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MAWLID

Mawlid, Mawlid an-Nabi ash-Sharif or Eid Milad un Nabi ([Arabic](#): مَوْلِدُ النَّبِيِّ, [romanized](#): *mawlidu n-nabiyyi*, [lit.](#) 'Birth of the Prophet', sometimes simply called in [colloquial Arabic](#) مَوْلِد, *mawlid*, *mevlid*, *mevrit*, *mulud*, among other vernacular pronunciations; sometimes ميلاد, *mīlād*) is the observance of the birthday of the [Islamic prophet Muhammad](#)^[6] which is commemorated in [Rabi' al-awwal](#), the third month in the [Islamic calendar](#).^[7] 12th | Rabi' al-awwal^[8] is the accepted date among most of the [Sunni](#) scholars, while most [Shia](#) scholars regard 17th Rabi' al-awwal as the accepted date, though not all Shias consider it to be this date. Also called **Maouloud** in [West Africa](#).^{[9][10]}

The history of this celebration goes back to the early days of

Islam when some of the [Tabi'un](#) began to hold sessions in which poetry and songs composed to honour Muhammad were recited and sung to the crowds.^[11] It has been said that the first Muslim ruler to officially celebrate the birth of Muhammad in an impressive ceremony was [Muzaffar al-Din Gökböri](#) (d. 630/1233).^[12] The [Ottomans](#) declared it an official holiday in 1588,^[13] known as [Mevlid Kandil](#).^[14] The term *Mawlid* is also used in some parts of the world, such as [Egypt](#), as a generic term for the birthday | celebrations of other historical religious figures such as [Sufi saints](#).^[15]

Most [denominations of Islam](#) approve of the commemoration of Muhammad's birthday;^{[16][17]} however, with the emergence of [Wahhabism-Salafism](#), [Deobandism](#) and [Ahl-i Hadith](#),^[18] many Muslims began to disapprove its commemoration, considering it

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an illicit religious innovation ([bid'ah](#) or *bidat*).^{[19][20]} *Mawlid* is recognized as a national holiday in most of the Muslim-majority countries of the world with the exception of [Saudi Arabia](#) and [Qatar](#). Some non-Muslim majority countries with large Muslim populations such as [India](#) also recognise it as a public holiday.

HISTORY

In early days of Islam, observation of [Muhammad's](#) birth as a holy day was usually arranged privately and later was an increased number of visitors to the Mawlid house that was open for the whole day specifically for this celebration.^[35]

The early celebrations, included elements of Sufic influence, with animal sacrifices and torchlight processions along with public sermons and a feast.^{[16][36]} The celebrations occurred during the day, in contrast to modern day observances, with the ruler playing a key role in the ceremonies.^[37] Emphasis was given to the [Ahl al-Bayt](#) with presentation of sermons and recitations of the Qur'an.^[38]

The exact origins of the Mawlid is difficult to trace.^[39] According to *Muhammad in History, Thought, and Culture: An Encyclopedia of the Prophet of God*, the significance of the event was established when Muhammad fasted on Monday, citing the reason for this was his birth on that day, and when [Umar](#) took into consideration Muhammad's birth as a possible starting time for the

Islamic calendar.^[39] According to *Festivals in World Religions*, the Mawlid was first introduced by the [Abbasids](#) in [Baghdad](#).^[40] It has been suggested that the Mawlid was first formalized by [Al-Khayzuran](#) of the [Abbasids](#).^[39] [Ibn Jubayr](#), in 1183, writes that Muhammad's birthday was celebrated every Monday of [Rabi' al-awwal](#) at his birthplace, which had been converted into a place of devotion under the Abbasids.^{[39][25]}

According to the hypothesis of Nico Kaptein of [Leiden University](#), the Mawlid was initiated by the [Fatimids](#).^[41] It has been stated, "The idea that the celebration of the *mawlid* originated with the Fatimid dynasty has today been almost universally accepted among both religious polemicists

and secular scholars."^[42] Annemarie Schimmel also says that the tendency to celebrate the memory of the Prophet's birthday on a larger and more festive scale emerged first in Egypt during the Fatimids. The Egyptian historian Maqrizi (d. 1442) describes one such celebration held in 1122 as an occasion in which mainly scholars and religious establishment participated. They listened to sermons, distributed sweets, particularly honey, the Prophet's favourite and the poor received alms.^[43] This Shia origin is frequently noted by those Sunnis who oppose Mawlid.^[44] According to [Encyclopædia Britannica](#), however, what the Fatimids did was simply a procession of court officials,

which did not involve the public but was restricted to the court of the Fatimid caliph.^[45] Therefore, it has been concluded that the first Mawlid celebration which was a public festival was started by [Sunnis](#) in 1207 by [Muzaffar al-Dīn Gökburj](#).^{[45][46][47]}

It has been suggested that the celebration was introduced into the city [Ceuta](#) by [Abu al-Abbas al-Azafi](#) as a way of strengthening the Muslim community and to counteract Christian festivals.

