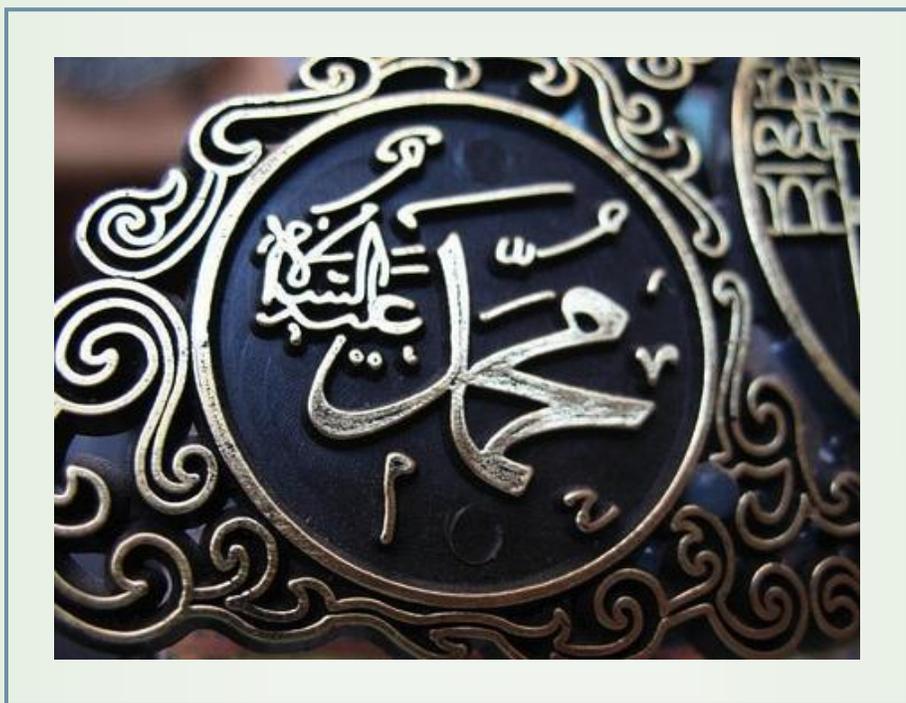


IN DEFENSE OF THE MILAD

BY SHAYKH ABU NAHLA AL WAZANI



Distributed by Noesis Institute



12TH RABIYAL AWWAL

A short synopsis on celebrating the Prophet (S) Birth



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Allah, Teachers, Supporters, and Students of Noesis Institute,

As Salaamu Alaikum.

This quickly written e-booklet is being distributed by Noesis Institute, courtesy of Sh. Abu Nahla, and intended as a gift to his students, at large. May Allah reward the shaykh, the editors, and you the reader.

Jazakum Allahu Khairun,

Noesis Institute



Table of Contents

Three Points of Clarification	4
Defining The Term <i>Bida`a</i>	5
Proof That Celebrating The Miladun Nabih Is Not A Forbidden <i>Bida`a</i>	9
Exaggerating In Praising The Prophet (saaw) During The Milad.....	13
Crossing The Bounds Of Shariah At Milad Celebrations	16
A Prayer	22

THREE POINTS OF CLARIFICATION

Alhamdulillah, we have received many emails regarding Miladun Nabi (saaw) celebrations, and of them we found a few expressing disapproval. We truly appreciate your candid reactions, sincere inquiries as well as your adhab in questioning in the matter of celebrating the Prophet's birthday. It seems that there is quite a bit of confusion and a general lack of knowledge about why some choose to celebrate and why some do not. Inshallah, in this message we will try to shed light for all seeking clarification. More specifically, we will respond to three main requests: prove that celebrating the Miladun Nabi is not a *bida'a*, explain why some say it is an accepted *bida'a*, and show that the hadith forbidding us from exaggerating in praising the Prophet (saaw) has naught to do with celebrating the Milad.

Please be advised that in the interest of keeping this message as short as possible for the reader, we will not be able to go in-depth. For every example that is provided, keep in mind that there may be more and better proofs that we have not mentioned. We leave the research up to you, inshallah, to further expand on this subject.

DEFINING THE TERM BIDA'A

Let us start with the term *bida'a* and the meanings it carries. All scholars of Islam agree that *bida'a* is, by definition, inventing within the deen that which is not from the deen. This is actually the Prophet's (saaw) definition. He (saaw) said, "Whoever invents in our deen that which is NOT FROM IT, then it shall NOT be accepted. It is a *bida'a*, and every *bida'a* misleads people and results in a sinful act."

عن عائشة رضي الله عنها قالت قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم (من أحدث في أمرنا هذا ما ليس منه فهو رد) أخرجه البخاري ومسلم وفي رواية لمسلم (من عمل عملاً ليس عليه أمرنا فهو رد).

But, as the hadith implies, if the invention is supported by and within the lines of Islamic texts and teachings of the deen, by default the invention is acceptable. Of course, people are at liberty to choose whether or not to practice the invention. All of us must respect choice, as long as inventions are in line with and rooted to the Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet (saaw).

No reliable scholars with knowledge of the religion, Usool of Fiqh, or Usool of the Deen have ever defined *bida'a* as doing something that the Prophet (saaw) and his Companions did not do. This definition alone is a trap of shaytaan and not at all accepted. To make an act haram because it was never done by the Prophet (saaw) or his Companions is surely out of all lines of Islamic law. Yet, there are a few unread individuals who label particular practices that they do not care to engage in as a *bida'a* saying: "We did not see the Prophet or his Companions doing that, so it's not from the deen." Defining a *bida'a* this way is incorrect. In fact, using what the Prophet (saaw) and his Companions did or did not do as the sole definition of *bida'a* is a *bida'a* in and of itself.

It is very dangerous for Muslims who do not have proper knowledge of the sciences of the deen to adopt and perpetuate this erroneous definition. Eventually, it may lead them to asserting that some of the Companions or the people in the generation after the Companions engaged in *bida'a*. Actually, some narrow-minded individuals of old fell into this trap and accused Umar (ra) of creating a *bida'a* when

he instituted the tarawih prayer. They argued that during the time of the Prophet (saaw) and Abu Bakr (ra), Muslims did not pray tarawih in the format Umar (ra) encouraged. To that accusation, Umar (ra) retorted, “Blessed be such a *bida’a*.” From this, Umar (ra) taught us that inventions in line with the deen and that have roots in it, are not rejected *bida’a*. They are called *bida’a* language-wise, but again, they are accepted *bida’a*. Even the toughest, most ultra-conservative scholars could not refute that Umar’s format of tarawih was an invention, but they accepted it because of its roots in Islam. If something has roots in the deen then it is a *bida’a* by language only. It is not a new, foreign act that is not Islamically accepted but was invented. Ibn Rajab Alhanbali, a scholar who defined *Bida’a* and comments on it, has explained exactly as we have done:

قال الحافظ ابن رجب : المراد بالبدعة ما أحدث مما لا أصل له في الشريعة يدل عليه وأما ما كان له أصل من الشرع يدل عليه فليس ببدعة شرعاً وكان بدعة لغة و قال رحمه الله : وأما ما وقع في كلام السلف من استحسان بعض البدع فإنما ذلك في البدع اللغوية لا الشرعية فمن ذلك قول عمر رضي الله عنه لما جمع الناس في قيام رمضان على إمام واحد في المسجد وخرج ورآهم يصلون كذلك فقال نعمت البدعة ... إلى قوله : ومراده أن هذا الفعل لم يكن على هذا الوجه قبل هذا الوقت ولكن له أصل في الشريعة يرجع إليها فمنها أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم كان يحث على قيام رمضان ويرغب فيه وكان الناس في زمنه يقومون في المسجد جماعات متفرقة ووجدانا وهو صلى الله عليه وسلم صلى بأصحابه في رمضان ليلة ثم امتنع من ذلك معللاً بأنه خشي أن يكتب عليهم فيعجزوا عن القيام به وهذا قد أمن بعده صلى الله عليه وسلم.

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Some may argue that the Prophet (saaw) himself prayed Tarawih alone as well as in a group. However, He (saaw) stopped praying in the group format so that it would not become a farida (must) on the people. After the death of the Prophet (saaw), they say Umar (ra) just formally organized what he had seen the Prophet (saaw) do. Umar (ra) did so because the people were randomly performing the prayer.

Whether inventions in line with the deen were performed during the time of the Prophet (saaw) or not, they are not haram. The Prophet (saaw) said in a reliable narration: “Whoever makes a new SUNNAH in Islam that is useful and good he will be rewarded for it and get the reward for anyone who does it till the Day of Judgment.” Some scholars of today have tried to switch the meaning of this Hadith and claim that it refers to reviving a Sunnah of the Prophet (saaw) not inventing a

new one. This is a false understanding for 2 reasons: Firstly, the word SANNA in the hadith means to establish a practice, not revive it. Secondly, the rest of the Hadith reads “and whoever invents a bad SUNNAH will carry the sin of it and the sin for whoever does it till the hereafter.” If SANNAH meant revive, this would imply that the Prophet (saaw) had bad Sunnahs that should never be revived. Astaghfirullah, this claim is against Islam and leads to an act of disbelief.

وقوله صلى الله عليه وسلم: (من سن في الإسلام سنة حسنة فعمل بها بعده كتب له مثل أجر من عمل بها ولا ينقص من أجورهم شيء ، ومن سن في الإسلام سنة سيئة فعمل بها بعده كتب عليه مثل وزر من عمل بها ولا ينقص من أوزارهم شيء) رواه مسلم. (704/2 - 705) من حديث جرير بن عبد الله

Additionally, when the Companions thought that they had to limit their actions solely to what the Prophet (saaw) did to remain within the lines of Islam, the Prophet (saaw) corrected them. This took place once when he refused to eat a dish called *D'abb*. They assumed the dish was haram so they did not eat it either. The Prophet (saaw) encouraged them to eat saying about the *D'aab*, “I do not eat it myself, and I am not making it haram,” In another narration he explained: “Eat, it is Halal but it is not my type of food.”

ومن أدلة ذلك حديث سيدنا ابن عمر رضي الله عنهما مرفوعاً : (الضب لست أكله ولا أحرمه) رواه البخاري في : "الصحيح" وفي رواية عند مسلم: (كلوا فإنه حلال ولكنه ليس من طعامي)

This was a one of a kind lesson for the Companions who wanted to make haram to themselves that which the Prophet did not do. It is a mercy from Allah that the Prophet (saaw) dispelled this thinking. Otherwise, so much of the everyday lives of people who are inclined to think this way would be off limits.

In fact, the Prophet (saaw) inspired people to refrain from inquiring about the permissibility of matters commonly understood as permissible. He did so to avoid making that which was halal into haram. He (saaw) said: “Allah has not mentioned many things, not because He is unaware of them, but out of His mercy on you.”

{إن الله فرض فرائض فلا تضيعوها، وحد حدوداً فلا تعتدوها، وحرم أشياء فلا تنتهكوها، وسكت عن أشياء رحمة بكم غير نسيان- فلا تسألوا عنها} رواه جمع من المحدثين: الدارقطني والحاكم والبيهقي والترمذي وابن ماجة وغيرهم، فالحديث إن شاء الله حسن أو صحيح،

There are some people who keep asking and asking until something that was once halal becomes haram. Such people were disliked by the Prophet (saaw) for that. He (saaw) said: “Do not make it narrow for yourselves, and then God will make it narrow on you. For some people made it narrow on themselves and Allah made it narrow on them. Here you see the remnants of their places of worship and invented isolation. We never demanded this from them.”

وعن أنس بن مالك -رضي الله عنه - أن رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - كان يقول (: لا تشددوا على أنفسكم فيشدد الله عليكم ، فإن قوما شددوا على أنفسهم ، فشدد الله عليهم ، فقتلك بقاياهم في الصوامع والديار ورهبانية ابتدعوها ما كتبناها عليهم رواه أبو داود .

We repeat again, a *bida'a* is defined as inventing something in the deen that is not rooted in it or from it. However, if the invention is rooted and in line with the Quran and Sunnah it is accepted and permissible for people to practice at will. This type is called a *Bida'a* by language, yet it is a Sunnah by invention and in terms of action.

Now that we have defined a *bida'a*, and determined that “doing something other than that which the Prophet (saaw) did” does not fit the definition, let us look at the Milad celebrations more closely. There are only two options, either it is a *bida'a* to celebrate it or it is not.

PROOF THAT CELEBRATING THE MILADUN NABIH IS NOT A FORBIDDEN BIDA'A

The most significant proof lies in the Quran and then the Sunnah of the Prophet (saaw). Before looking into the Quran however, we will define the term Sunnah and extract lessons about celebrating the Milad from the Prophet's life.

A Sunnah is defined as "whatever the Prophet (saaw) said, did, or confirmed his acceptance of via silence." This definition of "Sunnah" is agreed upon by all scholars at large, and although they may have slight differences in wording, it does not affect the meaning. So if the Prophet (saaw) were asked, "Why do you eat dates in the morning?" and he replied, "It is a good thing," then eating dates in the morning would become a Sunnah because of what he said. If the Prophet (saaw) were to line his eyes with kohl, then lining the eyes would become a Sunnah because of his action. And if the Prophet (saaw) saw someone eating or praying in a certain way and he did not object, then eating or praying that way would become a Sunnah because of his silence. Now let us see if the birthday of the Prophet (saaw) has any value in the Sunnah under the previous definition.

Most scholars who are in support of celebrating the Milad reference the following paraphrased hadith: The Prophet (saaw), when asked why he fasts on Mondays, said a very important sentence for truth seekers. He said, "This is the day I WAS BORN," then he (saaw) added, "and the day I RECEIVED REVELATION." From this, we observe that the Prophet (saaw) himself not only gave weight to his birthday by remembering it, but it was so important that he even made a worship - fasting - in celebration of the day. In the same Hadith, the Prophet (saaw) made a most curious association for us. The day he was born, a Monday, was also the same day of the week he received Quranic revelation. He (saaw) worshipped Allah (swt) in honor of two of the most significant historical events known to man as they changed the fate of humanity forever. Without the life of the Prophet (saaw), we would not know how to practically apply the Quran. Therefore, it makes sense that his birthday and revelation of the Quran were recognized together. But, from this

hadith we see that the Prophet (saaw) first emphasized his birthday and then went on to mention Divine revelation. His emphasis teaches us that it is a Sunnah to give special care and consideration for the anniversary of the day he was born, and those that do so are practicing the Sunnah indeed.

Under the umbrella of Sunnah, let us take a look at the Companions and see how they regarded the Prophet's birthday and his (saaw) reaction to them. It is reported on the authority of Ibn `Abbas and Ibn Jabir that the Prophet (saaw) was born in the "Year of the Elephant" on the 12th of Rabe` Al-Awwal. He also received the Divine Revelation, ascended to the Heavens, migrated to Medina and died on the 12th of Rabe` Al-Awwal. How would these Companions be able to report this except that a record was being stored in their minds and hearts? Ibn `Abbas and Ibn Jabir carried a care and placed an importance on the Prophet's birth date. What's more is that they publicly taught that care and made others pay attention to the date, and the Prophet (saaw) did not discourage them from doing so. Also, he did not discourage them from highlighting the night ascension to the heavens or the migration to Medina which too occurred on that day. In fact, Muslims celebrated the Prophet's migration (which is as important if not less important than his birthday) with songs, poetry, and very outward displays of happiness. He (saaw) did not object to this. Again, Rasulullah's (saaw) silence is his confirmation for us that it is permissible to give weight to these significant days.

To this point, you may recall the incident wherein the Prophet (saaw) came back from a battle and a woman said to him, "Prophet of Allah, I made a promise that I would play the *duff* (drum) and sing, standing above your head if you came back safe and sound." The Prophet (saaw) replied, "Then fulfill your promise." She played the *duff* and sang in his presence. He (saaw) said nothing and gave no reaction to suggest that the woman's actions were haram or wrong. The Companion was permitted to celebrate the Prophet's return. But which is more important - his (saaw) safe return from a battle or his birth? Well, as aforementioned, he gave value to his birth. Therefore, it is only proper that we, who care for and love him, place an importance on it as well.

أن امرأة أتت رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - فقالت : يا رسول الله ، إني نذرت أن أضرب بالدف بين يديك إن رجعت من سفرك سالما . فقال:(أوفي بنذرك «هذا الحديث صحيح رواه الترمذي في «جامعه» ، وابن حبان في «صحيحه» من رواية بريدة رضي الله عنه «أن رسول الله -صلى الله عليه وسلم - لما رجع من بعض مغازيه ، جاءتة جارية سوداء فقالت : يا رسول الله ، إني نذرت إن ردك الله سالما أن أضرب بين يديك بالدف وأتغنى . فقال لها : إن كنت نذرت فأوف بنذرك» . هذا لفظ الترمذي وقال : حديث حسن صحيح .

Now, let us take a look in the Quran and see what Allah says about the Milad. In His Book, Allah (swt) explains that it is our duty to give the Prophet (saaw) respect and place importance on everything that relates to him (saaw). In ayat 7:157 and 48:9, we are demanded to try to show as much love and care as we can for the Prophet (saaw) and do what it takes to uphold and make alive his name, life, and teachings. Celebrating his birthday is rooted in and connected to this command. Of course, someone may argue that these ayat do not directly command us to celebrate the Prophet's birthday. To that we say, nowhere in the Quran does it say make four rakat in salah. For that knowledge, we look in the Sunnah, and as demonstrated above we see that the Sunnah gives recognition to and shows care for the Prophet's birthday. Also, we point to another verse in the Quran that specifically relates to a birthday. In Surah Maryam 19:15, Allah (swt) said about Jesus (as), *"Peace be on him the day he is born, the day he dies and the day he is resurrected."* Many who celebrate the Prophet's birthday ask, would Allah (swt) really give weight to Jesus' (as) birthday, and consider Muhammad's less significant? Of course not. People celebrate in the spirit of sending peace upon him (saaw) for the day he was born and received revelation, the day he died, and the day he will be resurrected and inshallah intercede on our behalves.

In another ayah, 3:164, Allah directly mentions the birth and sending of Muhammad (saaw) as a prophet and called him a good gift and favor from Allah to us. He (swt), in fact, considers the Prophet (saaw) a huge favor that we should thank Him for and appreciate. How can we thank Allah (swt) or show appreciation except by following Muhammad's (saaw) teachings, reviving his Sunnah, and caring for all that is related to him?

In yet another surah, Allah makes a *QASAM* or swears an oath by the city of Mecca, the birthplace of the Prophet (saaw). It is also the place he resided for the majority of his life, the place he received the first revelation, the place he (saaw) was made a father, and more. Allah's oath implies that the life of Muhammad (saaw) is momentous and that the who, what, when, where and why surrounding him (saaw), (including his birthday) should be recognized as distinguishing him from the rest of creation. We should love the places he loved, the people he loved, and the days he (saaw) loved, including his (saaw) own birthday. May Allah (swt) teach us truly how to give the due respect to His beloved Nabih (saaw). Amin. The Quran also states that Allah (swt) used the Prophet's life as a means to make a qasam, and He (swt) swore by it as well in ayah 15:72. Allah said, "*By your life, they are in their confusion going blind.*"

You, the reader, may agree based on the evidence provided that the Prophet's birthday is to be given weight. But you may say to yourself, "It's one thing to remember the day and possibly fast, and another to have a celebration." We concur. To address the issue of celebrating, we reference the understanding of our honored Khalifah Umar (ra). A Hadith of the Prophet (saaw) about the Hijri inspired Umar (ra) to delineate the day of Hijra from all other Islamic days, start the Islamic calendar based on it, and pronounce it a day to celebrate. This was his own Ijitihaad, and it is from him that the idea of celebrating a special day in Islamic history came about in our Ummah. Another example of Umar (ra) acknowledging that certain days in Islam should be celebrated can be found in the account wherein a Jewish person approached him (ra) and remarked, "There is an ayah in your Quran about a specific day, and if it were in our book we would have made it a memorable day." Umar (ra) asked, "Which ayah?" The Jewish person recited the ayah, "*Today I have completed for you your religion.*" Umar (ra) did not disagree with the Jew about celebrating or making memorable certain days, instead he said something very insightful for the person who reflects. He (ra) said, "By Allah, there is no ayat in the Quran that I do not know where it was revealed and why. It is all known to me and I remember." Umar's response teaches us that celebrating in order to remember a

day is a tool, that people who often forget, use to keep an event alive. Umar (ra) mashallah did not have a problem with his people forgetting that day in the life of the Prophet (saaw), but he did have a problem with them forgetting the Hijra so he made celebrations. Like those who lived during the time of Umar, we forget events too. In fact, we forget far more than they did, including but not limited to, the birthday of the Prophet (saaw). Hence, we celebrate the Milad to remember and remind others. Of course, not everyone forgets. But, by the mercy of Allah (swt) this story supports the notion that those who are forgetting should do what it takes to make dates like the Prophet's birthday, and even more importantly the Days of Allah, memorable.

Alhamdulillah we have examples left by the Prophet (saaw) and Companions that show us just how to celebrate such days. Do you recall the songs, poetry, and festivities the Prophet (saaw) allowed the day he (saaw) migrated to Medina? Do you also recall the lady playing the *duff* and singing in his presence, celebrating his return and safety? Why would it be so bad if Muslims played the *duff* and sang honorable words on his (saaw) birthday? Why not recite poetry about his life as well?

Lastly, in surah 14:5 we find that Allah (swt) actually commanded Moses (as) to remind his people of the Days of Allah, (the days of good things God gifted, miracles that took place, the day they were saved, etc.) and to celebrate and care about them. Ibn Abbas defines the Days of Allah as days and/or events from past or previous nations that have occurred. To help you better understand, in Arabic we say someone is good at the Days of the Arabi. This means remembering the main events of the Arab.

قال ابن عباس ومقاتل: "بوقائع الله في الأمم السالفة يقال: فلان عالم بأيام العرب أي بوقائعها"

Some scholars say it is a very high worship to remind people of such Days and of all of Allah's favors. What better favor do we have than Mohammad (saaw)? As we saw in ayah 3:164 and mentioned before, he (saaw) is a huge favor. The same scholars go on to say that even if celebrating the Milad is a *bida'a* it is a blessed *bida'a*

because it is in line with the Quran and Sunnah. (We will discuss the notion of a blessed bida'a in another section.) Scholars of old like As-Suyuti, Ibn Hajar Al-`Asqalani and Ibn Hajar Al-Haythmi are just a few who have recommended celebrating the Prophet's birthday and derive their opinion from the verse: "*Bring your people out from darkness into light, and make them remember the Days of Allah* " (Surah Ibrahim, 14:5). In explaining the verse, An-Nasa'i and `Abdullah Ibn Ahmad in Zaway'd Al-Musnad and Al-Bayhaqi in Shu'ab Al-Iman, report on the authority of Ibn Ka'b that the Prophet (saaw) said: "*The days of Allah are Allah's blessings and signs, and the Prophet's birth is a great bliss.*" (Al-Alusi's Ruh Al-Ma`ani).

EXAGGERATING IN PRAISING THE PROPHET (saaw) DURING THE MILAD

Some have asked us if it is permissible to go above what the Prophet (saaw) has taught us, in terms of praising him (saaw). Before addressing this question let us take a glimpse at how the Companions approached and regarded our Nabi (saaw), and how he responded to them and set limits. We have records of the Companions having treated the Prophet (saaw) and everything associated with him with extraordinary love, affection, attention, honor, regard, and care. They loved him (saaw) so much that they would collect his saliva and rub it on their skin. They would also collect his blood that they would drink for blessings, even his urine. They would save his hair, his clothes, used wudu water, etc. They would even go so far as following him (saaw) and walking in his footsteps as a means of seeking blessings from Allah (swt) and even collect his (saaw) sweat to create perfume mixtures. In all of this, never once did the Prophet (saaw) command his Companions to stop or tell them that their actions were haram or that they crossed the lines of adhab, or exaggerated in their love. Instead, he was silent. This made their actions a basis for any actions we take to express our love, as long as they fall within the zone of what is permissible. How could their actions be wrong when, like we said before, Allah has demanded such respect in His Book?

In Surah A'raf 7:157 the word *TU AZZI ROHO* (تعزروه) signifies true holiness, respect, and devotion in love for Muhammad (saaw). Additionally, from his (saaw) Sunnah we know that he used to clearly teach Companions to love him saying, "None of you will ever achieve complete Iman unless he loves me (saaw) more than money, children, and people, including self." So, the Companions did more than just celebrate the Prophet's birthday to demonstrate their love, they sought blessings in anything related to him.

عن أنس بن مالك رضي الله عنه انه قال؛ قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: [[والذي نفسي بيده لا يؤمن أحدكم حتى أكون أحب إليه من نفسه وماله وولده والناس أجمعين]]. رواه البخاري
وورد عن الخليفة عمر رضي الله عنه أنه أعلم رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم عن مدى محبته له فقال: ((يا رسول الله !! والله لأنت أحب إلي من كل شيء ، إلا من نفسي ..)) فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: [[لا يا عمر حتى أكون أحب إليك من نفسك ..]]
فقال عمر: ((يا رسول الله !! والله لأنت أحب إلي من كل شيء ، حتى من نفسي ..)) قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: [[الآن يا عمر]] . رواه البخاري

We all know the story about Umar (ra) and how he had to make the love of the Prophet (saaw) above the love he had for himself so that he could be confirmed and accepted by the Prophet. The Prophet (saaw) said: By the one whom my soul is in His hand, "None of you will believe till I am more beloved to him than himself, his money, his kids and all people at large."

One may counter argue that there is a Hadith wherein the Prophet (saaw) explicitly tells us: "Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Mary, for I am only a Slave. So, call me the Slave of Allah and His Messenger." A majority of those who celebrate the Milad agree that the lines of faith must not ever be crossed in our attitudes or perceptions of Muhammad (saaw), which is what this Hadith addresses. Prophet Muhammad (saaw) must be regarded as human and not as an angel, god, light or anything else besides a man. Again, this is wholly agreed upon. As the Quran states in 18:110, 21:34, 41:6 and 17:93 to believe that the Prophet (saaw) is not a human is an act of disbelief, against the Islamic faith, and the purity of tawheed.

We are aware that some people claim that Allah (swt) called Muhammad (saaw) a *noor* and source of light in 33:46 and ask why then is he not light (noor)? To this we say read the ayah before and you will see where you went wrong. Allah (swt) said, "We sent you as a witness, carrier of glad news, a warner, a preacher/inviter to God by His permission, and a source of light." Let's look at the ayah again, it states "We **sent** you as...light" not "**created** you as...light." If the Prophet (saaw) were light, while the Quran itself says he has been created a man like you, this would be an enormous contradiction in Allah's book, and glory be to Allah (swt) and His Messenger (saaw) from such a contradiction.

To the point though, Milad celebrations do not challenge the tenet of the deen that states that Prophet Muhammad is a slave and Messenger. If he (saaw) were to be exaggerated beyond this status, then surely fatwas would be passed for people to cease. On the other hand, Prophet Muhammad (saaw) should not be treated like the average person either. This is sinful too. Look at the ayah where the Quran speaks

of the people who treat or speak to the Prophet (saaw) like they treat themselves. What did Allah (swt) tell them? In surah Hujurat 49:2, Allah (swt) forbade this from happening. He asked those who have taqwa to show respect and love for the Prophet (saaw) by lowering their voices and not speaking to him like a regular person. The Prophet's maqam, or station, with Allah is different from ours. If anyone tries to deny that or bring him down to the level of an average man they will find themselves in the zone of sin, just as the one who denies the human nature of Muhammad (saaw). Both have deviated from Islam.

Not only did Allah (swt) differentiate Muhammad (saaw) from the average person in the Quran, but the Prophet himself (saaw) did the same. When the Prophet (saaw) saw people slightly belittling his maqam (state with Allah) he would correct them. He did this not out of pride, but to teach the truth: that he is the beloved to Allah, the master of mankind, the bearer of the flag of hamd in the Hereafter, the first intercessor when no one will intercede that day, and the first to shake the door of jannah to enter with the poor believers.

عن ابن عباس قال جلس ناس من أصحاب النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ينتظرونه فخرج حتى إذا دنا منهم سمعهم يتذكرون فتسمع حديثهم فإذا بعضهم يقول عجباً إن الله اتخذ من خلقه خليلاً فإبراهيم خليله وقال آخر ماذا بأعجب من وكلم الله موسى تكليماً وقال آخر فعيسى كلمة الله وروحه وقال آخر وأدم اصطفاه الله فخرج عليهم فسلم وقال قد سمعت كلامكم وعجبكم أن إبراهيم خليل الله وهو كذلك وموسى نبيه وهو كذلك وعيسى روحه وكلمته وهو كذلك وأدم اصطفاه الله تعالى وهو كذلك ألا وأنا حبيب الله ولا فخر وأنا حامل لواء الحمد يوم القيامة تحته آدم فمن دونه ولا فخر وأنا أول شافع وأول مشفع يوم القيامة ولا فخر وأنا أول من يحرك بحلق الجنة ولا فخر فيفتح الله فيدخلنيها ومعني فقراء المؤمنين ولا فخر وأنا أكرم الأولين والآخرين على الله ولا فخر

سنن الدارمي

Balancing love and respect, praise and celebration of the Prophet (saaw) is part of the Sunnah. The Companions upheld this Sunnah, perhaps in a different format than we do today, but the roots are the same. A woman, when told that her son had been killed in a battle, asked, "How is the Prophet (saw)?" They told her that her father also died and her brother was killed too. Again she asked, "How is the Prophet (saaw) doing?" She was more worried about him (saaw) than her own

children, father, brothers and self. Also, look at the woman who we mentioned playing the *duff* and singing. She celebrated the Prophet's return and he (saaw) approved. Hence, celebrating the Prophet (saaw) became a Sunnah.

Some say that the lady who sang with the *duff* was exceptional. She was only permitted to do so because she made a promise to Allah (swt). They go on to say that her situation cannot be used to justify Milad celebrations unless of course someone has sworn an oath to celebrate. Such claims have no roots, and are indeed an attempt at hiding the truth. Is it really ok to celebrate the Prophet's birthday each year ONLY if a promise was made beforehand? What type of scholar would teach this? It encourages people to play a game between themselves and Allah (swt). If we just apply the true understanding of Islam, we would use this example to confirm that celebrating the Prophet (saaw) has roots in the deen. Telling the lady to fulfill her promise to celebrate upon his (saaw) safe return does not make it haram to celebrate in the absence of a promise. Celebration is fully permitted. Some scholars use this hadith also as an indication that the voices of women do not have to be hidden. The only limitation to the woman's promise was the number of times she could play the *duff* and sing over the Prophet (saaw). She could only do so once. However, the act of celebrating cannot be limited. After all, wasn't there celebration when the Prophet (saaw) arrived to Medina with Abu Bakr? Songs were sang and the *duff* was played on that happy day.

There is no harm in celebrating his (saaw) birthday, the day of hijra, the day of Badr, the opening of Makkah, etc. as long as we never call these days EID or make it a must and duty to do so. In Islam, we have only two Eids, but we have many Days of Allah to remember. We can utilize these Days of Allah to revive Islam and the memory of the Prophet (saaw). In fact, he (saaw) himself ordered us to teach our children to love him and instill in them a good memory of him and his family and Allah's book the Quran.

قال النبي عليه أفضل الصلاة والسلام: (أدبوا أولادكم على ثلاث خصال: حب نبيكم، وحب آل بيته وتلاوة القرآن، فإن حملة القرآن في ظل عرش الله يوم لا ظل إلا ظله) رواه الديلمي

What better day to bring joy into the lives of our children and teach them about the Prophet (saaw) other than his birthday? As you can clearly see, Inshallah, it is not a forbidden *bida'a* to celebrate, and it is in fact the Sunnah.

A *bida'a*, as we mentioned before, are of two kinds: one is haram, misleading and sinful. It is dangerous enough that it can lead a person outside the bounds of Islam. The other is acceptable, it cannot be rejected in Islam, but it does not have to be followed either. Ergo, even if one concludes that the Miladun Nabi celebration is a *bida'a* we should all keep in mind that it is a *bida'a* that is fully in line with the Quranic order. It has roots in Hadith and that it is one that is from the heart of our deen – loving the Prophet (saaw). He (saaw) said, as we mentioned before: “A person’s Iman will not be complete unless that person loves me (saaw) more than his/her own children, money, and people at large including him/herself.” Celebrating the Milad is a way for Muslims all over to declare their deep and profound love for the Prophet (saaw). Of course, people express love differently, and that is ok. All are entitled to freedom of expression so long as it is rooted in Quran and Sunnah, and done within the scale of the shari’a of Allah (swt). With that said, it is important to mention that the one who does not celebrate the Milad has no right to forbid others from celebrating.

CROSSING THE BOUNDS OF SHARIAH AT MILAD CELEBRATIONS

There needs to be justice in dealing with issues. Those who celebrate the Milad cannot be accused of inventing something void of roots in the deen or committing the haram until they have done so. At that point, they need to be stopped, but the celebrations do not need to be stopped. Just like the theft that occurs at hajj. It does not make hajj bad, it makes that person bad. Committing haram at a Milad does not make the Milad wrong it makes the person wrong. For example, there are some people who claim to have the hair of the Prophet (saaw), which is fine. But, when they present it before the people and encourage the people to prostrate to the hair, that is when they have gone against the deen. Prostrating is an act of worship that is reserved solely for Allah (swt) alone. Prostrating to the Prophet's hair, grave, or him for that matter is an act of deviation from Islam. When a companion tried to prostrate to the Prophet (saaw), the Prophet (saaw) asked, "Why did you do that?" The Companion said, "I saw the people in the west prostrate for rabbis and leaders." The Prophet (saaw) taught the man not to express his respect in such a way, and to only do that for Allah (swt). He (saaw) went on to say, "If I were commanded to allow sujood as way to respect someone, I would command a woman to do so for her husband because of the rights he has over her." Sujood to any other than God is an act of disbelief because it is in direct violation of the Quran and Sunnah. Allah said sujood is only to Him (swt), and the Prophet (saaw) commanded us, "Do not prostrate to me or even stand like the foreigners do for their kings."

وعن أبي أمامة -رضي الله عنه - قال : خرج رسول الله - صلى الله عليه وسلم - متكئا على عصا ، فقمنا له فقال " : لا تقوموا كما يقوم الأعاجم يعظم بعضهم بعضا . " رواه أبو داود

It is agreed that haram acts have to be stopped at Milad celebrations and whoever engages in them should be taught that he/she is committing a sin. But, if people prepare food, teach the children about the Seerah, recite poetry, or even sing Islamic songs that express love for the Nabi (saaw) they should not be forbidden from doing so. This is in line with the Deen. The Prophet (saaw) once gave his abayah to someone who praised him with a poem.

We should all educate ourselves on the boundaries of the deen so that we avoid crossing the limits, but we should not punish or forbid the good because of a few misguided ones. This indeed is not from our deen.

A PRAYER

We pray you achieve the truest love for the Prophet (saaw) and that your followership of him is accepted. We also pray Allah almighty grants us Prophet Muhammad's (saaw) intercession, love and company in the hereafter. Amin.

We encourage people to always celebrate the Days of Allah, memories of the Prophet (saaw), his victories in Islam, historical events related to the Quran, etc. Of course, we also encourage all to make the events they are hosting a worship to Allah, and that everyone attending abide by His laws and the teachings of His prophet (saaw). May God (swt) accept us all into His mercy. Please forgive us for what we have done wrong, or any shortcomings, and always pray that Allah (swt) guide us to what is better. Amin.