



## An Islamic Perspective about Valentine's Day

### **Question: Is it a sin to celebrate Valentine's Day?**

#### **Answer:**

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

As-salāmu 'alaykum wa-rahmatullāhi wa-barakātuh.

#### **Let us examine the origin of Valentine's Day:**

##### **The History of Saint Valentine's Day**

Valentine's Day started in the time of the Roman Empire. In ancient Rome, February 14th was a holiday to honour Juno. Juno was the Queen of the Roman Gods and Goddesses. The Romans also knew her as the Goddess of women and marriage. The following day, February 15th, began the Feast of Lupercalia.

Under the rule of Emperor Claudius II Rome was involved in many bloody and unpopular campaigns. Claudius the Cruel was having a difficult time getting soldiers to join his military leagues and creating a huge army. Many men did not want to participate in the army. This made Claudius furious. He believed that the reason for this was that Roman men did not want to leave their loved ones or their families. As a result, Claudius decided to cancel all marriages and engagements in Rome. Many people thought this was a preposterous and a cruel idea.

At that time, a Saint existed by the name of Valentine who was a priest of Rome in the days of Claudius II. He did not like the Emperor. He and Saint Marius aided the Christian martyrs and secretly married couples even after Emperor Claudius passed his law. He would isolate himself in a secret candlelit room with the bride and the groom. He whispered the words of the ceremony, listening all the while for the steps of the soldiers.

One night, he heard the footsteps of the soldiers and the couples he was marrying escaped in time. Unfortunately he was caught. For this action of his, Saint Valentine was apprehended and dragged before the Prefect of Rome, who condemned him to be beaten to death with clubs and to have his head cut off. He was then thrown in prison and was told that his punishment was sentenced to death. The news spread and many young people came from across the land to visit him in prison. They threw flowers and notes up to the window. One of the young people was the daughter of the prison guard. Her father allowed her to visit Saint Valentine in the cell. Sometimes they would sit and talk for hours. She helped him in keeping up his spirits. She agreed that he had done the right thing by ignoring the Emperor and going ahead with the secret marriages. Saint Valentine had fallen in love with her and on the day he was to die, he left his little friend a note thanking her for her friendship and loyalty. He signed it, "Love from your Valentine."

Saint Valentine died on February 14, 269 A.D. Since then, every year people from all over the world commemorate this day as "Valentine's Day". At that time it was the custom in Rome, a very ancient custom, indeed, to celebrate in the month of February the Lupercalia, feasts in honour of a heathen god. On these occasions, amidst a variety of pagan ceremonies, the names of young women were placed in a box, from which they were drawn by the men as chance directed.

On the eve of the festival of Lupercalia, the names of Roman girls were written on slips of paper and placed into jars. Each young man would draw a girl's name from the jar and would then be partners for the duration of the festival with the girl whom he chose. Sometimes the pairing of the children lasted an entire year, and often, they would fall in love and would later marry.

It has been believed that the custom of exchanging love notes had started on Valentine's Day.

### **Valentine Traditions**

Hundreds of years ago in England, many children dressed up as adults on Valentine's Day. They went singing from home to home. One verse they sang was:

*Good morning to you, valentine;  
Curl your locks as I do mine  
Two before and three behind.  
Good morning to you, valentine.*

In Wales, wooden love spoons were carved and given as gifts on February 14th. Hearts, keys and keyholes were favourite decorations on the spoons. The decoration meant, "You unlock my heart!"

In the middle Ages, young men and women drew names from a bowl to see who their valentines would be. They would wear these names on their sleeves for one week. Wearing the heart on the sleeve made it is easy for other people to know how they were feeling. In some countries, a young woman may receive a gift of clothing from a young man. If she kept the gift, it meant that she would marry him.

From the history of Valentine's Day, we acknowledge that Valentine is not just a name of a holiday. In fact, Valentine was a man whom the Christians believe to be a saint. Moreover, the history of Valentine is based on Shirk. In addition to this, the actions committed by the young boys and girls, were purely the acts of fornication.

Islam is a religion of peace, love and unity. In Islam, there is no special day to express gratitude and love. In fact, every day is a day to express love to one's wife, children, parents, elders etc. Islam has ordered us to be kind and just with our family members and close ones to the extent that even animals deserve love and affection. A beautiful Hadith of Rasullullah Sallallahu Alaihi Wa Sallam explains that Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'alā had forgiven an immoral and a prostitute woman due to her kindness towards a thirsty dog.

بَيْنَمَا كَلْبٌ يُطِيفُ بِرَكِيَّةٍ، كَادَ يَقْتُلُهُ الْعَطَشُ، إِذْ رَأَتْهُ بَغِيٌّ مِنْ بَغَايَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ، فَنَزَعَتْ مَوْقَهَا فَسَقَتْهُ فَعَفَرَ لَهَا بِهِ (صحيح البخاري 173 /4)

“There was a dog who was circling a well. Thirst had nearly killed him when a prostitute from amongst the prostitutes of Bani Israeel had seen him. She removed her shoes and quenched the dog. Thereupon, she was forgiven due this action of hers.”

**(Sahih Al-Bukhari 4/173)**

We should show love to our loved ones everyday of our lives. Our love should not be confined to a particular date such as the 14th of February. A person receives tremendous amount of reward simply by placing a morsel in the mouth of one's wife. Imagine the reward for other good deeds. The Hadith mentions:

وَأَسْتَنْفِقُ نَفَقَةً تَبْتَغِي بِهَا وَجْهَ اللَّهِ إِلَّا أُجِرْتُ بِهَا، حَتَّى اللَّقْمَةَ تَجْعَلُهَا فِي فِي امْرَأَتِكَ  
صحیح البخاری 5/178

“And you spend not upon your family seeking the pleasure of Allah but that you are rewarded for it to the extent of placing a morsel in the mouth of your wife.”  
(Sahih Al-Bukhari 5/178)

However, due to the fact that the foundation of celebrating Valentine's Day is based on kufr and shirk, such a celebration is Harām and prohibited in Islam.

And Allah Ta'āla Knows Best

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