

Celebrating Festivals in the Light of Shariah

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Abstract: Different nations and religious groups fashioned their respective communal identities through differing rituals, narratives, and conceptions of their history. Shariah guides Muslims on what they should and should not do on various occasions. There cannot be a better service to Islam than to campaign against the practices that are declared Har'am by the Shariah and refrain from them. And there cannot be a better introduction of Islam than professing that it stands for "Maruf" and prohibits "Munkar". These two words encapsulate the whole philosophy of Islam. They are the reason behind Rasulallah(S) spending twenty-three years in Makkah and Madinah and his grandson Moula Al Husain ibn Ali (as) established the meaning of Maruf and faught against Munkar at Karbala in a manner which shall be remembered till the Qiyamah. Therefore, everything related to Muslims is connected to Shariah. Muslims have been warned by Allah and His Rasul (S) against following the non-Muslims in rituals and practices that are characteristic of other's religious beliefs. It is particularly emphasized in the case of non-Muslim festivals, carnivals, or holidays, which hold culturally or ideologically non-Islamic meanings. Eid ul-Fitr, Eid ul-Adha, Eid al-Ghadir, Eid Mil'ad un-Nabi, Eid Mil'ad Amir al-Mumineen, Mil'ad al-Imam uz-Zam'an (as) are the occasions when Muslims celebrate with great joy. The birthdays of the chosen people of Allah are the days of bliss when believers perform good-deeds and get blessings of the Creator. Moreover, Jumuah is declared as a day of blessings which is also a weekly Muslim festival.

1. A Distinction Between Allowed & Prohibited Festivals:

The concepts of Walayah[1] and Bara'at[2] are the principal lessons of the Qur'an. It is mandatory to begin the recitation of the Qur'an with the declaration of Bara'at (Boycott) of Shait'an[3] by reciting: "Aaudhubillahi Min ash-Shaitan'ir Rajeem"[4]. Afterwards: "Bismillahir Rahmannir Raheem"[5] is an announcement of Walayah. This Walayah is the station of the Representative of Allah on Earth. Unfortunately, masses do not give importance to these important divine injunctions which are connected with the cardinal order of the Qur'an: [6] "al-Amr bil-maruf wan-Nahy Anil-Munkar".

This order is a major blood vessel of the body of Islam. If “al-Amr bil-maruf wan-Nahy Anil-Munkar” is performed, Earth will become a safe place, enemies will be subdued and all other affairs will be discharged satisfactorily. “al-Amr bil-maruf wan-Nahy Anil-Munkar” is Wajib and if one person does it, it becomes Saqit on others. If no one does it, all are equally accountable – regardless of their financial or social status – the following requirements are met:

(a) He himself is aware of what is good and bad from the Shariah point of view.

(b) By tongue. By discussing and persuading somebody using the politest possible language to start off with. “Minding your own business” is not a correct way to go about things in Islam when the circumstances of “Nahy Anil-Munkar” become obligatory. Not paying attention to an act that another is doing and leaving him to do as he wishes, and saying “what does it matter to me,” or due to some other reason such as not wanting to trouble our friends and acquaintances or so as not to be a nuisance, we refrain from this act. Acting in this way will slowly get us to the point that evil will rule over a society and the righteous doers will become less in number and good acts in general will be forgotten.

(c) By conduct. If talking produces no result, a gradual withdrawal of friendship and companionship should be resorted to.

For the establishment of the Daw’ah of Maruf (good deeds) and abstinence from the acts of Munkar (Har’am), Abi Abdillah Al Imam al-Husain ibn Ali (as) sacrificed everything including his life on the day of Aashurah, for the survival of Islam. As Muslims celebrate Eid al-Adha in remembrance of the symbolic action of Ibrahim (as) who was ready to sacrifice his son Ismail (as), why don’t all Muslims commemorate the day of Aashurah in remembrance of the actual sacrifice of Abi Abdillah Al Imam al-Husain (as), the beloved grandson of Rasulullah (S)? In fact, as per the Ayah Mubahilah, Husain (as) holds the status of son of Rasulullah (S).

It is the misfortune of Muslims that they are not well versed with the ideology of Walayah and Bara’at. Nor do they truly understand the spirit of the Amr (order) of the Maruf and instruction to refrain from the Munkar, which is the basic Talim of the Qur’an. To attain this objective, a tradition prevalent amongst the Muslims through centuries is the organization of celebrations and gatherings on special occasions. Celebration on these events refreshes our spirit. Therefore, such celebrations have great importance, benefit, and blessings. Another reason to attend these events is to receive spiritual benefits and blessing from the Selected or the Chosen of Allah. However, those festivals which are repugnant to the Shariah [7] should not be called Muslim festivals as they reflect the total opposite of Islamic culture and civilization. Qur’an says: [8]

To each among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way

Qur’an further explained: [9]

“For every nation (previous) We have appointed rites which they perform. Therefore, [O Muhammad], let the disbelievers not contend with you over the matter but invite them to your Lord. Indeed, you are upon straight guidance.”

Once Rasulullah(S) said this while granting permission for lawful sports [10]:

“Every nation has their festival and this is our festival (so let them play).”

The impact of regional-cultural integration is noticeable in Muslim communities where they have merged their culture with the non-Muslims [11]. It is a matter of regret that Muslims have

celebrated non Islamic festivals, and have become addicted to it, resulting in the practical departure from their perfect traditions [12]. As a result, they get involved in practices which are contradictory to Islam. Qur'an and Ahadith strictly warn us to prevent the people from following the customs of the Kafir [13] and Mushrik[14]. A Hadith says: [15]

"Whosoever follows (imitates in manners and culture) a nation, is one of them."

From this Hadith, one can realize that following the culture and traditions of non-Muslims concerning socio-religious practices which are confined to them is prohibited in Islam.

2. Shariah Rulings regarding Festivals:

During joys and sorrows, through celebrations and sufferings, we must follow the one straight path – not many divergent paths. Islam came to destroy paganism in all its forms and it cannot tolerate any sign of it in the lives of its followers. Further, Islam is very sensitive about maintaining its purity and the unique identity of its followers. Laws of Islam and its teachings go to extra lengths to ensure this. It is a great tragedy that under the globalist propaganda, Muslims have inclined towards non-Muslim festivals.

Muslims should not celebrate non Muslims festivals and do the following:

- i. Christmas, Easter, New Year, Diwali, Holi, etc.
- ii. Halloween trick-or-treat, purchasing or wearing Halloween costumes
- iii. Thanksgiving celebration and inviting friends to a Turkey dinner
- iv. April Fool which is the day of remembrance of eliminating Muslim rule from Spain
- v. Men and women mingling, shaking each other's hands and hugging
- vi. Indulging in drinking, dancing, singing, gambling and other forms of sinning
- vii. Improper dressing, showing off body parts through insufficient clothes.

One must refrain from expressions such as happy thanksgiving, happy valentine, happy new year, etc. The only possible happiness is in true Im'an! If non-Muslims greet you on their events you do not have to greet them in the same terms, but only offer thanks as a courtesy. Muslims are not bound to exchange greetings on the events repugnant to the Shariah even if it goes against the canons of courtesy. Furthermore, it is prohibited for a Muslim to attend such occasions. This is worse than just congratulating because it involves actively participating in the celebrations.

The Fuqaha (Muslim Jurists) have categorized closeness into four stages:

i) Muwal'at or Mawadda:

This means an intimate relationship based on affection and devotion from one's heart. This kind of relationship is reserved only for Rasulullah(S), his Ahl al-Bait (as) and Awliya; therefore, it is not permitted for a Muslim to share a relationship of this manner with non-Muslims. Qur'an condemns intimate devotional attachment with non-Muslims. This message is clearly communicated in the Qur'an: [16]

"O you who believe, do not take My enemies and your enemies as allies, extending to them affection while they have disbelieved in what came to you of the truth, having driven out the Rasul and yourselves [only] because you believe in Allah, your Lord. If you have come out for Jih'ad in My cause and seeking means to My approval, [take them not as friends]. You confide to them affection, but I am most knowing of what you have concealed and what you have

declared. And whoever does it among you has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way.”

ii) Mudar’at:

It is a mere outward expression of the first stage Muwal’at; therefore, it entails being polite and kind towards non-Muslims. However, if there is fear of corrupting one’s religious values, then this type of friendship is not permitted with non-Muslims.

iii) Muwas’at:

This means to help, assist and benefit people at large. It includes charitable help and support, condolences and consolations, and removing harm, such as giving water to a thirsty person or food to someone hungry. This is permitted with all types of non-Muslims except those who are directly at war with Muslims. The Qur’an says: [17]

“Allah forbids you not with regards to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loves those who are just This Ayah specifically refers to this kind of relationship with non-Muslims.

iv) Muamal’at:

This means to deal, transact and trade with non-Muslims. This is also permitted with all non-Muslims except when it is harmful to Islam and Muslims in general. The above clearly illustrates the need for Muslims to be moderate with regards to their interaction with non-Muslims. Unfortunately, some Muslims are victims of excess in one way or the other. Rasulullah(S) forbade Muslims even offering Salaat at the time of sunrise, zenith, and sunset for there was an element of outwardly resembling the sun-worshippers.

3. Why should Parents Have Only One Day?

It is not necessary to follow western practices blindly, be it mother’s/father’s day or any other day. The status and value attached to parents in Muslim society is very high. This is evident from the Salaat of a Muslim being incomplete until he/she offers Dua for his/her parents during the longer sitting of Salaat. The Dua is as follow:

“Forgive me O Allah and my parents and treat them with kindness just as they showed love and kindness to me when they brought me up in my infancy.”

This informs that it is Fard [compulsory] upon Muslims to serve their parents with religious zeal and if they have departed then to offer Dua Tarhim for them. It is not only an injustice but cruelty to the sacrifices of parents that only a single day be dedicated to them. In fact, in Islam, every day is the parent’s day. Qur’an informs : [18]

“Your Lord has commanded that you shall not do ‘ibad’ah (worship any) but Him, and do good to your parents. If either or both of them reach old age with you; do not say “Uff” to them nor blame them, and speak to them gentle words. And make yourself submissive out of compassion, and say: O my Lord! Have mercy on them just as they nourished me when I was small.”

A person once requested Rasulallah(S) about taking part in a Ghazw'ah[19]. He (S) enquired the person about his mother in detail. When he informed that she was alive (and aged), Rasulallah(S) directed, according to Tirmidhi [20]:

"(Then) stay with her (mother), for Jannah is at her feet."

Amir al-Mumineen Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) says: [21]

"Goodness towards (one's) parents is the greatest obligatory act."

4. Valentine's Day: A Carnival of the Shait'an:

What is Valentine's? And why is this day observed?

Valentine's Day began as a pagan ritual started by Romans in the 4th century BCE to honour their False God Lupercus. The main attraction of this ritual was a lottery held to distribute young women to young men for "entertainment and pleasure" until the next year's lottery. As usual, Christianity tried, without success, to stop the evil celebration of Lupercalia. When Christianity came to Rome, Italy, it wanted to replace this feast with something more in line with its ethics and morality.

The Italian Bishop Valentine was executed by the order of Roman Emperor Claudius II for conducting secret unions of soldiers in the year 270. The only success it had was in changing the name from Lupercalia to St. Valentine's Day, which was declared in 496 CE by Pope Gelasius. According to the historical records, Bishop Valentine fell in love with his jailer's daughter and encouraged sex among non-married couples. The corrupt Western society dedicated February 14th a day of celebration.

Hence Muslims should avoid anything associated with such immoral practices. We do not need to honour or celebrate the death of a Christian "Saint". Islam does not encourage flirting or offers of romantic relationships before marriage. The love between families, friends and a married couple does not need to be celebrated on a single day based on such un-Islamic origins. Celebrating this day means promoting the culture of pre-marital-sex amongst the young generation. Only Shait'an and his slaves promote such carnivals in Muslim societies to destroy morals and characters of Muslim youngsters. Please try to understand and create public awareness against this festival of the West individually as the media of the Muslim world has a special paid agenda to corrupt and destroy Muslim youth. Such sex-provoking festivals gift ultimately non-curable diseases like Aids and Hepatitis. The Qur'an guides [22]:

"...Help one another in Al-Birr (Righteousness) and At-Taqwa (Piety); do not help one another in sin and transgression..."

5. Christmas & New Year; Not for Muslims:

One of the most widely celebrated festivals in the world is Christmas. This festival commemorating the supposed birthday of Essa (as) is the most awaited and glorious day of the Christian calendar. Due to the brain-dead Muslim rulers, Western influence is on the zenith in Muslim countries, while Islamic tradition has started eroding. The so-called ultra-modern Muslims decorate their houses and business places with flashing lights, Christmas trees and many other forms of decorations. All forms of such decorations, whether this is done to enhance the pre-Christmas sales or just as a custom are Israf (waste of wealth), which is judged by

Qur'an as a hateful sin indeed. Ayah 31 of Surah al-Aar'af-7 sums up Isr'af in the following stringent statement [23]:

"---eat and drink; but do not be extravagant; surely He does not love the wasteful."

Qur'an says: [24]:

"...eat of its fruit when it bears fruit, and pay the due share of it on the day of its harvesting; and do not act wastefully; surely He does not love the extravagant."

Moreover,

Qur'an says: [25]:

"---- the Musrif (one who waste money) are the inmates of the fire"

Qur'an further says: [26]:

"---and do not waste, because the squanderers are indeed the brothers of the Shait'an and Shait'an is ever ungrateful to his Lord."

Amir al-Mumineen Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) explained: [27]:

"Whenever Allah intends goodness from His servants, He reveals to him to live moderately, spend modestly and keeps him away from extravagance."

Instead of taking your child to show the Christmas decorations, take him to places of better interest and which can benefit him in his future. No doubt Islam teaches us being courteous to Muslims and non-Muslims alike, but this does not mean that our courtesy should extend beyond the legal boundaries of the Shariah. The learned writer of the Da'a'im ul-Islam provided a crystal clear Hadith as guidance: [28]

"You will definitely follow the paths of the previous communities as a horseshoe upon a horseshoe and an arrow feather on an arrow feather, to the extent that if they had entered a lizard's hole, then you too would surely have done the like."

Frequently the Qur'an and Ahadith encourage us to shun the practices and customs of the Kuff'ar (non believer in Allah). When the Christians see us not celebrate like non muslims, they will ask us the reason. This opportunity should be used to discuss the Muslim culture and civilization, which is not confined in the area of food festivals. It is Har'am to celebrate the New Christian Year. Muslims should not fall for this because it is the festivals of Christians. As for a Muslim, he is a person whose life is guided by the established rules of Shariah and exemplified by the best, Rasulullah(S), his Ahl al-Bait and chosen Ash'ab. As per the direction of the Shariah, Tashabbuh (following) the Kuffar is Har'am (prohibited), either religiously or socially. Indeed Islam came to tear down the pillars of Kufr and replace them with the pillars of Islam.

6. Hindu Festivals and the Invitation of Shirk:

Among the Muslims of Indian Subcontinent, Hindu-Muslim socio-religious association has accordingly resulted in a great degree of religious integration. In India, it is common practice for a Muslim to attend various Hindu festivals as India is a land populated by Hindu communities. Each have different gods and goddesses, likewise, they have hundreds of festivals in different parts. One should understand that when Islam prohibits Muslims to imitate Fasiq (Muslim-breaking Shariah Laws) and Fajir (Muslim-committed evil acts), how can it allow its followers to join festivals and celebrations of the Mushrik. Behind each Hindu festival, there is a mythological background which promotes Hinduism. Below mentioned Ayah draws our attention [29]:

“Do not incline towards those who act unjustly.. then the fire will touch you---”

The above Ayah sufficiently warns Muslims not to adopt or imitate the culture and customs of the non-Muslims. Qur’an informs the intention of Shait’an:[30]:

“....I will lead them astray, and surely I will create in them (vain) desires---”

Act of Muslims should be based on the purpose of Qurbat and pleasure of Allah only. This is not to say that Hindus should not be treated nicely and kindly – they should be dealt with under the guidance of the Shariah Law while maintaining a boundary.

7. Festival of Basant or Kite Flying:

Basant is celebrated in honour of Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of knowledge, music, and art. It is celebrated every year on the fifth day (Panchami) of the Hindu month Magh (January-February), as a beginning of spring. Haqiqat Rai was the son of Bhagmal Kathri [d.1734] who belonged to the Sikh community. His mother sent him for religious education to Gurdwarah and for learning Persian to a Madrasah, where all his class fellows were Muslims. One day a dispute arose amongst Haqiqat Rai and the Muslim students. The Sikh boy uttered abusive wordings against Rasulullah(S) and his beloved daughter, Sayedah Fatimah (as). When class resumed in the evening, students complained to the teacher, who in turn forwarded the sensitive case to the Nazim [Administrator] of the city of Sialkot, Aamir Baigh.

As the matter was serious and a Hindu was involved, therefore the Nazim informed the Governor of Punjab, Zakaria Khan, who passed an order to execute Haqiqat Rai. Sikhs protested on a large scale against the death of Haqiqat. They turned this into a large event in his memory with religious zeal. Afterwards, it became a cultural festival of the Indian-Punjab which was later adopted on a large scale by non religious Muslims too.

Indeed, Islam is not against fun and sport; it only prohibits all doors to evil and opens all doors to goodness. What is allowed in Islam is what we should accept and what is forbidden in Islam is of course forbidden for us. Celebration of Basant is totally Har’am as it involves free-mixing of men and women, dancing, singing, and a truly free-culture environment.

8. Haj: The Fardh Festival of Muslims:

Qur’an says: [31]

“Make the Maqam e Ibrahim as a place of Salaat.”

Qur’an commands Muslims to adopt the spot where Ibrahim’s (as) feet were positioned as a sacred and establish it as a place for Salaat. In this manner, the memory of Ibrahim (as) and the construction of Kaabah will remain alive in the hearts of the Muslims forever. During the construction of Kaabah, Ismail (as) brought Hajaril Aswad [sacred stone] and Ibrahim (as) did the masonry till when the walls had risen to a desirable height. Qur’an says regarding Safa and Marwah:[32]

“Surely the Safa and the Marwah are among the signs appointed by Allah; so whoever makes a Haj-pilgrimage to the House or pays a visit (to it), there is no blame on him if he goes round them both; and whoever does good spontaneously, then surely Allah is Grateful, Knowing.”

Allah has made the Sae'e [running in between] of Safa and Marwah an essential part of Haj and Umrah in memory of the efforts of Hajar, the wife of Ibrahim (as). Ibrahim (as) had left Hajar and his infant son Ismail (as) in the land of Makkah, where water was not available. They both were very thirsty. The son, struggling with thirst, cried repeatedly and the mother ran towards Safa from Marwa to see if she could locate water. Disheartened, she moved again to the hill of Marwah, but to no avail. This was repeated seven times. Ibn Abbas (ra) transmitted from Rasulallah(S) that for this reason the Za'ir [pilgrim] goes across the Safaa and Marwah seven times. In remembrance of the great Niyat of Ibrahim (as) to sacrifice his son Ismail (as), the following Ayah appeared: [33]

"We gave him the tiding of a boy, possessing forbearance. And when he attained to working with him, he said: O my son! Surely I have seen in a dream that I should sacrifice you; consider then what you see. He said: O my father! Do what you are commanded If Allah pleases, you will find me of the patient ones. So, when they both submitted and he threw him down upon his forehead. And We called out to him saying: O Ibrahim! You have indeed shown the truth of the vision surely thus do We reward the doers of good. Most surely this is a manifest trial. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice."

On the Niyyah of Ibrahim (as) Muslims celebrate Eid al-Adha every year and pay sacrifice to Allah, just to reaffirm the Sunnah Ibrahim. There is a question from those Muslims who sincerely love Rasulallah(S) that how and why has the commemoration of Muharram and Aashurah al-Husain (as) become Bidah? In fact, Husain ibn Ali (as) holds the status of the son of Rasulallah (S), as per the Ayah Mubahilah. No doubt that Zikr al-Husain ibn Fatimah (as) is an elixir of faith.

9. Celebration of Eid Mil'ad un Nabi:

Throughout history, Muslims have celebrated on the 12th Rabi ul-Awwal, the birthday of Rasulallah(S) with great joy. Muslims organize feasts, start new work, make donations to charity, help the poor and demonstrate their happiness and joy through gatherings. Those who need the mercy of Allah and Shafaat of His Rasul (S) carry out such Hasanat [good deeds]. Many books have been written on the recommendation of Mil'ad un Nabi celebration by scholars of Islam throughout history. Only Shait'an and his disciples cry on the celebration of Mil'ad un Nabi, an event enjoyed by all Muslims to attain bounties. 51st Al Da'i al-Fatemi, Dr. Sayedna Taher Saifuddin, discussed Mil'ad un Nabi as a great Eid day in Islam in one of his Naat as follows: [34]

Meladu-hul Maiyminu Yumnan Kamilan;
Qad Ja'a Fil Islam e Eidan Akb'ara
His birthday is a wonderful day of delight and bliss;
it is the greatest Eid (festival) in Islam
"Aa Nasimu Balligh Bil Khuzue Salamana;
Le-Nabiyena Taha Mazaran Ath'ara"
O Breeze! Present our Salaam with utmost reverence;
At the blessed and sacred Shrine of our beloved Taha Nabi(S).

10. Navroz; Celebrated by Rasulallah(S):

It was the day of the declaration of the Daw'ah by Rasulallah(S). It is the day when the Universe was created. Due to the efforts of Awliya the festival of Navroz reached the nook and corners of the Muslim world. On the day of Navroz, devotees of the Ahl al-Bait prepare and set a special Sufreh [Dastar Khawn] at home. Various items are placed on the Sufreh as a good omen, which include:

- i. Qur'an*
- ii. Fertile wheat seeds: (its green portion indicate strength and abundant food)*
- iii. Sweets: (a sign of happiness, love, and affection)*
- iv. Fruits/Dry fruits: (indicate long life)*
- v. Raisins/garlic: (signify good health)*
- vi. Nuts: (indicates intelligence)*
- vii. Mint: (signifies curing disease)*
- viii. Cloves Rose-water: (show the pleasure of life)*
- ix. Gold-coin: (believed to bring prosperity)*
- x. Candles: (represent light and goodness)*
- xi. Goldfish in water*
- xii. Pomegranates*
- xiii. Mirror*
- xiv. Painted eggs*

Existence of Navroz amongst Muslims can be traced back to the dawn of Islam. Rasulallah(S) being a keen observer and respecter of diversity asked about Navroz from Sayedna Salman al-Farsi(ra), who appeared well-dressed in Nabavi presence. Sayedna Salman (ra) informed that Central Asians enjoyed this day as a beginning of spring. He used to prepare sweets on this day and present them to Rasulallah(S). Our beloved Nabi participated with his Ash'ab (ra) and gave us a scale to judge that there is no harm in the adoption of good festivals which are free from acts repugnant to the Shariah. Our Nabi also offered Dua for Muslims on this special day, hence with the entrance of Sayedna Salman al-Farsi (ra), Muslims also got the gift of Navroz. The customs of Navroz became more important when Abi Abdillah al Imam al-Husain ibn Ali (as) got married to Sayyidah Shahar Bano (as), the daughter of an Iranian King. She along with the Ahl al-Bait (as) used to celebrate Navroz and prepare sweets at home.

Muhammad Baqir Majlisi [35] quoted several narrations from Abi Abdillah al-Imam Jafar us Sadiq (as). In one episode transmitted by Moalla bin Khunais, the Imam (as) said:

- i). "On the day of Navroz Adam (as) was born.*
- ii). On this day Allah took the Mis'aq from the Arw'ah Muqaddisah.*
- iii). On the day of Navroz, Ibrahim (as) destroyed the idols.*
- iv). On the day of Navroz, Rasulallah(S) received the first Wahi.*
- v). On the day of Navroz, Rasulallah(S) raised Ali (as) on his shoulders to smash 360 idols from the inside and top of the Kabah.*
- vi). Besides all these historical facts, the most joyous is that Rasulallah(S) declared and appointed Ali ibn Abi Talib (as) as his sole legitimate Successor, by Nasse Jali among seventy thousand Muslims, at Ghadeer al-Khum.*

vii). It will be the day when Qa'im ul-Qiyamah (S) shall deliver Justice.

The Bektashi Sufi order in present-day Turkey, for instance, celebrate Navroz (Turkish Nevruz) not because of the new year it is to herald, but to commemorate the spiritual birthday of Amir al-Mumineen Ali ibn Abi Talib(as), and also in his capacity as the symbolic founder of most Sufi orders throughout Islamic history.

Furthermore, Navroz was marked in Damascus by the exchange of gifts during the period of the Umayyads. Ahmad al-Yaqubi was a Muslim geographer and perhaps the first historian of world culture in the Abbasid era. He [36] writes that during the era of second Caliph Navroz and Mehrjan gifts were abolished through an order. Later on, Yazid II withdrew this ban.

The Abbasid emperors also gave importance to this day. Mansur Abbasi declared this day as Eid an Navroz. During the Abbasid era, people rose early in the morning and went to the site of water (rivers & lakes), collected it in a vase and poured it over themselves. [37] Tabari writes that they also sprinkled water on each other. In the time of Mutawakkil, Navroz was celebrated with great pomp and jubilation. [38] Famous historian Maqrizi writes in his Khitat that the Abbasid emperor Mutawwakil struck five million Dirhams painted in colours of red, yellow and black, for showering upon his courtiers and personnel.

Masked Actors (Ash'ab al Samaja) appeared before the emperor, who flung coins at them and distributed roses dipped in red Amber. [39] Ibn Zubayr reports that at one Navroz, the play of Samaja was arranged for Abbasid emperor Mutadid, which cost 13,000 Dinars. A variety of sweet dishes, such as Sabuniyya and Lawzinaj were cooked and then distributed amongst the guests. Tabari [40] quoted that during the era of Mutawakkil a poet Buhturi composed the poem in which he said:

"Navroz has attained its lost glory which was introduced by Ardasher"

Like the Persian emperors, the Abbasid monarchs used to appear in their courts dressed up in their best attire to collect valuable gifts from their courtiers and faithful. It was also marked by an exchange of gifts. [41] Tanakhi (d. 384/994) writes that Abbasid emperor Mutawakkil used to sit in his chamber from morning to evening, accepting the gifts offered to him by the high ranking officials and other dignitaries.

In Baghdad, the common people on this festive occasion illuminated their houses with cotton pods and clay censers [42]. The royal houses at the same time would be lit with pods of costly materials, such as the light Zahri cloth soaked in oil of balsam as well as other expensive oils were burned in censers of stone.

During the six days of Navroz festival, the people in Baghdad gathered in the streets and lit fires. [43] Tabari writes that in 284/897, Abbasid emperor Mutadid tried to prevent the unrestrained rejoicing in the streets during the summer, but after two days he was obliged to let public resume their customary practice. [44] Ibn Hawqal (d. 367) writes that in the 10th century in Jibal, people celebrated Navroz for seven consecutive days with much enthusiasm and joviality. They cooked a number of delicious meals and donned elaborate costumes and spent on the

celebrations. They organized various sports, arranged parties, and feasted even on the roofs of their buildings. [45]

Sabit notes that the people in Baghdad hired a special cook to work during the night to have the dishes fresh in the morning, and gave parties for relatives and friends, at which they served green melons, plums, peaches, and dates. Women purchased perfumes for the day. Eggs were dyed in various colours. People sprayed Bukhur on each other for driving away the evil influence, laziness, and fever. Furthermore, this was considered a good day for taking medicine. People hit each other with water-skins or threw water in their houses or gardens, while common folk did this on the streets.

Navroz was also celebrated in Syria and Egypt under the magnificent Fatemi Empire [46]. A national holiday was declared in the jurisdiction of the Fatemi Empire. There was beautiful lighting with Misbah (traditional hanging lamps) in the city of Al Muizziyyat'il Qahirah. People celebrated Navroz due to the Imami Farman [order]. Its celebration in Al Muizziyyat'il Qahirah appears to have been well established at the time of the Bani Fatimah's conquest of Egypt. On that occasion, the Imam rode to the Al Jame al-Azhar under a golden royal umbrella, carrying the high ranked official, wearing a white turban and royal uniform, girded with a sword. He was accompanied by five thousand men in a procession. The Imam also presented royal costumes and robes. A grand banquet then followed. The royal chef and his team carried trays from the palace, containing one hundred collections of wide bowls covered by silk round pieces, on top of which were mats scented with a light musk. When the banquet was over, each person took what was leftover "for Barakah and Tabarruk".

Prince Tamim al-Fatemi (337-374/948-984), the eldest son of the Fatemi Imam al-Muiz (as) was one of the renowned poets. In his Diw'an, he eulogizes the Imam from the progeny of Mohammad(S) and the festival of Navroz as follows: [47]

*If Navroz is a festival of joy and delight,
It is through your light that it has come to be so.*

It must be known that Egypt under the Fatemiyeen remained a tolerant Muslim empire. Al Muizziat'il Qahirah alone housed a large Sunni population. When Al Imam al-Muiz (as) found that the general Muslims didn't take much interest in the festival, he restricted festivities of Navroz within the Fatemi empire. Therefore, the celebration moved from the streets of Al Muizziyyat'il Qahirah to the al-Azhar, and within the limits of the Fatemi Court in 363/974. These changes depict the tolerance of the Fatimiyyeen.

After shifting the highest seat of learning of the Ismaili Tayyabi Daw'ah to Yemen in 1132 CE, many changes occurred. Like Al Muizziyyat'il Qahirah, Egypt, Yemen was not a cultural-hub, it was a remote mountainous range, so the native did not retain each and every cultural-practice of Al Qahirah in Yemen. When the highest seat of the learning of the Ismaili Tayyabi Daw'ah transferred to India from Yemen, religious festivals of Yemen were partly transferred to India as a gift of Arabia.

11. Concluding Discussion:

Rasulullah(S) is one of the selected few who should be loved for the sake of Allah, particularly because he is the source of bounty, divine as well as material. Qur'an mandates love for Rasulallah(S) in the following Ayah: [48]

Islamic teachings have taught us that culture and civilization are always based upon the faith that lead towards the Right Path. According to the philosophy of Islam, civilization means advancement in understanding and development of good-deeds. Festivals based on learning and morality have always established true civilizations. While forces inimical to religious values behind the cloak of civilization and culture are trying to eliminate them, it is necessary to realize that this is the plot of Shait'an. Follow Shariah completely as partly following the religion means cheating on your relationship with Allah.

I conclude this discussion on the following beautiful Arabic verse of the Naat written by 51st Al Da'i al-Fatemi, Dr. Sayedna Taher Saifuddin: [49]

Zur Madinatahu, Rum Khazinatahu, Shim Dafinatahu;

Sal Sakinatahu, Wa Safinatahu, Farkab Wastaqir

Do Ziyarat of His (Rasulullah's) Madinah, approach His blessed treasures, see (and think in) His buried Khazanah, 'itrat Tahera-progeny of Rasulallah(S);

extend request of His Sakinah(Divine Peace), be aboard on His ship of salvation and sit with peace and tranquility.

Through this verse of Naat, he guides Muslims towards the institution of Ziyarah, the Zahiri meaning of which is to visit the grave of Rasulallah(S) at Madinah, but its esoteric meaning is to spend life within the jurisdiction of Madina, which is secured within the strong boundary of the Shariah. Study Qur'an and Sirah, from the sources which are closer to Allah and His Rasul. Allah has granted bounty of Aql to each human as per his strength to consider the wonders of the creation. To understand the wonders of the creation, think only about the evolutionary process of humans. All the religions admit that for the guidance of humanity, a selected few come. Compare and study the characters of these chosen people. This approach will definitely lead you in the right direction. As each King has its own treasure, is it possible that the Emperor of the Anbiya has no Treasure? In fact, Nabavi Treasure is like an unbroken chain, one after the other, son after the father, an Imam after another Imam, till the Day of Judgment.

The 51st Fatemi Da'i prescribed a cureable prescription for the Shifa of Muslims which is that they should appeal in the Nabavi Court, who is the Master of the Mulk [Madinah] that he may shower His blessings of the Sakinah (Divine Peace). Al Shakhs al-Fadil Saheb al-Rasa'il [50] "Ikhwan us Safa" discussed the philosophy of Madinah aptly. The Imam(as) has explained the Daw'ah of Rasulallah(S) as "Madinah Fadilah Ruhaniyyah" which carries the Sakinah. This Sakinah is transferred from the pious father to his reverent and virtuous son, from period unknown and this shall continue till the appearance of Qiyam of Qa'im al-Qiyamah (S). It was granted to Adam (as) divinely, which he passed on to his successor and finally reached our beloved Nabi(S). Seekers of Najaat shall attain Barakah of this Sakinah, and sit in this Safinah which has an assurance of Najaat.

At this moment I recall a Hadith: [52]

“Innal Husain Misbah ul-Huda Wa Safinat un-Naj’at”

Husain (as) is the Lighthouse of Guidance and the Ship of Salvation.

Those who are on board this Safinah of Ahl al-Bait (as) are safe of the storm of vast ocean which is full of dangers because they do not know how to swim in such an ocean – embarking on this “Ship of Najaat” is a necessary blessing. Let us persevere with our good deeds, board the Safinah, and be at ease. If we are pious and get on Safinah of Husain (as) and his son Imam uz Zaman (as), ‘in sha Allah, we will not face any harm at all, for: [53]

“Surely friends of Allah shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.”

The similarity of the Ahl al-Bait (as) is like Ark of Nuh (as), which is Safinat un Najaat. Solutions of all problems are available in the Safinah of Ahl al-Bait (as). And the people who are on board, shall achieve salvation.

Selected Bibliography & Short Notes:

[1] *Walayah*: In Shi'i-Islam, this refers to the authority that the Imam has over the believers. The meaning of *Walayah* is Taat with special devotion and love of the representative of Allah, the Imam of Ahl al-Bait(as).

[2] *Baraat*: The meaning of *Baraat* is total condemnation, disagreement, separation and immunity from the enemy of the Imam.

[3] *Shait'an*: An unbelieving class of Jinn, commanded by Iblis

[4] *Audhu Billahi Min ash Shaitan'ir Rajeem*: I seek refuge (protection) from Allah against the Devil. It's a kind of Dua where you ask Allah to empower you to start and do something successfully without the devil's attempt to mess it up to yield opposite results.

[5] *Bismillahir Rahmanir Raheem*: The magnificence of the meaning of these words brings out a rhythm from somewhere deep in the soul, celebrating the majesty and glory of the One. There is no way for any one translation to capture the many facets of this beautiful phrase.

[6] "*al-Amr bil-maruf wan-Nahy Anil-Munkar*" Ayah 104: Surah A'li Imr'an; Ayah 110: Surah A'li Imr'an; Ayah 42: Surah Haj. This order is a major blood vessel of the body of Islam. Abi Jafar al Imam Muhammad al-Baqir (as) says: "*al-Amr bil-maruf wan-Nahy Anil-Munkar*" are the most important obligations because upon them depends the performance of all other obligations. If "*al-Amr bil-maruf wan-Nahy Anil-Munkar*" is done, Earth will become a safe place, enemies will be subdued and all other affairs discharged satisfactorily". Addressing the Ulama at Mina after he had left Madinah on his way to Karbala, Abi Abdillah al Imam al-Husain warned them because of their failure to do "*al-Amr bil-maruf wan-Nahy Anil-Munkar*". This sermon is interpreted in length in my article:

"Political and Moral study of the sermon of Al Imam al-Husain (as) at Mina"

For study see: <http://www.durrenajaf.com/WorldAffairs.html>

It also explains Imams's stand against Yazid. "*al-Amr bil-maruf wan-Nahy Anil-Munkar*" are *Wajib'i Kifa'i*. If one person does it, it is *Saqit* on the others. If no one does it, all are equally accountable, regardless of their financial or social status, provided the following requirements are met:

(a) He himself is aware of what is good and what is bad from the Islamic point of view;

(b) He believes that the person to whom he wishes to do "*al-Amr bil-maruf wan-Nahy Anil-Munkar*" will listen and follow the advice. If he is satisfied that the person will not under any circumstances listen to the advice, it is then not *Wajib* upon him to do "*al-Amr bil-maruf wan-Nahy Anil-Munkar*" with them;

(c) He is satisfied that by his undertaking to do "*al-Amr bil-maruf wan-Nahy Anil-Munkar*" no personal or financial suffering will be caused to a third party.

Ways of doing "*al-Amr bil-maruf wan-Nahy Anil-Munkar*":

(a) By tongue. By discussing and persuading, using the politest possible language to start off with.

(b) By conduct. If talking produces no result, a gradual withdrawal of friendship and companionship should be resorted to.

[7] *Shariah*: In its precise definition, is a divine law, as expressed in the Qur'an and Sunnah.

[8] Ayah 48: Surah al-Ma'idah-5

[9] Ayah 67: Surah Haj-22

[10] 1- Saheeh Muslim, vol.4; 2- Saheeh al Bukhari, vol. 5, chapter 58

[11] For further study, please see:

<http://www.durrenajaf.com/Articles/Muslim%20Culture%20&%20Civilisation/TrytounderstandsophisticatedWesternizedminds,QaziDr.ShaikhAbbasBorhany.pdf>

[12] For further study, please see:

<http://www.durrenajaf.com/Articles/Muslim%20Culture%20&%20Civilisation/AtimetoremoveHinduethnicityfromMuslimmarriage%20,QaziDr.ShaikhAbbasBorhany.pdf>

- [13] Kafir: This term applies on a person who rejects Islamic faith.
- [14] Mushrik: This term applies on an idol worshipper, polytheist and disbeliever of Tawhid
- [15] Hadith: Abu Dawood, Sunan, published, Qahirah
- [16] Ayah 1: Surah al-Mumtahinah-8
- [17] Ayah 60: Surah al-Mumtahinnah-8
- [18] Ayah 23-24: Surah Bani Israil-17
- [19] Ghazw'ah: The defensive wars fought by Rasulallah(S) in the protection of Muslims
- [20] Tirmidhi, Abu Isa Muhammad ibn Isa [d.892] wrote al Jami al-Saḥiḥ, popularly called Sunan al-Tirmidhi, one of the six canonical Hadith compilations used in Sunni Islam, as well as Shamail Muḥammadiyah, known popularly as Shamail Tirmidhi, a collection of Hadith.
- [21] Mizan al-Hikmah, p. 709, vol. 10
- [22] Ayah 2: Surah al-Maidah-5
- [23] Ayah 31: Surah al-Aar'af-7
- [24] Ayah 142: Surah al-Anaam-6
- [25] Ayah 43: Surah al-Mumin-40
- [26] Ayah 26-27: Surah Bani Israil-17
- [27] Amir al-Mumineen Ali ibn Abi Talib(as), Mustadrak ul Wasail
- [28] Da'aim ul-Islam, Sayyidna al-Qadi an Nauman, vol. i, Qahirah
- [29] Ayah 113: Surah Hud-11
- [30] Ayah 119: Surah al-Nisa-4
- [31] Ayah 125: Surah al-Baqarah-2
- [32] Ayah 158: Surah al-Baqarah-2
- [33] Ayah 100-107: Surah al-Saffat
- [34] Naat written (in 1372) by the 51st Al Da'i al-Fatemi Dr. Sayyedna Taher Saifuddin, Diw'an published in Dubai. Only Shait'an and his offspring cry on the Milad of Rasulallah(S).
- [35] Mohammad Baqir Majlisi, Bih'ar al-Anw'ar, vol. 14, Iran
- [36] Yaqubi, Ta'rikh ibn Wadih or popularly Tarikh Yaqubi [it is a well known classical Islamic history book], vol. 2, p.366
- [37] Tabari, vol. 3, p.2163
- [38] Taqiuddin al-Maqrizi, al-Khitat,
- [39] ibn Zubayr,
- [40] Tabari, vol.3, p.1448
- [41] Tanakhi, Nishwar al-Muhadara vol. 8:p. 145
- [42] Tanakhi, Nishwar al-Muhadara, vol.1:p.143
- [43] Tabari, vol 3, p.2163
- [44] Muḥammad Abul Qasim Ibn Ḥawqal, born in Nisibis; travelled 943-969 CE was a 10th century writer, geographer, and chronicler, who wrote in 977 Şurat al-Arḍ.
- [45] Prof. Tritton quotes this passage in Sketches of Life under the Caliphs (MW, LXII, 1972, p. 145) from an unpublished text of Hilal al-Sabi's Kit'ab al-Hafawat about the Navroz during the Abbasid era at Baghdad.
- [46] Maqrizi, al Khatat, vol.4, p.241-2
- [47] Diw'an Amir Tamim bin Al Imam al-Muiz al-Fatemi (d. 375/985),manuscript
- [48] Ayah 31: Surah A'li Imr'an-31

[49] 51stAl Da'i al-Fatemi, Dr. Sayedna Taher Saifuddin, Naat, written in the year 1364 (AH), Diw'an, published Dubai.

[50] "Ikhwan us Safa", Al Imam Ahmad al-Mastur (as)

[51] Hadith Maruf

[52] Qur'an 10:62

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