

Six Questions from Pakistan Presented to Shaykh Sulaymān ibn Ḥamdān

About the Author: Shaykh Sulaymān ibn ‘Abdul-Raḥmān ibn Ḥamdān was one of the scholars of Makkah who taught in al-Masjid al-Ḥarām from many decades, as well as in al-Masjid al-Nabawī. He studied under several renowned scholars, notably, the Najdī scholars Shaykh Sulaymān ibn Saḥmān and Shaykh Sa‘d ibn Ḥamad ibn ‘Atīq. He was praised by Shaykh Ibn Bāz, who described him as an ‘Allāmah (al-Majmū‘ [3/196]). He authored various works, the most significant being his explanation of the chapters of ‘Kitāb al-Tawḥīd’ of Mūhammad ibn ‘Abdul-Waḥḥāb entitled: ‘al-Durr al-Naḍīd ‘alā Abwāb al-Tawḥīd’. He passed away in the year 1397^{AH}, may Allāh have mercy on him. This article is a translation of his book entitled: ‘al-Ajwibah al-Ḥisān ‘alā As’ilah Murshid Bākistān’.

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

All praise is due to Allāh who answers those who ask Him and may peace and blessings be upon his trustworthy Prophet, Muhammad, his family, companions and followers.

To proceed:

Shaykh ‘Abdul-Ghanī Khada Bakhsh has presented me with questions from Pakistan, specifically from Shaykh ‘Abdul-Raḥīm Balūshī Nūkut Sindah al-Bākistānī who requested my responses, so I say, seeking aid from Allāh:

Question 1 — The Bid‘ah of the Mawlid

Question: Did the Prophet (ﷺ) take his birthday as an Eid or did he celebrate it like the people celebrate in the month of Rabi‘ al-Awwal? Did he command to celebrate it or did his companions (Ṣaḥābah), their successors (Tabi‘ūn), the successors of the successors or the Imams and scholars of the Salaf do so?

Answer: It has not been narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) took his birthday as an Eid, nor did he celebrate it, nor did he command with it, nor was it celebrated by any of the companions nor the successors who followed them exactly in faith, nor the Four Imams who are followed (Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik, al-Shāfi‘ī and Aḥmad) nor anyone else from the Salaf. In fact, it is from the innovations that have been introduced after the favoured generations. The Prophet (ﷺ) prohibited newly invented matters, Muslim reported in his Ṣaḥīḥ Collection from Jābir (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to say in his Friday khuṭbah (sermon): **“To proceed, certainly the most truthful speech is the book of Allāh and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad and the worst of matters are the newly invented matters and every innovation is misguidance.”** The wording in

Sunan al-Nasā’ī includes: “...and every misguidance is in the hellfire.”

The authors of the Sunan Collections reported from al-‘Irbāḍ ibn Sāriyah (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “Whosoever from amongst you lives for long, he will see great amounts of differing and controversy, so upon you is to cling to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me, bite onto it with your molars. Beware of the newly invented matters, for every Bid’ah is misguidance.”

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) clearly stated that all innovations are misguidance, without excluding anything from the innovations and newly invented matters. It is not permissible for anyone who believes in Allāh and the Last Day to narrow this general, unrestricted statement of the Prophet by removing its generality and excluding any innovation and newly invented matter — this is an opposition to the Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and going against his prohibition.

Additionally, it is reported in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim also from ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) that Allāh’s Messenger (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: “No Prophet has been sent before me by Allāh towards his nation except that he had among his people disciples and companions who followed his ways and obeyed his command.” In a wording: “...followed his guidance and emulate his ways. Then there came after them their successors who said what they did not practice,

and practiced what they were not commanded to do. He who strives against them with his hand is a believer: he who strives against them with his tongue is a believer, and he who strives against them with his heart is a believer and beyond that there is no faith even to the extent of a mustard seed.”

Furthermore, it is reported in Sunan Abī Dāwūd that Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) said: “Every act of worship that the Companions did not do, do not do it for certainly those who have preceded have not left anything for the later generations to add. So, fear Allāh O reciters [of the Qur’ān] and take the path of those who came before you.”

Although this statement of Ḥudhayfah (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) is regarding acts of worship it is sufficient [as evidence] that in our prayer we ask Allāh to guide us to the straight path, the path of those whom Allāh has bestowed his grace, from the prophets, *ṣiddīqīn* (steadfast affirmers of the truth), martyrs and righteous. We ask Allāh to keep us away from the path of those who have earned Allāh’s wrath—who are the Jews—and those who are misguided—who are the Christians. Thus, taking the Prophet’s Birthday (Mawlid) as an Eid and celebrating it is deviating from the Straight Path and following the path of the misguided Christians.



Question 2 — Believing that the Prophet Attends the Mawlid

Question: Some people believe that the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) attends these celebratory gatherings that they hold, and they stand up for him out of veneration for him. Is this permissible or not?

Answer: Whoever claims that the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) attends these gatherings then the Qur'an belies him as Allāh says to His Prophet in His Book:

﴿إِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَإِنَّهُمْ مَّيِّتُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُونَ﴾

“Certainly you will die, and certainly they [too] will die”.¹

The resurrection of bodies from their graves only occurs on the Day of Judgment. If they claim that the Prophet's soul attends then the Qur'an also belies this claim as Allāh says in His book:

¹ Sūrah al-Zumar (39:30-31)

﴿اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا فَيُمْسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا
الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى﴾

“It is Allāh Who takes away the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not during their sleep. He keeps those (souls) for which He has ordained death and sends the rest for a term appointed.”²

Thus, the soul of the deceased is held back and does not control its coming and going.

Claiming that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) attends these celebrations is a lie against the Prophet and he has said: “Telling lies about me is not like telling lies about anyone else. Whoever tells lies about me deliberately, let him take his place in Hell.”³

As for their standing in veneration of him based on the claim that he attends, this is one of the worst evil acts because standing in veneration is an act of worship that should not be directed except to Allāh in the prayer, Allāh, the Most High, said:

﴿وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ﴾

² Sūrah al-Zumar (39:42)

³ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

“And stand before Allāh [in prayer] with obedience”.⁴

The Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) also prohibited people from standing for one another out of veneration, he said: “Whoever loves that the people to stand up for him, let him take his place in Hell.”⁵



⁴ Sūrah al-Baqarah (2:238)

⁵ Abū Dāwūd and al-Tirmidhī

Question 3 — The Ruling on the Mawlid Gatherings and Participating in Them

Question: Are these celebratory gatherings from the Sunnah or recommended? Is it permissible to participate in them and to assist through spending or other means?

Answer: Holding these gatherings is neither from the Sunnah nor recommended; rather, it is a prohibited innovation that must be condemned and forbidden. It is not permissible for a Muslim to attend, participate in, or support these gatherings through spending or other means because it is not from righteousness (*birr*) and piety (*taqwa*), rather it is from sin and transgression and Allāh says:

﴿وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ﴾

“Help one another in righteousness and piety; but do not help one another in sin and transgression”.⁶

Thus, spending money on these evil matters is forbidden, and those who do so are sinful and not rewarded. Some scholars state

⁶ Sūrah al-Mā'idah (5:2)

that it is also forbidden to eat the food prepared for such celebrations because the intention behind it is not for Allāh, so it is not allowed to eat it and it is obligatory to boycott those who celebrate it and believe it is permissible.



Question 4 — Raising the Hands in the Prayer

Question: Is it permissible to raise the hands before the rukū‘ (bowing) and after raising from the rukū‘? A group of people here do so and believe it is Sunnah, while the majority dislike it and criticize those who practice it. Which group is upon the truth?

Answer: Those who raise their hands in the prayer before and after the rukū‘ and believe it is Sunnah are upon the truth. Raising the hands before and after the rukū‘ is from the established sunan (traditions) of the Prophet due to what Ibn ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا) narrated that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) used to “**raise his hands parallel to his shoulders when he entered into prayer, when he made takbīr for rukū‘ and when he raised his head from the rukū‘.**”⁷ The hadith of Abu Ḥumayd (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) reported by Abū Dāwūd states that “he raised his hands bringing them parallel to his shoulders”. The version reported by Muslim from Mālik ibn al-Ḥuwayrith (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) is similar to the hadith of Ibn ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا) but it mentions: “bringing them parallel to his earlobes”. Allāh says in His Book:

⁷ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ﴾

“Certainly, in the Messenger of Allāh you have a good example to follow”.⁸

Muḥammad ibn Naṣr al-Marwazī (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said: “The scholars of different lands have a consensus (ijmā‘) on that—meaning, on raising the hands before and after the rukū‘—except the people of Kūfah.”

Al-Bukhārī (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) reported that his Shaykh, ‘Alī ibn al-Madīnī (رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ) said: “The Muslims must raise their hands before and after the rukū‘ due to the hadith of Ibn ‘Umar (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا).” al-Bukhārī reported this elsewhere and then added: “...and he (Ibn al-Madīnī) was the most knowledgeable of the scholars of his time.” He further stated, “Whoever claims that it is an innovation then he has disparaged the companions, may Allāh be pleased with them.”

If this is understood, then those who raise their hands in the prayer before and after the rukū‘, believing it to be Sunnah, have implemented the Sunnah of their Prophet (صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) and followed his guidance, which is the best guidance. As for those who dislike raising the hands before and after the rukū‘ and criticize those who uphold it have committed a grave error by abandoning acting upon this Sunnah and criticizing those who

⁸ Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33:21)

uphold it and the Prophet (ﷺ) has said: **“Whoever turns away from my Sunnah is not from me”**.⁹



⁹ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

Question 5 — Believing the Prophet is Light from Allāh’s Light and a Part of Allāh

Question: Most people believe that the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is light from the light of Allāh, a part of Allāh and not human. Another group believe that the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is human and declares the first group to be disbelievers. Which of the two groups is upon the truth and what is the ‘aqīdah of the Salaf concerning this?

Answer: Whoever believes that the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is light from the light of Allāh and a part of Him, the Exalted, and that he is not human is a kafīr (disbeliever). He must be urged to repent and if he does not repent then he faces capital punishment [carried out by the Muslim ruler] due to apostasy. This is because he rejects what Allāh stated in His Book:

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ إِلَهُ وَاحِدٌ﴾

“Say: I am only a man like you. It has been revealed to me that your Ilah (God) is One Ilah (Allāh)”.¹⁰

¹⁰ Sūrah al-Kahf (18:110)

“Like you” means that he is human, like us, except that Allāh has chosen him from Prophethood and Messengership. Distinguishing him above other humans.

The person who believes he is not human also rejects the Messenger’s statement: **“Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Maryam, for I am only a Slave. So, call me the Slave of Allāh and His Messenger”**.¹¹

A slave of Allāh can never be a lord worthy of worship nor a part of the Lord. Whoever claims that the Messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) is light from the light of Allāh or a part of Allāh, the Exalted, is more of a disbeliever than those whom Allāh described:

﴿وَجَعَلُوا لَهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءًا إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ مُّبِينٌ﴾

“But they have attributed to Him from His slaves a portion. Indeed, man is clearly ungrateful.”¹²

If Allāh declared as disbelievers those who gave some of his slaves a portion by worshipping them, how much more so for those who consider some of his slaves as a part of him or from His light which is one of His Perfect Attributes?! According to the assertions of these heretics, does it mean that with the Prophet’s death, a part of

¹¹ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Būkhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim

¹² Sūrah al-Zukhruf (43:15)

Allāh—the Perfect Living who never dies—also died? High be Allāh, exalted above that.

The belief of Ahl al-Sunnah wal-Jamā‘ah is that Allāh is Uniquely One, Alone, the Self-Sufficient Master (al-Ṣamad). He did not take a partner or son and there is nothing comparable to Him. He is above his throne, distinct from his creation, nothing from His Essence is within His creation nor is there anything from His creation that is part of His Essence.



Question 6 — Taking an Oath and Sacrificing for Other than Allāh

Question: Is it permissible to take an oath, prepare food for other than Allāh, sacrifice for the saints (awliyā), give charity in the name of a saint and donate a well for the sake al-Ḥusayn (رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ) and prepare food for the deceased on the day of their death as well as on the third, tenth, twentieth, fortieth day after the death and six months or a year after the death?

Answer: It is forbidden to sacrifice for the saints (awliyā), take oaths or prepare food for them. This is because sacrifice is an act of worship that must be sincerely directed to Allāh; directing it to other than Allāh is shirk (polytheism), as Allāh states:

﴿فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ﴾

“So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone].”¹³

Just as it is forbidden to pray to other than Allāh, it is also forbidden to sacrifice for other than Allāh. Sacrificing for graves or its inhabitants or those near the graves is associating partners

¹³ Sūrah al-Kawthar (108:2)

with Allāh in worship. Thus, it is forbidden to eat from such sacrifices even if Allāh’s name is mentioned because it is from what has been sacrificed for other than Allāh. The person who sacrifices for other than Allāh is an apostate, his marriage is invalidated, and such meat is more forbidden than eating *maytah* (animals that have not been slaughtered islamically).

Additionally, it is forbidden to take an oath to provide food, give charity at the graves or donate a well for the sake of al-Ḥusayn or anyone else at the graves. This is considered shirk and it is an oath of sin which the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) has said concerning: **“Whoever vows that he will be obedient to Allāh, should remain obedient to Him; and whoever made a vow that he will disobey Allāh, should not disobey Him.”**¹⁴

As for the practice of preparing food for the deceased and gathering to recite the Qur’ān on the day of his death or on the third, tenth, twentieth, fortieth day, six months or a year after the death then this is all from the evil innovations which does not have any basis in the Islamic legislation. It does not bring one closer to Allāh and not recommended; thus, it must be prohibited, even if the deceased requested it, this will be false and invalid. Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُمَا) said: **“In the time of the Prophet we would**

¹⁴ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī

consider the family of the deceased preparing food to be a form of wailing over them.”¹⁵

When news of Ja‘far ibn Abī Ṭālib’s (رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ) death came, the Prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said: **“Make food for the family of Ja‘far because they have become occupied [with his death].”**¹⁶ The Sunnah which the Prophet commanded with is to prepare food for the family of the deceased, not for them to prepare food for others. And perhaps this food that his family prepares is from the wealth of orphans who are in need and are more deserving of it, may Allāh protect us from that.



¹⁵ Musnad Aḥmad

¹⁶ Abū Dāwūd and al-Tirmidhī

I will conclude with this. I ask Allāh, our Master and Protector, the Most High and Majestic to guide us to what is best and to grant us success in following the truth and acting upon it. Certainly, He is the Owner of that and Able to do so. May Allāh make good mention of the final Prophet, the leader of the believers who will have bright faces and limbs on the Day of Judgement, and may He grant him abundance peace and safety.

Written by one who has hope in his Lord, Sulaymān ibn ‘Abdul-Raḥmān Ḥamdān, the teacher in Masjid al-Ḥarām. May Allāh have mercy on him.