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Ruling on celebrating the Mawlid:

Scholars classified the gatherings held during the month of Rabi` Al-Awwal, which are called Mawlid (the Prophet's birthday), into two types:

First: Gatherings free of prohibited actions, which are considered Bid` ah (innovation in religion) and fall under the same ruling as other newly-invented practices in Islam. the Shaykh of Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said in his compilation entitled "Al-Fatawa Al-Kubra": "As for specifying a celebration other than the Islamic celebrations such as certain nights during the month of Rabi` Al-Awwal, referred to as the night of Mawlid, or some nights in the month of Rajab; or the eighteenth of the month of Dhul-Hijjah, or the first Friday in the month of Rajab, or the eighth of the month of Shawwal which the ignorant call 'Eid-ul-Abrar' (Festival of the righteous) are Bid` ahs (innovations in religion) that were neither approved nor practiced by the Salaf (righteous predecessors)."

Moreover, in his book entitled "Al-Iqtida'" he said: "Indeed, this, namely making the birthday of the Prophet (peace be upon him) a festival, was not practiced by the Salaf, although the reason existed and there was nothing to prevent them from doing it." He continued: "If there had been any pure or preponderant good in doing so, the Salaf would have been the keenest to celebrate it, since they loved the Messenger (peace be upon him) and honored him more, and were more eager to perform good deeds than us."

It is also reported that Ibn Al-Haj in his book entitled "Al-Madkhal" said: "If celebrating the Mawlid does not involve listening to prohibited things and their consequences; and it is restricted to preparing food accompanied with the intention of considering it Mawlid and inviting people to celebrate in a way free of all prohibited things mentioned before, it is still a Bid` ah by the mere intention of having Mawlid, because doing so introduces something new into Islam and is not a practice of the Salaf.

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It must be stressed that following the Salaf is a priority and more obligatory than exceeding by an intention of departure from their way, because they were the truest followers of the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him). Moreover, they have honored him and his Sunnah more than anyone else. They preceded everyone in following the Sunnah, but it was not reported that anyone of them intended through any action to celebrate Mawlid. We are their followers, and therefore, what satisfied them should satisfy us as well. It is well-known that we must follow them in origins and sources as stated by Shaykh Abu Talib Al-Makky (may Allah be merciful to him) in his book. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is reported to have said: [\(The Last Hour will not come until good is looked upon as evil and evil is looked upon as good.\)](#)

What the Prophet (peace be upon him) foretold has come true as seen in what has been previously mentioned and what will be seen later on. Those who hold such celebrations believe that they obey Allah and regard whoever does not follow their example as negligent. Indeed, we belong to Allah, and indeed, to Him we shall return!

The erudite scholar Taj Al-Din `Aly ibn `Umar Al-Lakhmy Al-Sakandary, known as Al-Fakihany, wrote

in his treatise about Mawlid entitled "Al-Mawrid fi Al-Kalam `ala Al-Mawlid" commenting on the type of Mawlid celebration which is free from any prohibitions: "I have not come across any basis supporting the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Qur'an or the Sunnah. Its celebration was not reported from any Muslim scholars who are the good example to be followed in religious matters and who abided by the practices of their pious predecessors. It is a Bid`ah introduced by the falsifiers and a desire raised by the gluttonous. The evidence for this judgment is that when we apply the Five Rulings on Actions to this celebration, we conclude that this celebration is either Wajib (obligatory),

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Mandub (commendable), Mubah (permissible), Makruh (reprehensible) or Haram (prohibited). Based on the unanimous opinion of the Muslim scholars, it is not Wajib. Also, it is not Mandub because the definition of a Mandub matter is that which Shari`ah (Islamic law) requires and does not condemn the person who does not perform it; and this practice of celebrating the Mawlid is not required by Shari`ah and was not practiced by the Sahabah (Companions of the Prophet) or the Tabi`un (Followers, the generation after the Companions of the Prophet) and, according to my knowledge, it was not practiced by religious scholars. This is will be my answer regarding this celebration before Allah if He asks me about it. Furthermore, this celebration cannot be classified as Mubah, because Ibtida` (heresy) is not permissible according to Ijma` (consensus of scholars). Therefore, this act is either Makruh or Haram."

Then, Al-Fakihany defined the type of celebration which he discussed earlier as that which is held by a person from his own money for his friends, family and children going no further than gathering for food while committing no sins in this celebration. He continued: "A celebration of this description is a reprehensible Bid`ah and a heinous act. It was not practiced by earlier righteous people, who were the jurists of Islam, the scholars of mankind, the illuminating lamps for all times and places."

It is reported from Ibn Al-Haj in his book "Al-Madkhal", that the intention of celebrating the Mawlid is a Bid`ah, even if people busy themselves on that day with reading the Sahih of Al-Bukhari. He stated: "Some of those who busy themselves with celebrating the Mawlid refrain from hearing songs and their evil consequences and read the Sahih of Al-Bukhari and other useful books." It is a well-known fact that reading the Hadith in itself is one of the greatest forms of worship and drawing closer to Allah, which carries great blessings and goodness if done according to

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the proper Islamic way, not with the intention of celebrating Mawlid. Do you not see that Salah (Prayer) is one of the greatest means of drawing a person closer to Allah, the Almighty, and in spite of that if one performs it at a time different from its prescribed time, it will be condemned and will be in discordance with Shari`ah (Islamic law)! If this is the case regarding Salah, then what about other actions and deeds! This is what has been explained by the verifying scholars with regard to celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (peace be upon him).


However, Al-Suyuty in his treaties entitled "Husn Al-Maqsid fi `Amal Al-Mawlid" tried to refute the argument of Al-Fakihany, but he did not bring evidence strong enough to refute what he stated. He tried to refute the argument of Al-Fakihany claiming that celebrating the Mawlid was introduced by a knowledgeable and just king who intended to draw closer to Allah by this celebration and was accepted by Ibn Dihyah who compiled a book in this regard. This is not an acceptable proof in support of celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (peace be upon him), since any Bid`ah is disapproved based on the Hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Therefore, we cannot contradict the Hadiths which warn us against Bid`ahs in favor of mere acts of Abu Sa`id "Kukbury" ibn Abu Al-Hasan `Aly ibn Baktaktin who introduced the celebration of the Mawlid during the sixth century of Hijrah, and his being trustworthy and just ruler does not make him infallible. It is reported

from Ibn Khallikan that Kawkabury used to love listening to singing, and as for Ibn Dihyah Muslim scholars held him to be questionable. They also accused him of fabricating a Hadith regarding shortening the Maghrib (Sunset) Prayer, as reported in the book of history compiled by Ibn Kathir.

As for the second type of celebrating the Mawlid which includes forbidden acts, it has been prohibited by the scholars who provided a detailed explanation of it. Following are some of

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their statements:

Shaykh of Islam Ibn Taymiyyah said in one of his Fatwas: "As for gathering on the day of Mawlid for singing, dancing and similar acts considering such acts as worship, no one from the people of knowledge has a doubt that it is an evil act which is prohibited in Islam and no one recommends it except an ignorant or an atheist." 

It is also reported from Al-Fakihany in his treatise regarding Al-Mawlid that he said: "The second, namely of the two types of celebrating the Mawlid, is that in which a crime is introduced and the involvement increases to the point that one is given something prohibited and their desire follows it and their heart ails and aches due to suffering from the pain of the wrongdoing. Moreover, scholars stated: 'Taking money by means of embarrassment is like taking it by the sword.'" These celebrations are even more heinous when they involve singing and the hearts become filled with the falsehood of instruments; such as drums, flutes, and men mixing with beardless young men and tempting women who mix freely with them directly or indirectly as singers and dancers gyrate. They become engrossed in amusement and forget the day of fears (i.e. the Day of Judgment). Also, women gather together raising their voices and prolonging their singing, and exceed the proper bounds in recitation of the Qur'an and the remembrances of Allah; unaware of the Almighty's Statement: [\(Verily, your Lord is Ever Watchful \(over them\).\)](#)

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There is no disagreement among the scholars on the prohibition of this type of celebration and no sensible, honorable man can approve of this. Only those whose hearts are dead and do not refrain from sins and indiscretions consider it permissible. Moreover, they regard it as a form of worship, not evil actions; surely, we belong to Allah, and indeed, to Him we shall return! "Islam began as a stranger and shall return as a stranger as it began". May Allah bless our Shaykh Al-Qushairy who said some words of which we approve:

Evil is applauded and goodness rejected

In our difficult days

People of knowledge have become isolated

While the ignorant have been raised to high ranks

They deviated from the truth, and the path they have taken

Compared to past goodness is so distant

Then I said to the righteous; to people of piety

And religion when distress intensified

Do not despise your status, since your

Turn comes at the time of strangeness

It was reported that Al-Fakihany said: "And indeed, Abu `Amr ibn Al-`Ala was right when he said:

"People will continue to be in goodness as long as they wonder at the strange."

Moreover, the month in which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was born, that is the month of Rabi` Al-Awwal, is the month in which he died; therefore, happiness in this month takes no priority over sadness. It is our obligation to explain this matter, and we ask Allah, the Almighty, for the best acceptance of our good deeds.

It was also reported from Shaykh Abu Al-Hasan ibn `Abdullah ibn Hasan Al-Nabhany Al-Maliqy Al-Andalusy in his book entitled "Al-Muraqabah Al-'Ulya fiman Yastahiqqul-Qada' Wal-Futya" commenting on Al-Qady Abu `Abdullah Muhammad ibn `Abdul-Salam Al-Munastiry that he said:

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"The Emir Abu Yahya invited Al-Qady Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad ibn 'Abdus-Salam Al-Mustaniry with a group of jurists to spend the night in the Caliphate Palace and to stand in the presence of the Emir on the night of the blessed Mawlid. He wanted to celebrate it according to the Moroccan way which includes preparing food, filling the palace with dignitaries and selecting orators to chant poetry accompanied with singing voices. When everything was arranged and the Sultan sat on his throne inspecting his arrangements and people taking their positions; some sat and others stood standing, the singer beat his drum and began exulting them with his tunes and the assisting player followed him as usual, then Al-Qady Abu `Abdullah left his place, waved a greeting to the Emir and left the gathering and all the jurists followed him to the Masjid (mosque) of the palace and spent the night there. The king thought that they went out to answer the call of nature, and therefore, he commanded his ministers to look for them and serve them until they would return. The minister who went out to accompany them back told Al-Qady about his mission to accompany him and the group of jurists back, but Al-Qady responded : 'May Allah correct you, this blessed night for which we ought to thank Allah, and which the Sultan, may Allah protect him and prolong his life, gathered us on; if the Prophet (peace be upon him) who was born on this night could see what we are doing there, he would not allow us to gather for such things, where no one forbids the other from diversion and lack of modesty, in the presence of Al-Qady and the jurists. It is unanimously agreed by Muslim scholars that publicizing sins is prohibited, unless there is a need such as confession of a sin that requires punishment or expiation. Therefore, it is more appropriate for us if the Emir, may Allah correct him, leave us to spend the night in his Masjid until the morning.

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However, if we partake in liabilities for shows of hypocrisy, intrigues and arrogance, then people will imitate us because we are examples for them, may Allah be kind to us all. Upon hearing that, the minister, returned to Emir Abu Yahya and told him the whole story. Thereafter, he remained seated for a little while and then left his place and sent his representative to Al-Qady to thank him and his companions for what they did. He did not repeat the celebration after that time. Furthermore, on the morning of the blessed night he started distributing food to the weak and meeting the needs of the poor thanking Allah for His Blessings."

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