

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful



THE SUPREME FESTIVAL
English Version of the Urdu treatise
(Eidon - Ki - Eid)

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Mas'ud Ahmed
M. A., Ph. D., Gold Medalist

International Series

1

Idara-e-Mas'udia, Karachi
(Islamic Republic of Pakistan)

THE SUPREME FESTIVAL

By

Professor Dr. Muhammad Mas'ūd Ahmed
M.A; Ph.D

Translated and Revised By

Dr. Professor A.A. Godlas
(Georgia University, U.S.A)

International Series. No.1

Idara-i-Mas'ūdia
6/2, 5-E Nazimābād, Kārāchi. (Pākistān)

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مَنْ كَانَ فِي حَرْبٍ مَعَهُ نَسْرَةٌ
فَلْيُقَاتِلْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ
لَعَلَّه يَكُونُ مُسْتَقِيمًا
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Beginning with the name of Allah, the *Extremely Compassionate*, the *Merciful*.

The first thing created by Allah was the light (*nūr*) of the Holy Prophet¹. Then He blessed him with Prophethood², and the process of *durūd sharīf* litanies of blessing for the Prophet began. Angels were created who participated in *durūd* and *salām* (sending of blessings and peace to the Prophet). When that light became manifest³ in this world, people also became part of this process⁴. If we ponder this process we will realise that it too is a form of proclaiming and establishing a joyful celebration. *Allāhu Akbar* (God is great)!

From the very beginning of creation, remembrance of the Holy Prophet has continuously occurred and been celebrated. Allah shows infinite love for those whom He loves. He has declared their signs and symbols His own⁵ and has commanded his creation to exhibit the highest form of reverence for them⁶. He has made their memorial days to be days worthy of His remembrance⁷ by commanding, "*And remind them of the days of Allah*".⁸ The birthday of the Holy Prophet is an important "*day of Allah*". The importance of this day can be ascertained from the Qur'ān. With regard to *Ḥaḍrat Yaḥyá* (John the Baptist). Allah states, "*So peace be upon him the day he was born, the day he departed, and the day on which he will be raised again*".⁹

The Holy Prophet came into this material World on a Monday. As a mark of gratitude for this day, he used to fast every Monday. A *ṣaḥīḥ* hadith reports, "*The Messenger of Allah was asked about fasting on Monday. He replied, 'I was born on it and the revelation commenced on it.'*"

¹ *Madārij al-Nabuwwa*, vol.I, p.2

² *Ash'ā al-Lam'āt*, p.474

³ Qur'ān, *al-Mā'ida*, 5:15

⁴ Qur'ān, *al-Aḥzāb*, 56-57

⁵ Qur'ān, *al-Baqara*, 2:158

⁶ Qur'ān, *al-Ḥajj*, 22:32

⁷ *Tafsir Khazin and Madarik*

⁸ Qur'ān, *Ibrāhim*, 14:5

⁹ Qur'ān, *Maryam*, 19:15

¹⁰According to some traditions, the date of birth of the Holy Prophet is 12 *Rabi' al-Awwal*, (569/571 C.E.), ¹¹ a date corroborated by proofs dating back almost four thousand years.¹² Hence Monday, 12-*Rabi' al-Awwal*, is especially connected to the Holy Prophet.¹³ Therefore, because of the connection of this day to him, its celebration is a means of attaining moral and spiritual elevation.

Allah declares, "*Indeed Allah bestowed a favour upon the believers when he raised up a Prophet in their midst*".¹⁴ Favours are conferred so that they may be remembered and never forgotten. Moreover, Allah has also declared, "*Say, 'In the bounty of Allah and in His mercy—in this, then, let them rejoice'*".¹⁵ The implication of these *āyāt* then, is that Allah has commanded us to commemorate and celebrate the joyful beginning of the Prophet's mission.

Haḍrat 'Īsá (Jesus), said to Allah, "*O our Sustainer, send us a 'table spread with food' (mā'ida) from heaven, that it may be an 'id (feast day) for us, for the first of us and for the last of us*".¹⁶ Ponder over this: if *Haḍrat 'Īsá*, can celebrate a feast day ('id) on account of the coming down of a "table spread with food," should we not then celebrate the day when Allah sent the very heart and essence of the bounty? Allah declared the night on which the Holy Qur'ān was sent to humankind to better than a thousand months.¹⁷ Imagine then the greatness and loftiness of the night on which the living Qur'ān the Holy Prophet came down! If the Night of Power (*Laylat al-Qadr*) can be celebrated annually, then why should the night on which the pride of creation was born not be celebrated each year!

Allah states, "*Speak of the bounty of thy Lord*".¹⁸ *Imām Bukhārī* (d. 256/870) states that the Holy Prophet is the

¹⁰ Ibn al-Athīr: *Uṣd al-Ghāba*, vol.1 p.21-22; *Saḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut, 1972), vol.11, p.820

¹¹ Ibn Hishām, *al-Sira, al-Nabawīyya*, vol.1, p.158

¹² *Bhagwata Purana, Askanda*, 12, chp.2, shloka, 18

¹³ *Saḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut, 1972), vol.11, p.820

¹⁴ Qur'ān, *Āl-i-'Imrān* 3:164

¹⁵ Qur'ān, *Yūnūs* 10:58

¹⁶ Qur'ān, *al-Mā'ida* 5:114

¹⁷ Qur'ān, *al-Qadr* 97:3

¹⁸ Qur'ān, *al-Ḍuḥā* 93:11

greatest bounty of Allah,¹⁹ hence he should become the object of the most publicity. The Holy Prophet himself spoke about his blessed birth from the pulpit.²⁰ On his instruction some of his noble companions also described and publicized the Holy Prophets most excellent qualities.²¹ In the year 9 AH/630 C.E., on the occasion of returning from the battle of Tabūk, Ḥaḍrat ‘Abbās (d. 32/653), the uncle of the Holy Prophet , recited a poem on the birth of the Holy Prophet , in his presence.²² On another occasion, the Holy Prophet himself put the platform (*minbar*) on which Ḥaḍrat Hassān bin Thābit (d. 54/674) stood and sang an ode in his praise,²³ for which the Messenger of Allah blessed him with a special prayer. All these true incidents are recorded in books of traditions (*ahādīth*).

Whenever Ḥaḍrat Imām Mālik bin Anas (d.179/795) would intend to speak about the tradition (*Hadith*) of the Holy Prophet , he would make particular preparations for it.²⁴ This practice has been perpetuated by our learned scholars (*‘ulmā’*) and pious sages, who continue to hold such august gatherings. On the eleventh of each month Ḥaḍrat Shaykh ‘Abd al-Qādir Jīlanī (d. 561/1166) would offer gifts in the name of the Holy Prophet ,²⁵ and this practice has been continued up to the present day. In addition, Ibn Taymīyya (d. 728/1328) stated that devotees who hold *mīlād* gatherings sincerely will receive abundant blessings and rewards.²⁶

Mīlād gatherings [for celebrating the Prophet’s birth] are not something new; they have been celebrated for many

¹⁹ *Bukhārī*, vol.II, p.566

²⁰ *Tirmizī*, vol.II, p.201

²¹ *Zurqānī*, vol.I, p.27

²² *Ibn Kathīr, Milad-i-Mustafā*,(urdu tr.) pp.29-30; Suyuti, *Hasan al-Maqsad*, p.5

²³ *Bukhari* vol.I, p.65; *al-Musnad* (Beirut, 1983), vol.VI, p.72; al-Dhahabi, *Siyar al-A‘lam, al-Nubala* (Beirut,1992), vol.II, pp.513-41; *Bukhari*, Bab 68, vol.I, p.2641

²⁴ *Iqama al-Qayama*, p.44

²⁵ *Qura al-Nāzir*, p.11

²⁶ *Majma‘ al-Fatāwā*, vol.23, p.163.

centuries. The origin of those gatherings can be traced to the auspicious period of the Holy Prophet .

In more recent times, Shāh ‘Abd al-Rahīm (d. 1131/1719), father of Shāh Walī Allāh Muḥaddith Dihlawī (d. 1176/1762), would hold *mīlād* gatherings annually. On such blessed occasions, he would prepare and distribute meals to the poor.²⁷ This was also the practice of Shāh Walī Allāh and his learned son, Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Aziz Muḥaddith Dihlawī (d. 1239/1824). On every 12th of Rabī‘ al-awwal, they used to invite the masses to their *mīlād* gatherings, in which they would speak about the auspicious events related to the Holy Prophet’s birth. At the end of the celebration they would distribute food and sweetmeats.²⁸ Once Shāh Walī Allāh attended a *mīlād* gathering in Makka al-Mukarrama (Mecca) in which he saw manifestations of light cascading down.²⁹

Hāji Imdād Allāh Muhājir Makkī (d. 1317/1899), the spiritual guide (*murshid*) of Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī (d. 1323/1905), would hold *mīlād* gatherings each year as a means of obtaining salvation; during these gatherings, while in a standing position he would recite *salawāt* and *salām* (prayers of blessings and peace for the Prophet).³⁰ On the 12th of Rabī‘ al-awwal of each year, the grand Mufti, Shah Muhammad Mazhar Allāh Dehlawi, would hold *mīlād* gatherings in great splendour, continuing all night from ‘*isha*’ prayer until the *fajr* prayer, at dawn. *Salawāt* and *salam* would be recited in a standing position, after which food and sweetmeats would be distributed.³¹

As mentioned earlier, the importance of invoking blessings and peace for the Prophet is stated in the Qur’ān, which is understood as asserting that some angels are at all times reciting *salawāt* and *salām* in a standing position.³² Thus, this is the practice of the angels. In Madīna at the funeral bed of the Holy Prophet , the angels, men and women, and even children offered *salawāt*

²⁷ *Al-Dur al-Thamin*, p.8

²⁸ *Al-Dur al-Munazzam*, p.89

²⁹ *Fuyuz al-Haramayn*, pp.80-81

³⁰ *Faysla-i-Haft Mas’ala* (with annotation), p.111

³¹ *Tadhkara-i-Mazhar-i-Mas’ūd*, pp.176-177

³² Qur’ān, *al-Saffāt*, 37:1

and *salām* in groups, for hours in a standing position.³³ Seven hundred years ago, the celebrated scholar *Imām* Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d.756/1355) was in a gathering of learned scholars in which the poetry of the Hassān of his time, *Imām* Sarsarī (d. 656/1258), was being recited. Upon hearing the verse in which the poet fervently urges the audience to stand at the time of the Holy Prophet's august remembrance, all of the scholars stood in reverence.³⁴

In addition, *Ḥaḍrat-i* Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥaqq Muḥaddith Dihlawī (d. 1052/1642) would recite *salawāt* and *salām* invocations of blessings and peace for the Prophet in a standing position, regarding these as a means of gaining Allah's acceptance of his deeds and prayers.³⁵ In the light of these facts, it should be clear that reciting *salawāt* and *salām* is the practice of pious angels, companions of the Holy Prophet, and sages of the Muslim *umma* (community).

The Holy Prophet said, "Anything which is regarded as good by Muslims is regarded likewise by Allah."³⁶ Further more, the Holy Prophet stated, "Whosoever introduces a good practice (*sunna ḥasana*) in Islam shall not only receive a reward for it, but the reward of those who act upon it."³⁷ He also commanded that one must remain at all times under the banner of *al-sawād al-a'zam* (the great mass of Muslims),³⁸ which is the

³³ *Madārij al-Nabuwwa*, vol.II, p.440; *Fatawa Riḍawiyya*, vol.IV, p.54 Ref.Bayhaqi and Hakim.

³⁴ *Tabaqāt al-Kubrā* (Egypt), vol.I, p.208

Note: For further details please see the author's treatise "*Salam-o-Qayam*" (Karachi: 1361/1996) and its English translation "*Salutation And Adoration*" (Karachi,1316/1996)

³⁵ *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, (Delhi, 1309), 309, Urdu tr. p.624.

³⁶ *Mo'atta Imam Muhammad*, p.104; *al-Mustadrak* (Beirut), p.78-79

³⁷ *Muslim*, vol.III, p.718

Note: For further details on *Sunna Hasana* please see author's treatise "*Na'i Batain*" (Karachi, 1415/1995) and its English translation "*The Novelities*" (Karachi, 1316/1996)

³⁸ *Mishkat*, vol.I, p.58; *Al-Mu'tadrak*, (Beirut), p.78-79; *Al-Musnad*, vol.I, p.379; *Ibn Maja*, vol.II, p.1303

majority.³⁹ Therefore the actions of the Holy Prophet , the noble companions, the successors (*tābi'ūn*) , the generations after the successors, and the pious sages illustrate the Islamic authenticity of organizing and celebrating the blessed birth of the Holy Prophet .

It is an inherent quality of love that a lover feels tremendous joy on hearing the praise of his beloved. Rather, it is even more correct to say that the heart of the lover yearns to praise and remember his beloved at all times. In addition, a lover is never offended by a person who is remembering his beloved. This would go against the nature of love. The truth of the matter is that genuine celebration lies in acting upon the *sunna* of our Holy Prophet in every aspect of our illustrious predecessors, who have championed the cause of Islam. Shāh 'Abd al-Ghanī Muḥaddith Dihlawī (d.1295/1878), the [hadith] teacher of Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī, rightly said, "*In celebrating the birth of the Holy Prophet lies a person's complete felicity.*"⁴⁰

May Allah bless us with the love of the Holy Prophet , which will in turn mold and conform us to the *Sunna* (the example of the Prophet), so that we can become a beacon of light for others. *Āmin!*

With the Co-operation
of
**Sahibzada Mian Jamil Ahmad
Sharquri**

Sher-e-Rabbani Islamic Centre
11-A, Bedford Avenue, Calander Road
Valley Range, Manchester (U.K.)
Ph. 01-61-8619778

³⁹ *Mishkat*, p.31; *Muslim*, vol.III, pp.1476-77; *Bukhāri* (trans M.M.Khan) vol.IX, p.145-146

⁴⁰ *Shifā al-Sa'il*,

