

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE BIRTH OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD (PHUH)

A Conceptual Clarification and analysis on Islam and Politics, Jan 2001

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From: Jashan-e-Milâd-un-Nabî (sall-Allâhu `alayhi wa sallam A'imma o Muhaddithîn ki nazar mae)

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IN THE EYES OF THE SCHOLARS OF ISLÂM

The commemoration of the birth of the Holy Prophet Peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him (Mawlid or Milâd) is received by some people with doubts, suspicion and aspersions. Recently some have even made attempts to provide scholarly evidences in order to denounce it (Allâh forbid) as a bid`a (reprehensible innovation). In reality, this is not only jâ'iz (permissible), mustahsana (recommended) and a Shar`i act, but it is a means to develop blazing love for the Holy Prophet peace and blessings of Allâh be upon, something which is much needed by the Muslim Community today. This book, "Jashan-e-Milâd-un-Nabî sall-Allâhu `alayhi wa sallam ki Shari` hasayyat" (The status of commemorating the birth of the Holy Prophet Peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him according to the Sharî'ah) was written in order to shed light about the acceptance of the practice from the sources of law. This particular article includes the verdicts and opinions of the leading classical and traditional scholars of the past with regard to the practice. May Allâh enable us to have extreme love for His Beloved Prophet, to show the utmost respect and honour towards him and to obey him unconditionally and thoroughly peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him (Âmin bi jâhi Sayyidul-Mursalîn sall-Allâhu `alayhi wa sallam).

A: al-Imâm Jalâl ad-Dîn as-Suyûtî on Commemorating the Birth of the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him (Mawlid)

(1) Imâm Ibn Hajar `Asqalânî

"Shaykh al-Islâm, the Keeper (Hâfiz) of the Time, Abul-Fadl Ibn Hajar [al-`Asqalânî], has been asked about the practice of Mawlid. He answered, and these are his exact words: ...and that which has been confirmed in the Sahîhayn [two rigorously authentic books of ahâdîth, Bukhârî and Muslim], that when the Prophet peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him, came to the city of Medina, he found that the Jews fasted on the day of `Âshûrâ'. When he asked them about it, they said: This is a day when Allâh drowned Fir`awn (Pharaoh) and saved Mûsâ (Moses). So we fast it in thankfulness to Allâh, the Most High (shukr Allâhu Ta`âlâ). From this, we learn to perform the act of thankfulness to Allâh, the Most High on a certain day for a bounty He has bestowed or a disaster He has averted. And that act has to be repeated on the same day every year (anniversary). And thankfulness to Allâh, the Most High is done with different kinds of `ibâdât (acts of worship) like sujûd (prostration), fasting, giving charity and recitation (of the Qur`ân). **And what bounty is greater than the bounty of the coming of the Prophet peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him, the one who is the Prophet of Mercy on that day?"**

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(2) Imâm Jalâl ad-dîn Suyûtî himself writes:

"The report regarding the *`aḳīqah* of Allâh's Messenger peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him for himself after becoming Prophet: I said: It occurred to me to relate it (the hadīth) from another source, and that is what **Bayhaqī** narrated, from Anas Allâh be well pleases with him, that the Prophet peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him made an *`aḳīqah* for himself after becoming a prophet, even though it has been reported that his grandfather `Abdul-Muttalib had made it for him on the seventh day of his birth and the *`aḳīqah* is not repeated twice. This could be interpreted to mean that the Prophet peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him did that to express his gratitude to Allâh, the Most High for making him a Mercy to the Universe and an honour to his Nation. And he also used to make *salât* (invoke praise) on himself. **Therefore it is mustahab (advisable) for us to express happiness during his birth by making gatherings of brothers and delightful displays of joy, including giving food and all kinds of other offerings.**" [Husn Maqsid fī `Amal-il mawlid by Imâm Jalâl ad-Dîn Suyûtî, pp. 64-65]

(3) Imâm Shams ad-Dîn al-Jazrî

Suyûtî mentions a statement by Hâfiz Shamsud-dîn al-Jazrî: "...then I (Suyûtî) saw what the Imâm of Qur'ân (reciters/scholars of Qur'ân), Hâfiz Shamsud-dîn al-Jazrî said in his book, *`Urf at-ta`rîf bil-Mawlid ash-sharîf: Abû Lahab* was seen in a dream after his death and he had been asked, 'how are you doing?' He said, *'In fire, but I get a respite every Monday night. (He then gestured with the tips of his fingers and said) I suck from my two fingers this much water [which gives some relief] and this is because of my kindness to Thuwayba when she brought me the good news of the birth of the Prophet peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him, and that she had suckled him.'* **So if Abû Lahab, a kâfir (disbeliever) who has been cursed in the Qur'ân, is being rewarded for celebrating the night of the birth of the Prophet peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him, how about the Muslim, a muwahhid (one who believes in the Oneness of Allâh), from the nation of the Prophet, who celebrates his birth and spends what he can afford for his love peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him? And I swear (by my life) that his reward from al-Karîm (the Most Generous), Allâh, would be to admit him to the Paradises of happiness (jannâtun-na`îm).**" [Husn Maqsid fī `Amal-il mawlid by Imâm Jalâl ad-Dîn Suyûtî, p. 66]

(4) Imâm Shams ad-Dîn ibn Nâsir ad-Dîn ad-Dimashqî

The Shaykh al-Islâm and master of the Shâfi`î madhhab during his time, al-Imâm Suyûtî mentions the statement of Hâfiz Shamsud-dîn ibn Nâsirud-dîn ad-Dimashqî from his book *Mawrid as-Sâdî fī al-hâdî*:

"It has been authenticated that the torment of Abû Lahab is reduced on Monday for freeing (his slave) Thuwayba in celebration of the Prophet's birth peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him." [Husn Maqsid fī `Amal-il mawlid by Imâm Jalâl ad-Dîn Suyûtî, p. 66] He then writes the following piece of poetry: **"If this is a kâfir who has been cursed, and his hands are in hell where he is abiding forever, it has been said that on every Monday, his torment is being eased because he was pleased with [the birth of] Ahmad, what then about the servant, who all his life, is pleased with Ahmad and dies a muwahhid?"**

(5) Imâm Kamâl ad-Dîn al-Adfawî

The great scholar, Jalâlud-dîn [`Abdur-Rahmân] Suyûtî, related from Kamâlud-dîn al-Adfawî's book *at-Tâlî` as-Sâdî*, who stated in there:

"Our friend al-`Adl Nasirud-dîn Mahmûd ibn al-`Imâd narrated to us that Abut-Tayyib Muhammad ibn Ibrâhîm as-Sabtî al-Malikî, who lives at Qûs and who is one of the practising scholars (al-`ulamâ' al-`âmilîn), used to pass by the school on the day of the Prophet's peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him birth and say: **'O faqîh ! This is a day of joy. Let the children go' and he would let us go.** This is a proof of his confirmation and acceptance, not a denial (of showing happiness for the Prophet's birth). *This man was a Mâlikî faqîh, excellent in science and an ascetic. Abû Hayyân and others took (Abâdîth) from him.* He died in 695 H." [Husn Maqsid fî `Amal-il mawlid by Imâm Jalâl ad-Dîn Suyûtî, pp. 66-67]

One can conclude from this that **the practice of commemorating the Birth of our Master, the Holy Prophet peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him has been accepted by the great authorities of Islam.** One cannot possibly compare these and many hundreds of other great Imam's, who have made up the majority of the Muhadithîn (Compilers of Hadîth), Fuqahâ, Mufassirîn (Scholars of Qur`anic Exegesis), the Sûfiyya (Scholars of Self-Purification) and those who specialised in other Islamic fields to idolaters, innovators, ignoramuses and those lacking God-fearingness! Muslims should use this occasion to guide the masses, to encourage them to learn Islam and to develop blazing love for the Holy Prophet peace and blessings of Allâh be upon him. May Allah forgive me for any sort of coming in this article!