



246302 - A specious argument suggesting that celebrating Mother's Day is not a type of eid and it is not imitating the disbelievers

the question

How should we respond to those who say that it is permissible to celebrate Mother's Day and they quote the following as evidence?

They say that what people know about Mother's Day, when they get in touch with their mothers and visit them, and give them gifts on that day, is that it is not an eid in the Islamic sense; rather it is a day showing devotion and appreciation to mothers, as people all over the world have designated this day to acknowledging the kindness of mothers, and honouring mothers on this particular day in the ways mentioned above is something that all people are agreed on and it is not contrary to Islamic teachings, which emphasize the concept of devotion, appreciation and showing gratitude to parents at all times. Allah, may He be Exalted, says: {Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination} [Luqman 31:14]. Islam places a strong emphasis on treating mothers with kindness and generosity, as she is given precedence over the father, and the command to give precedence to her with regard to kindness is repeated three times. It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him) said: A man came to the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and said: O Messenger of Allah, who among the people is most deserving of my good company? He said: "Your mother." He said: Then who? He said: "Then your mother." He said: Then who? He said: "Then your mother." He said: Then who? He said: "Then your father." Narrated by al-Bukhari and Muslim.

Moreover, on the basis of this specious argument, they say that honouring mothers on Mother's Day should not come under the heading of imitating the disbelievers, which is prohibited; rather it should come under the heading of wisdom in a general sense, and wisdom is what the believer seeks; wherever he finds it, he is more entitled to it. This applies especially with regard to a matter that is strongly encouraged by Islamic teachings and is not contrary to those teachings. The Muslims fasted on the Day of 'Ashura' even though they knew that the Jews fasted on that day,



and the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “We have more right to Musa than they do.” So we have more right to honour our mothers than anyone else. As for the words of the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him), “You will surely follow the ways of those who came before you,” what is meant is a prohibition on following other nations.

Summary of answer

The specious argument mentioned in the question is a weak and unacceptable argument which stems from ignorance of what is meant by the word eid and of the fact that an eid is a religious observance for which there must be textual evidence; it also stems from lack of knowledge about what is meant by blameworthy imitation of others.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

Firstly:

The Islamic concept of eid is that it is a word that refers to recurring public gatherings that are repeated on a regular basis, whether that is yearly, weekly, monthly or otherwise, so the concept of eid combines several things:

- It is a day that recurs, such as Eid al-Fitr and Friday (Jumu`ah).
- There are gatherings on these days.
- There are certain activities on these days, including acts of worship or traditions. There may be a special place that is allocated for the eid, or it may be observed anywhere. Any of these activities may be called an eid.

End quote from *Iqtida' as-Sirat al-Mustaqim Mukhalafat As-hab al-Jahim* by Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah (p. 189).

In linguistic terms, Mother's Day is regarded as an eid, in the sense that it recurs annually, and



people gather on that day and do certain acts of worship and traditions, such as honouring their mothers, upholding ties of kinship, giving gifts and so on. Thus the three characteristics of the eid are combined on this day.

Secondly:

The eid is something that is prescribed in the religious texts, so any eid is either based on evidence in the religious texts, or – if there is no such evidence for it – it is innovated. This eid (Mother's Day) has no basis in Islam, and if it was something that is good and prescribed, Muhammad (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would have been the first to do it, especially since the religious texts that speak of the virtue of honouring mothers are many and well-known, including those that are quoted in the question. If part of honouring, appreciating and showing devotion to mothers was allocating a specific day of the year for doing that, then the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) would have taught us to do that, because he is the Prophet who enjoined honouring mothers and showing kindness and devotion to them. As he did not say anything about that and never did it, and there is no report from any of his Companions to suggest that they did that, then it is known to be an innovation.

If the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) had celebrated that day, then it would be a valid eid, and if he had fasted on that day as he fasted on the day of `Ashura`, fasting on that day would be something recommended. Whoever wants to make that day an eid or single it out for doing acts of worship has fallen into innovation.

Ash-Shatibi (may Allah have mercy on him) said, discussing the meaning of innovations that have a basis in Islamic teachings, but the way in which they are done is innovated: Thus innovation (bid`ah) is a word that refers to an innovated religious practice that resembles what is prescribed, and the intention behind adhering to it is to go to extremes in worshipping Allah, may He be Glorified... That includes innovating certain ways and manners of doing acts of worship, such as when people recite dhikr in unison, or take the day of the Prophet's birth as an eid, and so on.

That also includes doing certain acts of worship at certain times for which there is no religious text



to indicate that that act of worship should be done at that specific time, such as always fasting on the fifteenth day of Sha`ban and praying qiyam on the night thereof (*an-nisf min Sha`ban*).

End quote from *Al-I`tisam* (1/37).

Thirdly:

Imitating the disbelievers is blameworthy and prohibited, and a stern warning against doing that is seen in the words of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): "Whoever imitates a people is one of them." Narrated by Abu Dawud (4031); classed as sahih by al-Albani in *Sahih Sunan Abi Dawud*.

This eid (Mother's Day) is unknown except from the disbelieving nations, and it has only been adopted from them. In fact, the first time it appeared in the Arab world was the result of some journalist suggesting it, on the grounds that civilized nations do that!

The Prophet's words "You will surely follow the ways of those who came before you" apply to this, because celebrating this day is following the ways of other nations.

A man swore at the time of the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) that he would sacrifice a camel in Buwanah. He came to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) and said: I have vowed to sacrifice a camel in Buwanah. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Was there any of the idols of the Jaahiliyyah there that were worshipped?" They said: No. He said: "Was any of their eids (festivals) held there?" They said: No. The Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "Fulfil your vow, for no vow should be fulfilled if it involves disobedience towards Allah or that which the son of Adam does not possess." Narrated by Abu Dawud (3313); classed as authentic by al-Albani.

This clearly indicates that we should make sure to deliberately differ from and participate in eids (festivals) that are based on Jahiliyyah, especially since the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: "The most hated of people to Allah are three: A person who commits profanity in the Haram, a person who seeks to revive the practices of Jahiliyyah in Islam, and a person who



seeks to shed human blood unlawfully.” Narrated by al-Bukhari, 6882.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said: Everyone who wants to do any practices of Jahiliyyah is included in this hadith.

The practices of Jahiliyyah include all the traditions that they used to follow. This refers to practices that are done repeatedly, in which many people come together to do those practices, whether they regard them as acts of worship or not. Therefore whoever does any of their practices has followed a path of Jahiliyyah (ignorance).

End quote from *Iqtida' as-Sirat al-Mustaqim* (p. 76).

Resembling the disbelievers is prohibited, even if the one who does that does not intend to resemble them.

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah said: Resembling the disbelievers includes the one who does something because they do it, which is rare.

It also includes one who does something that others do because he has his own reasons for doing it, if that practice is taken from that other person.

As for the one who does something and it so happens that the other person does it too, and neither of them took it from the other, then that may not be called imitation, but it may be prohibited, so that it will not become a means that leads to imitating the disbelievers, and because the prohibition on doing it is for the purpose of being different from the disbelievers, as the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) enjoined Muslim men to dye their beards and trim their moustaches [in order to be different from the disbelievers].

Moreover, what we understand from the Prophet's words, "Change grey hair and do not imitate the Jews" indicates that imitating them may happen without any intention on our part to imitate them, and without taking any action; rather that may occur by merely not changing what is created in us. This is even more subtle than doing actions that resemble theirs with no intention of imitating them.



End quote from *Iqtida' as-Sirat al-Mustaqim* (p, 83).

Shaykh Ibn `Uthaymin said: It should be noted that imitation is not necessarily done with intention; rather it may be outward resemblance, meaning that someone does an action that is known to be an action of the disbelievers that is unique to them, in which case he will be imitating them whether he intended to do that or not.

Many people think that imitating the disbelievers is not regarded as prohibited imitation unless there is the intention to imitate them. This is wrong, because what matters is how things look.

End quote from *Fatawa Nur `ala ad-Darb*.

Fourthly: A number of scholars have stated that this eid (Mother's Day) is an innovation that has been introduced and it is resembling the disbelievers.

See their comments in the answers to questions no. [10070](#) and [59905](#).