Salaams in Mawlid u'n Nabi of Imam Barzanji

Contributed by pmuhammad.com
Friday, 24 February 2006
Last Updated Friday, 24 February 2006

The mawlid eulogy by Imam as-Sayyid Ja'far ibn Hasan ibn 'Abdal Karim al-Barzanji (1690-1766 C.E) Rahmatullahi 'alaih is popular Muslim poetry in praise of the Holy Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam, universally recited to celebrate his birth (mawlid) on twelfth Rabi' u'l Awwal. It is a poetic biography of the Holy Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam with his birth as its main theme. And when a Muslim says 'mawlid', every other Muslim knows it is the birth of the sweet beloved Prophet Sallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam that is being referred to.

This mawlid eulogy, just like dozens of others, is based on the Holy Qur'an Kareem, Hadith Shareef and books of seerah (history). It is in two parts. The first is Mawlid Barzanji Nathr, a 19 fasl (chapter) history of the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam in poetic prose with 355 verses while the second is Mawlid Barzanji Nazm, a similar 16 chapter history in poetic form with 205 verses all of which rhyme with the letter 'noon'.

After the recitation of each verse in this mawlid eulogy as in all mawlid eulogies, the congregation responds:

Sallallahu 'Alaih
Allah's blessings be upon him

or

Allahumma Salli wa Sallim 'Alaih
Allah's blessings and peace be upon him.

The spiritual benefits of reciting these salawaat are obviously immeasurable.

Mawlid Barzanji is in 'Arbi, it has been translated into Kiswahili by Mzee bin Ali Muhammad from the Comoro Islands of Africa, it is printed in Singapore, its introduction is in the Indonesian language in the Java dialect, it has been transcribed by Mawlna Uthman Abdulkarim Nasserpuri Rahmatullahi 'alaih of Kenya, it has been applauded in Zikr-e-Habib (Rememberance of the Beloved Prophet) by Ad-Daa'ee al-Kaamil Mawlana Abdul 'Aleem Siddiqi, Rahmatullahi 'alaih who incidentally composed salaams in Urdu, it has been reproduced in countless other kutub (books) including Baqatun 'Atirah (A Perfumed Bouquet) of Imam as-Sayyid Muhammad 'Alawi al-Maliki of Makkah, and it is recited from Makkah to Mombasa, from Madina to Singapore, from Arafat to Jakarta and from Mina to Toronto, that is throughout the world by Muslims of all the four Madh'habs and all Tariqas.

When the munshid (reciter) reaches the narration of the actual birth of the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam, all rise with respect and devotion in a standing ovation to the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam and they all offer him salaams from the depths of their hearts with deep love and affection in a resounding chorus which practically all Muslims know by heart, and indeed many other salaams whether in Arabic, Urdu or English have adopted this very same chorus.

Yaa Nabi Salaam 'alaika
Yaa Rasul Salaam 'alaika
Yaa Habib Salaam 'alaika
Salawaatu'llah 'alaika

Salutations on you, O Prophet
Salutations on you, O Messenger of Allah
Salutations on you, O Beloved
Blessings of Allah be upon you.

Although this Qiyam (standing ovation) is normally printed together with the Mawlid-u'n-Nabi Sallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam composed by Imam Barzanji, it cannot yet be established who actually composed it because it is also reproduced in the Mawlid-u'n-Nabi Sallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam titled Sharaf al-Anaam (Noble In The Whole World) composed by al-'Allamah Shaykh Ahmad bin Qasim Rahmatullahi 'alaih, as well as the one composed by al-Hafiz Shaykh Abdirrahman ibn Ali ad-Dayba'ee Rahmatullahi 'alaih. Interestingly, Shaykh ad-Dayba'ee is called al-Hafiz because he knew more than 100,000 Hadith Shareef of the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam by heart. Such is the stature of the ulama who have composed Mawlid-u'n-Nabi Sallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam.

Of the 35 verses in this qiyam following the chorus, the ones that are normally recited are:

Ashraqa't Badru 'alaina
Fakhttafat Minhu'l Buduru
A full moon rises on us
The other moon disappears
We never saw the like of your beauty
O face of gladness

You are the sun, you are the moon
You are light upon lights
You are gold and even more priceless
You are the light of hearts

O my beloved, O Muhammad
O star of east and west
O supporter, O praised one
O leader of both Qiblas

Whoever sees your face, gets happiness
O the kind one to both parents
Your clear and cool fountain
Is our goal on the Day of Reckoning

It ends with the following dua (prayer):

'Aalim-us-Sirri wa Akhfaa
Mustajeeb-ud-Da'awaati
Rabbi Farhamnaa Jamee'a
Bijamee-'is-Saalihaati

The Knower of the secret and even more hidden
One who accepts supplications
O Lord forgive us all
For the sake of all the good deeds.

The munshideen (reciters) love to add to the qiyam these verses of the qasida that the children of Madina recited on daf in greeting the beloved Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam and his noble companions when they entered that blessed city, as narrated by Imam al-Ghazali Rahmatullahi 'alaih in his Ihya 'Ulum al-Deen (Revival of the Religious Sciences).

Tala'al Badru 'Alayna
Min Thaniyyaatiil Wadaa'

Wajabah Shukru 'Alayna
Maada'a Lillahi Daa'

The full moon rises on us.
From Thaniyyaatiil Wadaa'

And it is abiligatory on us to express thanks
Whenever called upon by a summoner for the sake of Allah

Muslims never tire of sending salaams on the beloved Prophet Sallallahu 'alaihi wa Sallam and they keep on finding novel and more interesting ways of sending salaams. An alternative resounding chorus for this salaam is:

Marhaban Yaa Nura 'Ainee Yaa Nura 'Ainee
Marhaban Jadda'l Husaini
Marhaban Ahlan wa Sahlan Ahlan wa Sahlan
Marhaban Yaa Khaira Daa'ee

Welcome! O the light of my eyes, O the light of my eyes
Welcome! The grandfather of Imam Husain
Welcome! Greetings! Greetings!
Welcome! O the best caller and inviter to Islam.

A variation to this chorus is:

Yaa Habibee Marhaba Yaa Nura 'Ainee Marhaba
Yaa Habibee Marhaba Jadda'l Husaini Marhaba

O my beloved: Welcome! O the light of my eyes: Welcome!
O my beloved: Welcome! The grandfather of Imam Husain: Welcome!

Yet another variation that forms a preliminary before the start of the "salaam" proper is:

Marhaba Yaa Marhaba Yaa Marhaba
Rahmatu'lll 'Aalameena Marhaba.

Welcome! O Welcome! O Welcome!
Welcome the mercy for all the worlds.

Yet another way of offering salaams in this mawlid eulogy is to recite the second part of its fourth chapter in which the verses end in the letter "Hamza". All stand and the munshid (reciter) leads in rapturous resonance:

Wa Muhayyan Kash-shamsi Minka Mudeeun
Asfarat 'Anhu Laylatun Garraau
Lailatu'l Mawlidilladhee Kaana Liddeeni
Suroorun Biyaumhi Wazdihaau
Yauma Naalat Biwad'ihibnatu Wahbin
Min Fakhaarin Maa Lam Talanhu'nnisaau
Wa Atat Qaumahaa Bi-Afdali Mimmaa
Hamalat Qablu Maryamu'l 'Adhraau
Mawlidun Kaana Minhu Fee Taalil Kufri
Wabaalun 'Alaihimoo wa Wabaau
Wa Tawaalat Bushra'l Hawatifi an qad
Wulida'l Mustafa wa Haqqa'l Hanaau

And your face that shines like the sun
Has been unveiled on the finest night

The night of your birth bestowed happiness on religion
And splendour on its day

The day the daughter of Wahb succeeded in getting
Of prestige what other women never succeeded in attaining

She came to her people with a pregnancy
Superior than that of the blessed virgin Mary before her

A birth that resulted for the disbelievers
In nothing but woes and epidemics
And the glad tidings of rejoicers came one after another
That the chosen one was born and happiness was a must.

After each verse, the congregation responds:

Rabbi Salli 'ala'l Habibi Muhammad
Wa 'Ala'l Aali Man Humu'l Kuramau

O Lord bless the beloved Muhammad
And his family members who were (all) benevolent people

Imam Barzanji Rahmatu'llahi 'alaiah has borrowed these verses from the "Hamziyya" of the universally acclaimed Imam Sharafuddin Muhammad al-Busiri Rahmatu'llahi 'alaiah (608-695 A.H., 1212-1296 C.E) of Egypt. The "Hamziyyah" is a qasida in praise of the Holy Prophet Sallallahu 'alaiah wa Sallam with 456 verses, all of which rhyme in the letter "Hamza", hence the title "Hamziyyah". Then came Imam Yusuf Ibn Ismail an-Nab'haani Rahmatu'llahi 'alaiah of Lebanon who tried to emulate Imam al-Busiri Rahmatu'llahi 'alaiah and composed a "Hamziyyah Alfiyyah" in praise of the beloved Prophet Sallallahu 'alaiah wa Sallam, with almost 1000 verses (987 to be exact), all rhyming in the letter "Hamza"! You begin to wonder whether miracles will ever cease! And you begin to understand what is meant by the phrase "love for the Prophet", Sallallahu 'alaiah wa Sallam. And you surely realise that the mashaaiikh (spiritual masters) are madly in love with their very own Muhammad-e-'Arabi, Rasulil Rabbi'l 'Aalameen, Rahmatulil 'Aalameen, Sallallahu 'alaiah wa Sallam.

Sallu ala'r Rasul
Allahumma Salli wa Sallim 'Alaih.