

216480 - Did Ibn Hajar al-'Asqallaani regard it as permissible to celebrate the Prophet's birthday (Mawlid)?

the question

Did Ibn Hajar al-'Asqallaani really regard it as permissible to celebrate the Prophet's birthday, because many of the shaykhs here in Algeria quote al-'Asqallaani's view of it as permissible to support the idea that it is permissible to celebrate the Mawlid?

Detailed answer

Firstly:

Celebrating the Prophet's birthday (Mawlid) is an innovation that has been introduced into the religion. The first ones to celebrate it were the 'Ubaydi Fatimid caliphs, who were a misguided group that was out of Islam. It was not narrated from any of the early Muslims, the first three and best generations, that they regarded it as encouraged or permissible to celebrate the Mawlid.

Please see the answers to questions no. [70317](#) and [128530](#)

Secondly:

The basic source for Islamic rulings is the Quran and Sunnah, and the scholars are the heirs of the Prophets; they carry the banner of knowledge. Allah, may He be exalted, has enabled the scholars to understand the religion, each according to what Allah has made easy for him, but that does not necessarily mean that everything that a scholar says is true. Rather the scholar tries his best to work it out; if he gets it right, he will have two rewards, one for his striving to work it out and another for getting it right, and if he gets it wrong, he will have the reward for striving to work it out, and his mistake is forgiven.

Shaykh Ibn Baz (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

This is the Islamic principle with regard to the mujtahid scholars: whoever strives hard to seek the truth and examine the evidence, will have two rewards if he gets it right, and one reward if he makes a mistake, which is the reward for his effort in trying to work it out.

End quote from Majmoo' Fatawa Ibn Baz (6/89)

Thirdly:

As-Suyooti (may Allah have mercy on him) said:

Shaykh al-Islam Haafiz al-'Asr Abu'l-Fadl Ibn Hajar was asked about celebrating the Mawlid, and he replied as follows:

The basis for celebrating the Mawlid is innovation. It was not narrated from any of the righteous early Muslims of the first three generations. Nevertheless it includes both good things and their opposite. Whoever seeks out the good things in celebrating it and avoids the opposite, then it is a good innovation, otherwise it is not.

And he said:

It seems to me that it may be based on a sound analogy, which is comparing it to the day of 'Ashura that is mentioned in the report which is proven in as-Saheehayn, that when the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) came to Madinah, he found the Jews fasting on the day of 'Ashura. He asked them about it and they said: It is the day on which Allah drowned Pharaoh and saved Moosa, so we fast it in gratitude to Allah, may He be exalted.

What we learn from this is to show gratitude to Allah for a favour that He granted on a specific day, bestowing a blessing or warding off harm, and that may be done on the same day every year.

Gratitude to Allah may be shown by doing different kinds of acts of worship, such as prostration, fasting, giving charity, and reading Quran. What blessing can be greater than the birth of this Prophet, the Prophet of Mercy, on that day?

Based on that, one should seek out the exact day, so as to be in accordance with the story of Moosaa on the day of 'Ashooraa. Whoever does not pay attention to that, would not care on which day of the month he celebrates the Mawlid. In fact some people went so far as to move it to a different day of the year, and that may be subject to criticism.

This has to do with observing this celebration in the first place.

With regard to what is done during that celebration, it should be limited to that which may be understood as an expression of gratitude to Allah, may He be exalted, along the lines of what is mentioned above of reading Quran, offering food to people, giving charity, and reciting nasheeds that praise the Prophet, encourage people to lose interest in worldly gains, and motivate them to do good and strive for the Hereafter.

With regard to other things such as listening to entertaining poetry and the like, it should be said: whatever of that is permissible, and will instil happiness on that day, there is nothing wrong with adding that to the celebration; as for that which is haraam or makrooh, it should be prevented, and the same applies to anything that is not appropriate.

End quote from al-Haawi li'l-Fataawi (1/229)

It may be said here:

When we examine what was narrated from al-Haafiz Ibn Hajar (may Allah have mercy on him), we may note the following:

1. He clearly stated that celebrating the Mawlid was not the practice of the righteous early generations, therefore it is an innovation. We should not ignore this statement which Ibn Hajar made in his fatwa.
2. He said: With regard to what is done during that celebration, it should be limited to that which may be understood as an expression of gratitude to Allah, may He be exalted, along the lines of what is mentioned above of reading Quran, offering food to people, giving charity, and reciting nasheeds that praise the Prophet, encourage people to lose interest in worldly gains, and motivate them to do good and strive for the Hereafter.

However what people do nowadays in celebrations of the Prophet's birthday and other innovated celebrations is contrary to the guidelines given by al-Haafiz in his fatwa. Whoever looks at what most people do nowadays will realise that most of what is done in these Mawlid is more akin to innovations and reprehensible actions; in fact it may even involve shameful sins and other infractions, the extent of which only Allah knows!

Al-Bukhaari (869) and Muslim (445) narrated that 'Aa'ishah (may Allah be pleased with her) said: If the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) had seen what women have innovated, he would have forbidden them to attend the mosque as the woman of the Children of Israel were forbidden (from attending their places of worship).

If this is what the Mother of the Believers said concerning something that is prescribed in Islam, without any difference of scholarly opinion concerning it, and how people changed with regard to it, so she said what she said – then how about if the matter is an innovation in the first place, then it developed and became to include innovations and reprehensible actions, as is obvious to everyone??

Let the wise reflect here on the words of Imam ash-Shaatibi (may Allah have mercy on him):

If the accountable person were to seek out concessions with regard to every issue that concerns him, by examining the views of every madhhab in order to find a view that is in accordance with what he likes and prefers, then he would drift away from the path of righteousness and get carried away in following his whims and desires; he would contradict what the Lawgiver confirmed and would give no emphasis to what the Lawgiver emphasized.

End quote from al-Mawaafaqaat (3/123)

For more information, please see the answers to questions no. [107645](#) and [128171](#)

And Allah knows best.