited. Duas are accepted there. There the people of Makkah hold a gathering of Dhikr every Monday and they visit it every year on the 12th of Rabi ul Awwal”

(Al I’laam Bi I’laam Baitillah Al Haraam 355)

Gathering of Milaad at the blessed birthplace

Along with it’s visitation (ziyaarah) a Milaad gathering is also held at the blessed birthplace in which the signs and events appearing at the time of the birth are remembered in great detail. Shaykh Qutbuddin writes

‘The people leave Masjid ul Haraam and go towards Sooq ul Lail in great numbers and gather at the birthplace and hold a gathering in which one person speaks’

(Al I’laam Bi I’laam Baitillah Al Haraam 56)

Imaam Ibn Zaheera describes the speech

‘A Khutbah (sermon) is given in relation to that place. The people then return to Masjid ul Haraam for Isha’ *(Al Jaame ulLateef 201)*

The birthplace is of those places where Duas are accepted

One must always keep in mind that our Aslaaf have identified the blessed birthplace as one of those places whose barakah leads to Duas being accepted.

The Mufti of Makkah Shaykh Abdul Kareem AlQutbi (d 1014) writes

‘The duas are accepted at the Prophets birthplace and that place is well known, located in the district of Bani Hashim’

(Al I’laam ul Ulama 154)

Distributing Food in joy of Milaad

It had been the practice of the people of Makkah to distribute food in celebration of Milaad. They would invite friends and relatives and serve the poor and destitute, in particular, they would serve the Khuddaam of the Haram. Rather than describe the practice of the ordinary folk we will mention here the practice of the Qaadhi of Makkah Imam Muhammad bin Muhiyyudeen Al Batari.

The famous traveller Ibn Batoota writes in his travelogue under the heading ‘The Qaadhi and his Khateeb’s’

‘The Qaadhi of Makkah, the Aalim, the Saalih, the Aabid, Najm udDeen Muhammad bin Imam ul Aalim Muhiyyudeen At Tabri distributes great sadaqah and performs a great number of tawaaf of the Kabah. During the Hajj months he distributes a great amount of food, in particular, at the time of the Prophet’s birth he distributes food to Makkahs honourable, respected, poor and to the servants of the Haram’.

(Rihla Ibn Batoota 1:92)

The processions of the Makkans in joy of the Milaad

Along with the various gatherings the people of Makkah would also celebrate Milaad with illuminations and processions which not only the Ulama, Mashaaiikh and dignitaries attended but the ruler of the time would also participate.

Some people would be carrying lanterns whilst others would carry flags. The procession would start at Masjid ul Haraam and after proceeding through the streets it would reach the blessed birthplace in the Bani Haashim district where a gathering would be held. After that the procession would return to Masjid ul Haraam where the ruler would honour the Ulama and Mashaaiikh. At the end there would be Dua and the people would return to their homes.

Shaykh Qutbuddeen describes the practice of the Makkans:

“Each year a gathering would be announced in Masjid ul Haraam for the night of 12th Rabi ul Awwal. The ulama, fuqahaa, governors and Qaadhis of all the 4 madhabs from all areas would gather after Maghrib prayer in Masjid ul Haraam. They would travel through Sooq ul Lail to visit the birthplace of the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation. In their hands they would have lanterns, lamps and candles. There would be so many people that a place to stand could not be found. One of the scholars speaks and performs dua for all the Muslims and the people return to Masjid ul Haraam. Back at the Haram the ruler would honour all those involved in organising the gathering. Then the Adhaan and Jamaah of Isha would take place. After that all the people would return to their homes. This would be such a large gathering that people from faraway villages and towns, even as far as Jeddah, would come to participate and show their happiness”

(Al I’laam Bi I’laam Baitillah Al Haraam 196)

Imam Jamaaludeen Muhammad bin Jaarilaah writes

“It was the practice of the people of Makkah, on the 12th of Rabi ul Awwal each year, for the Qaadhi of Makkah – who was a Shaafi – after Maghrib prayer, would lead a grand procession of people to visit the birthplace of the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation. With him would be Imaams of the 3 (other) Fiqh Madhabs, Fuqahaa, Fudhala and other esteemed citizens of Makkah. In their hands they would carry lanterns and large lamps. At that place there would be a sermon about the birthplace and Duas for the ruler, Ameer of Makkah and the Qaadhi. The gathering would last until just before Isha when the people would return to Masjid ul Haraam. They would all gather at Maqaam ul Ibraheem and make Dua. All the Qaadhis and fuqaha would participate in this. Then Isha would be prayed and the people would depart. I do not know who started this practice and after great enquiry from my contemporaries I still do not know”

(Al Jaame ulLateef Fi Fadhl Makkah wa Ahliha 145/6)

21 Canon Salaam

The celebrations, gatherings and processions undertaken by the people of Makkah on the day of Milaad in 1917 are described in the Makkan newspaper ‘Al Qiblah’:

“When the Muezzin called the Asr Adhaan with the words ‘Allah u Akbar Allah u Akbar’ on the 11th of Rabi ul Awwal the walls of Makkah shook with the sound of Canon. All the people began congratulating each other on the occasion of Eid Milaad un Nabi. Sharif Husayn led a huge crowd in Maghrib prayer on the Hanafi Musalla in the Haram. After the prayer the Qaadhi ul Qudhaa, as is customary, congratulated the Sharif on the occasion of Eid Milaad un Nabi. Then all the ministers and officers of the Sultanate, along with the ordinary folk, left in a large crowd for the birthplace of the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation. This splendid procession headed towards the birthplace with great pomp and ceremony. The path from the Sultan’s palace to the birthplace was lit by lighting of the

highest order. In particular the birthplace was so enlightened that it would have been the envy of Jannah! After reaching it the crowd stood with great humility. One man presented the Seerah with great effect. After that Shaykh Fawaad, deputy foreign minister, delivered a befitting speech. At the end a Nasheed was recited which extremely moved the listeners. In the joy of Milaad all offices, courts and courts were closed for the day on the 12th. In this way this day of happiness and joy came to an end. We make Dua to Allah that He shows us this day again with such joy and happiness. Aameen’

Naat until 2 a.m.

These events were also described in the Monthly ‘Tareeqat’ Lahore January 1917 in the following way:

‘The day of the Prophet’s upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation birth is celebrated with great happiness in Makkah. It is known as the Day of the Prophets birth. On this day sweets are sold in great quantity. In the Haram an elegant carpet is laid behind the Hanafi Musalla. The Shareef of Makkah and the commander of Hijaaz with their staff in splendid uniforms come to participate. They go to the birthplace of the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation and return after a short interlude of Naat. The path between the Haram and the birthplace is lit up by a line of lanterns. The birthplace that day resembles a dazzling light. On their way they are led by a group of Naat readers who recite Naat in a sweet voice.

After Isha prayer on the 11th of Rabi ul Awwal a Milaad gathering is held in the Haram. They read Naat, Mowlud and Khatam up to 2.a.m. On that night many different processions go to the birthplace and recite Naat. From Maghrib prayer on the 11th to Asr prayer on the 12th a 21 Canon salute takes place at each prayer time. In these days the Makkans rejoice greatly, recite Naat and hold many Milaad gatherings.”

Imam Sakhaawi writes that the people of Makkah show greater endeavour on Milaad than they do for Eid! And all of them visit the birthplace

“The people of Makkah visit the birthplace – which is authenticated and is in Suq ul Lail – in the hope that their needs will be fulfilled. And they celebrate it greater than Eid. On this day everyone visits the birthplace, whether he be pious or not, fortunate or unfortunate”

(Al Mawrid arRawaa 28)

The Practices of the People of Madeenah

Now take a look at the practices of the people of Madeenah.

Shaykh ul Muhaditheen Mulla Ali Qaari (d1014), after mentioning the practices of the rest of the worlds Muslims on the day of Milaad, writes

“The people of Madeenah – may Allah give them greater success – hold many gatherings and participate in them in great numbers”

(Al Mawrid arRawaa 29)

If only I could hold a gathering on each day of Rabi ul Awwal!

After mentioning the practices of the Aslaaf he writes about the Imam of the time Shaykh Abu Isaaq bin Abd ur Rehman

“When he was in Madeenah – may there be great blessings and perfect praise upon its resident – he would celebrate Milaad by distributing food to the people. He would say ‘If I were able I would do the same on each day of Rabi ul Awwal’”

The practice of Mulla Ali Qaari

After describing the practices of the elders Mulla Ali Qaari explains that his financial position is not such to allow him to

feed others so instead he is writing a book which will benefit people until the end of time

“I say that this faqeer is too weak to serve the people in the apparent sense, but in order to serve them in a symbolic and Nuraani sense I have written this book to nourish people on this earth until the end of time. And I have named it ‘The means to quench the thirsty in Milaad un Nabawi’”

(Al Mawrid arRawaa 32)

The Milaad gathering would be held in Masjid un Nabawi

In describing the practices of the people of the Haramain Mufti Inayat Ahmad Kakorwi writes

‘On the 12th of Rabi ul Awwal this blessed gathering of the Prophet would take place in Masjid un Nabawi in Madeenah and at the birthplace in Makkah *(Taareekh Habeeb e Ilaahi 15)*

Description of a Milaad gathering in Masjid un Nabawi

Molaana Abd ul Haq Ala Abaadi writes that he saw his Shaykh and Murshid, Umda tu’l Mufasireen and Zubda tul Muhadditheen Shah Abdul A’la Naqshbandi Mujadidi

“participating in the Milaad gathering held in the Prophet’s Mosque on the 12th of Rabi ul Awwal. The gathering was in the courtyard of the Mosque. The Ulama sat at the pulpit facing the blessed tomb and spoke on the Milaad of the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation. During the remembrance the time to rise arrived. The atmosphere, events and barakah that appeared at that gathering cannot be bound in speech or writing”

(Ad Dur ul Munzam 113)

Chapter Four

Is the Milaad gathering Bid’ah?

Some people often, and sometimes rather vocally, object to the organisation and celebration of Milaad and the gathering commemorating the birth of the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation.

The gathering of Milaad is the name given to a gathering comprising the remembrance of Allah and the remembrance of the Prophet, both of which are the foundations and the fruits of Islamic teachings.

Consequently to slander the Milaad gathering as Bid’ah and contrary to the teachings of Islam is an excess. Unfortunately, despite this, a small minority still insist upon slandering this blessed gathering. Thus it has been deemed necessary to present a discussion on this topic.

First of all it is important to fully understand the meaning of Bid’ah, as this is the framework in which our discussion will develop.

Literally, Bid’ah means a new affair; a new mode; a new tradition or ritual. Imam Nawawi defines it as

“Each item which has no previous example”
(Shara Sahih Muslim Nawawi 1.285)

Hafiz Ibn Hajar states

“Literally Bid’ah is that item which is invented without a previous example”

(*Fat-hul Baari 4:219*)

An attribute of Allah has been mentioned in the Quran as

“He created the skies and the lands without a model and when he decides on a task, He says Kun and it becomes”

Here the word Bid’ah is in its literal sense, Allah created the skies and the lands without a previous example or model. In another place our Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation is told

“Say I am not a new Prophet”

The Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation is told to explain that he is like the previous Prophets in that his teachings are the same as those of the previous Prophets.

However, the People of knowledge concur that the Bid’ah vilified and condemned in the Quran and Hadith is not Bid’ah in the literal sense but is only the Bid’ah as defined specifically by Shaiah (Shar’ee Bid’ah). Remember that whenever the Quran and Sunnah use a word they do not refer to its literal meaning but restrict themselves to its Shar’ee meaning. For example the literal meaning of Salah is Du’a and burning of fire, but its Shar’ee meaning is only Prayer and performance of certain predetermined tasks, (Ruku, Sajdah etc). Similarly Hajj has many literal meanings, but its Shar’ee meaning is only the performance of certain rituals in a specified place at a specified time. Similarly Islam has used the term Bid’ah in the same way. Consequently it is necessary to define and understand the Shar’ee meaning of Bid’ah.

Shar’ee Meaning of Bid’ah

‘Each increase or decrease in religion for which there is no proof in Shari ah. And if a belief or new action has a Shar’ee basis then it is most definitely not a (Sharee) Bid’ah!’

This definition was not simply pulled out of thin air to suit ones needs but was established by our beloved Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation. Syeduna Jareer bin Abdullah narrates the following saying of the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation

“Whoever begins a new good thing in Islam will receive the reward of all those who imitate (copy) it, without there being a reduction in the reward of the imitators. And whoever initiates a new bad thing in Islam will receive the sin of all the imitators without there being a reduction in their sin”
(*Sahih Muslim*)

In another Hadith narrated by Syeduna Abu Hurayra the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation said

“Whoever calls to (the path of) guidance and good will receive the reward of those following it with no decrease in their (the followers) reward and whoever calls to deviation (and wrong) will have the sin of those following it without any decrease in their sin”
(*Sahih Muslim*)

These two narrations provide us with the principle that any act not contrary to the spirit and thought of Shari’ah is good and initiating and following such an act is also a good. Conversely, whichever act is against the spirit of Shariah, initiating and following it is catastrophic.

In reference to these Ahadith Imam Shaami writes

“the people of knowledge state that a basic ruling of Islam is established from these Ahadith, that each person who invents a bad receives the sin of all those re-enacting that bad whilst the one who initiates a good receives the reward of all those following it until the day of Qiyaamah”
(*Muqadama Fataawa Shaami*)

The Ulama & the definition of Bida’h

Thus whatever action is within the rules of Shariah is permissible and licit and all acts against the spirit and rules of Shari’ah are impermissible and illicit. This is the Shar’ee usage of Bid’ah and the one which the Aslaaf understood:

Shaikh Ibn Rajab Hanbali states

“Bid’ah means any new act which is without Shar’ee proof or reasoning. But the action for which there is Shar’ee proof is not a Shar’ee Bid’ah even if it is a literal Bid’ah”
(*Jaame Ul Uloom Wal Hukm*)

In explaining the Prophet’s Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation proclamation, ‘The worst actions are those invented’ Imam Badruddin Aini states

“each new work which has no Shar’ee basis is an invention and in Shari’ah it is known as Bid’ah and any act that does have a Shar’ee basis is not called a Bid’ah”
(*Umda tul Qaari*)

Hafiz Ibn Hajar concludes

“the truth is this that if the new action comes within a Shar’ee good then it is good and if it comes under a Shar’ee bad, then it is disliked”
(*Fath’ul Baari 4:219*)

Allama Saadudin Taftazaani (d 792h) defines a contemptible Bid’ah as

“each new invention is a bid’ah if it was not found in the time of the Sahaaba and Taabi’in and for which there is no Shar’ee proof or reasoning”
(*Shara Muqaasid fi ilm-il-kalaam 2.271*)

Molaana Abdul Hayy Lakhnawi states

“every new action invented after the (first) three generations will be assessed against Shar’ee reasoning – if there exists an example of it in the first 3 periods or if it comes under Shar’ee reasoning then it is not Bidah. Because Bid’ah refers to that invention which is neither found in the first three generations nor comes under Shar’ee reasoning”
(*Iqaama t’ul Hujja Ala Annal Akthaar*)

Molaana Muhammad Sarfaraz Khan Deobandi states whilst discussing Bid’ah Hasana and Bid’ah Saiyya,

“there are two types of Bid’ah - Literal and Shar’ee. Literal Bid’ah is that action invented after the passing away of the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation whether it be in worship or ritual and it is of 5 types, Wajib, Mandoob, Haram, Makruh and Mubah. Shar’ee Bid’ah is that which is not found in the first three generations and for which the legislators permission cannot be found in either his statements, actions, explicitly or implicitly. This is that bid’ah which is known as Dalaala, Qabiha and Saiyya”
(*Raahe Sunnah 99*)

It has been established that any action that comes under Shar’ee principles is permissible whilst that which has no such basis is wrong and impermissible.

The mistaken definition of Bid’ah

Some people define Bid’ah simply as any new action which the Sahaaba did not partake in. These people do not check if that act falls within Shar’ee rulings. From the above discussion one should know that such a simplistic definition is both inadequate and wrong. Nevertheless let us inspect what the Aslaaf say about this definition. Alaama Taftazaani says

“those people are ignorant who call each new action not found in the time of the Sahaaba a contemptible Bid’ah, even if there is no condemnation of it in Shari’ah. Their reasoning is based on the Prophet’s upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation call to refrain from inventions but they do not know that this statement only refers to those inventions that have no place in the religion”

(Shara ul Maqaasid 2.271)

Molaana Abdul Hayy Lakhnavi states

“a section of the Ulama of our time are wrong – it is in two groups – one restricts the Sunnah to only those actions which occurred in the three generations and label all actions after that (time period) as Bid’ah and deviation, they do not even bother to inspect whether or not that action comes under any principle of Shari’ah. Some of this group even restricts the Sunnah to just the lifetime of the Prophet and view the practices of the Sahaaba as Bid’ah! Whilst the other section are those who adopt every action of their forefathers and in this way denote many Bid’ah Saiyya acts as Bid’ah Hasana, without there being any Shar’ee proof for those actions”

(Iqaama tul Hujja 7)

Is the Milaad Gathering Bid’ah?

The principal component of the Milaad gathering is Dhikr-ul-Rasool. Consequently the objections to this gathering seem very

strange! Is Dhikr-ul-Rasool contrary to the teachings of Islam or is it not one of the foundations of Islam? Does Shari’ah not require the Dhikr-ul-Rasool? The same Dhikr that occurs in the heavens and that same Dhikr which Allah, the all Powerful, elevated? Similarly are we not required to rejoice when we receive Allah’s Fadhl and Rahmah?

To answer this let us inspect the statements of the scholars of Islam about the Milaad gathering (in the following accounts Milaad gatherings refer to organising gatherings, preparing food etc, because it is widely assumed that Dhikr-ul-Rasool is the basis of Islam).

Imam Hafiz Abu Muhammad Abdurehman Shahaab-uddin Abu Shaama Muqaddasi Shafi’ (d,665) who reached the position of ijtihaad, wrote ‘Al Baaith Ala Inkaarul bidha wal Havaadis’ in which he makes it clear that the Milaad gathering is not Bid’ah. And if one must call it Bid’ah, then it should be called Bid’ah Hasana

“in our time the sadaqah, show of decoration and happiness made on the day of the Prophets upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation birth comes under the category of Bid’ah Hasana. (This is) because through it not only are the poor fed but love and respect for the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation is expressed and thanks is given to Allah for granting us the mercy for all the worlds”

(Al Baaith Ala Inkaarul bidha wal Havaadis)

Imam Jalaaludin Suyooti in the commentary of Sunan Ibn Majah states

“the truth is that the Milaad gathering is Bid’ah Hasana Mandooba (good permissible act) as long as it is free from Shar’ee prohibited acts”

(Sublul Hudhaa)

Imam Zaheerudin Jafar Misri writes

“The Milaad gathering is Bid’ah Hasana when its purpose is to gather the Saaliheen, send Salaat and Darood upon the Prophet and feed the poor and destitute”
(*Sublul Hudhaa*)

As has been illustrated, with evidence, leading Scholars for over a millennia have deemed the Milaad gathering a good act. Thus to call the Milaad gathering a deviation is excessive and slanderous.

Those Scholars who have objected to the Milaad gathering have not objected to the gathering itself but to the illegal acts which a minority of ignorant people associate with it. It is incumbent upon all Muslims to ensure that illicit acts do not tarnish such a blessed gathering. It is only these acts which have been rightly condemned by leading Scholars.

Imam Ibn Ul Haaj, in discussing the birth day and the month of Rabi ul Awwal, writes

“The Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation was asked about the Fast on a Monday to which he replied ‘On this day I was born’. Through this statement the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation established the high status of the month in which the day of his birth occurred. Thus we should treat this month with great respect. From this is it also clear that a time and place do not have innate or intrinsic virtues (are not virtuous solely because of themselves or their personal qualities), but rather owe their status to the events and meanings (that occurred in that place or time). May Allah have mercy on us. Oh reader! Look at the status of this month and the day Monday – both of whom Allah selected for the arrival of the Prophet!
(*Al Mudkhal*)

Chapter Five

Is the Day of Milaad an Eid ?

A small minority object to using the word Eid in conjunction with Milaad-un-Nabi. They argue it is inappropriate because there are only 2 Eids in Islam – Adha and Fitr – and both contain a special prayer.

It will be shown that the above criticism is invalid. Eid refers to any day of happiness and what could be more joyful for Muslims than the day in which the mercy for all creation came into this world! To understand what Eid is inspect the following Du’a made by Syeduna Isa *alaihi salaam*.

‘O our Lord, send us from heaven a table set, that there may be for us – the first and the last of us – an Eid (a solemn festival)’
(The Quran 5:114)

Syeduna Isa *alaihi salaam* is labeling Eid the day on which Allah will shower them with His blessings. But for us Muslims what can be a greater blessing than the arrival of the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation who brought humanity out of ignorance!

Some could argue that labelling such days as Eid is a practice of the previous nations and thus cannot be a precedent for Muslims. Such a criticism simply braves the ignorance of the antagonists because the events of previous nations narrated to us, without Islam saying they are wrong, are a source of guidance. But we shall endeavour to prove that one can also refer to days, other than Adha and Fitr, as Eid.

Syeduna Abu Hurayra narrates that he heard the Prophet Upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation saying

“The day of Friday is an Eid. Thus you should not Fast on this day of Eid unless you are fasting before or after it”

(Al Mustadrak 1:603)

Syeduna Abu Hurayra also narrates that one year Eid occurred on Friday and the Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation said to the Sahaaba

“Today you have 2 Eids combined”

(Al Mustadrak, Book of Jumuah)

About these two ahadith Shaikh Abdul Qadir Atta narrates Imam Zahbi's statement “*they are Sahih and Ghareeb*”.

Syeduna Ayaas bin Abi Ramla Shaami narrates that one day he went to Syeduna Mu'awiyya who asked Syeduna Zaid

“Were you ever with the Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation when 2 Eids occurred on the same day? He replied “Yes” The Hadith goes on to explain that it was both an Eid and a Friday.”
(Al Mustadrak, Book of Jumuah)

Friday is better than the two Eids of Adha & Fitr

The Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation did not just denote Friday as an Eid but taught that it was better than Eid ul Fitr and Adha! Syeduna Abu Lubaaba bin Add ul Manzar narrates that the Prophet Upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation said

“Friday is the Chief (sayyid) of all days and to Allah is the most revered and better than both the day of Adha and the day of Fitr”

(Mishkat ul Masabih, Baab ul Jumuah)

Why?

One may ponder why such honour is bestowed upon Friday. The Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation provided us with the reason. On Friday Allah created Syeduna Adam *alaihi salaam* and on the others days He created the things humans use. Syeduna Oas bin Oas narrates that the Prophet Upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation said about Friday

“From your days Friday is the best, in it Syeduna Adam was born and on it he passed away”

(Abu Dawud, Nisai, Ibn Majah, Daarmi)

Syeduna Abu Hurayra narrates that the Prophet Upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation was asked why Friday is called Jumuah? The Prophet Upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation replied

“on it your father Adam's mould was made, on it Qiyaamah will be instituted, on it you will be raised again and in it there is a time when Allah accepts all prayers”

(Mishkat ul Masabih from Musnad Ahmad)

The day on which Syeduna Adam *alaihi salaam* was created is greater than not only the other days of the week but is greater than the two Eids! And there is also a time in it when Allah accepts all Prayers – it seems sensible to assume that this special time must be that when Syeduna Adam *alaihi salaam* was created. One can only wonder at the status of that day and time when the Prophet of Prophets and the reason for all creation was born!

Other days Islam calls Eid

The labelling of Eid is not just restricted to Friday. Islam has declared Yowm-ul-Arafah (9th day of Dhul Hajj) as an Eid.

In Tirmidhi Syeduna Abdullah Ibn Abass narrates that when the Prophet upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation recited the verse "Today I have completed for you your religion" some Jewish men were sitting near and said

"Had this verse been revealed to us we would have declared that day an Eid"

To this the Prophet replied

"You would only have celebrated one Eid, we had two Eids when this was revealed! One being Friday and the other being the day of Arafah"

(Tirmidhi, Tafseer Surah Al Maaida)

Imam Khaazin narrates from Ibn Abbas that on that day there were 5 Eids!

(Lubaab uTtaaweel)

Sahih Bukhaari contains a similar account when a Jew said to Syeduna Umar that your holy book has a verse which if it had been revealed to us we would have celebrated that day as an Eid. He asked which Ayah and he was told 'Today I have completed for you your religion'. Syeduna Umar replied

"We know the time and place of it's revelation to our Prophet. He was standing, at Arafah and it was Friday"

(Bukhaari)

About this reply Imam Aaini and Imam Nawawi explain

"(it means) we also respect the time and place because the place was Arafah, and there the biggest ritual of Hajj takes place, and the day was both Friday and the day of Arafah, thus two greatness' were combined and the respect of each one is compulsory for all Muslims and when these two come together, their greatness increases further. Thus we have made that day an Eid"

(Umda tul Qaari 1:264)

If Friday is an Eid then Muslims receive at least four Eids in a month in which to express happiness. From the above discussion one will have noticed that the day on which a verse was revealed became an Eid so why should that day not be an Eid when that being who is the personification of the Quran was sent to this world? One fails to understand why objections are raised to calling such a day an Eid!

One should also be aware that the days of Tashreeq are Eid for Muslims. Syeduna Uqba bin Aamir narrates that the Prophet said

"The days of Arafah, Sacrifice and Tashreeq are Eids for us and are days of eating and drinking"

(Al Mustadrak 1:600)

Friday night is better than Lail a'tul Qadr

Leading Imams and Scholars have taught that Friday is not just an Eid but it's night is better than Laila tul Qadr because in it the celebrated Nur of the Prophet Upon him be Allah's blessing and Salutation appeared in the blessed and pure womb of Syeda Aaminah. Shaikh Fath'ullah Banaani narrates Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal's teaching

"Friday night is better than Laila tul Qadr because on this night the pure and blessed Nur appeared in the blessed womb of Syeda Aaminah"

(Mawlood Khair Khalqillah 158)

Shaikh Abdul Haque Muhaddith-e-Dhelvi writes

“It is narrated from Imam Ibn Hanbal that Friday night is better than the night of Qadr because on this night the blessed Nur of the Prophet - which was the cause of innumerable blessings and goodness - appeared in the pure womb of Syeda Aaminah”
(*Isha t’ul Lumaat 1:577*)

Ashraf Ali Thaanwi writes

“It is narrated from Imam Ahmad “Friday night has greater status than the night of Qadr... because in this night the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation appeared in the pure womb of Syeda Aaminah. The Prophet’s upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation coming was the cause of so much goodness and blessing for both this and the next world that it is impossible to measure”
(*Juma ke fazail wa ahkaam*)

If the night in which the Prophet’s Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation Nur appeared in Syeda Aaminah’s womb is better than the night of Qadr then imagine the status of the day in which the Prophet upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation was revealed to the whole world!

Evidence that the Aslaaf termed the day of Milaad as a day of happiness (i.e. Eid – because Eid is a day of happiness) exists and some of it is provided below.

Imam Jalaaludin Suyooti narrates an event about a Maliki scholar Abul Tayyib Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Busti, (d.395) that on the 12th of Rabi ul Awwal he passed by a madrassa and went up to the teacher and said

“Oh Faqih, today is a day of happiness so give the children a holiday”
(*Al haawi lil fataawa 1:197*)

Imam Qastalaani (d 911), who wrote a commentary on Sahih Bukhaari, after detailing the activities of Rabi-ul-Awwal- the organisation of the gathering of Milaad, the giving of Sadaqah, relaying the life of the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation offers the following Du’a

“May Allah safeguard each and every one who celebrates the nights of the month of Milaad as Eid and thereby casts affliction on the one with sickness (of opposition to Milaad) in his heart”
(*Al Muwaahib ud duniya 1:148*)

Shaikh Fat-hullah Banaani Misri narrates the following saying of the Aslaaf about the Milaad

“Because of this day Allah gave this Ummah greater status over the other Ummahs. Thus it is necessary for this Ummah to celebrate this night as the greatest Eid”
(*Mawlid Khair Khalq illah*)

Some of the critics argue that if Milaad is an Eid why is there no special prayer (like the other Eids). To understand the reason one needs to delve into the realms of respect and love. Muhadditheen and Mufasssireen, through their knowledge of the Quran and Sunnah, provided the reason some 700 years ago. Here only a small selection is provided.

Imam Ibn ul Haaj (d.737) states that Allah is granting us great blessing in the shape of the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation should make it compulsory upon us to offer extra worship by way of gratitude. But it is due to the mercy – embedded in the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation – that an additional ibaad’ah has not been demanded.

Milaad un Nabi – a critical analysis

“The reason for this is the Prophet’s mercy and kindness upon his ummah. It is for this same reason that the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation would refrain or cease many acts in fear that they may become compulsory upon the Ummah. Allah mentions the Prophet’s Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation kindness in the Quran that he is very merciful and kind to the believers”

(Al Mudhkal 2:2)

“If one was to ask that Friday has an extra prayer and sermon and if (Milaad) is better why does it not have an extra worship the answer would be the same as that given before, that the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation always wanted to lighten, (the burden) on his Ummah thus no extra duties were demanded. Thus when Allah gave the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation the physical body it was out of respect for the Prophet Upon him be Allah’s blessing and Salutation that Allah did not make any extra (ibaadah) compulsory. Allah called the Prophet a mercy for all the worlds. This mercy is generally for all creation but is most specifically for his Ummah. Amongst his kindness and mercy is the fact that Allah did not order extra worship on the day of his birth”

(Al Mudkhal 2:30)

Imam Ahmad Qastalaani also answers this objection whilst discussing the status of the night of the Milaad

“If Friday, on which Syeduna Adam, (as) was born, contains a time when a Muslim has any Dua accepted then what of that time when the chief of all the Prophets arrived. The reason why the day of Milaad does not have an extra prayer or Khutba like Friday is out of the respect for the Prophet (that the burden on the Ummah has been lightened). Allah says ‘We have not sent you but as a mercy for all the worlds’ and one of the fruits of this mercy is that no extra worship is made compulsory”

(Al Muwaahib ud Duniya 1:142)