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A guiding, knowledgeable word regarding bid`ah and its rulings

By Shaykh Wahbī Sulaymān al-Ghāwījī

**Translated by IPSA students under the
guidance of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks**

AN INTERNAL IPSA PUBLICATION

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Hādiyah fil bid‘ah wa ahkāmihā*”

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EDITORS' NOTE

This book was translated by IPSA's final year Bachelor of Theology students in 2007, under the guidance of Shaykh Mahdi Hendricks, lecturer in Arabic and Tafsir. The following students undertook the various sections of the translation (in alphabetical order): Maida Asad, Firdaws Chilwan, Roshan Dawood, Fadihl Emandien, Mahendo Hamisi, Munowwar Harnekar, Soraya Salie and Faldie Solomon. The particular sections each of them translated are duly acknowledged at the head of each chapter.

We are very grateful to Shaykh Shoayb Ahmed of Gauteng for loaning us the last section of this translation [duly indicated in the text]. We learnt, by a welcome co-incidence, that Shaykh Shoayb was also translating the text, which will be an official translation. Due to an unfortunate set of circumstances, we mislaid the Arabic original of this section and Shaykh Shoayb was most generous in lending us his. We are positive that, once available, his translation will be of immense benefit to all English speaking Muslims. His translation has also illumined some other particular points and sections of this particular one.

The intial project was suggested by Shaykh Ighsaan Taliep, Deputy Principal at IPSA who loaned his copy of the Arabic original for this very purpose. The issue of bid'ah is a contentious one in the South African Muslim community and it was felt important that a work that goes beyond a surface understanding of the notion, and tackles the topic with the required depth and detail, be studied and made more broadly available. It was also because of Shaykh Ighsaan's welcome persistence that the work be edited and published in some manner, even inhouse, that the present work is available before the reader.

This translation is not an official one and is indeed one that is meant to be used for IPSA's internal purposes. The editors, Zuleiga Abderouf and Auwais Rafudeen, acknowledge that this is edition is capable of much further refinement. We humbly beg the reader's indulgence in this regard and ask them to bear in mind its "inhouse" nature and overlook its lapses and mistakes. Hopefully, there may be a future opportunity to further refine the text.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE:

In the Name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

To my colleagues amongst the *ulamā'* (learned scholars) in my
country and everywhere else

Let us come together amicably and mutually cooperate in inviting
all towards Allāh.

We cooperate in that in which we agree with and pardon (each
other) in that in which we disagree.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

(Comprising pages 1-11 of the original book. Translated by editors)

I want to introduce this book with good news...

The good news is the phenomenon of Muslims returning to Islam everywhere and in large numbers. So large, in fact, that it becomes difficult to estimate. The arena where this good news is most visible is that of finance. Globally we have the phenomenon of Islamic banks, Islamic companies, and Islamic foundations, books that expound the prohibition of interest (whatever its names and forms), and periodicals on the defects that arise from its application.

The phenomenon is also highly visible in the field of knowledge. Generally, there is a return to the Sunnah of Allah's Messenger (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him and his noble family). Many of the well-known and lesser known books on ḥadīth have now been printed and published, and are available to most people.

However, many of these books have been published without commentaries and explanations by Islamic scholars and jurists. Consequently readers of these books who do not have a solid grounding in Islamic law, or do not keep the company of the ulamā (thus benefiting from their knowledge), might come to criticise these books and the content thereof. For example, perhaps they may hurriedly try to practice every ḥadīth which is considered sound by a particular ḥadīth-expert; or perhaps they may assume an attitude of 'knowing it all', thereby puffing themselves up and thinking, "We are acting according to this ḥadīth but someone else opposes it."

Regrettably they will not refer to any one of the recognized living ḥadīth experts or research the books of others who had passed away. They will not strive to improve their knowledge regarding these aḥādīth: knowledge such as which ḥadīth is of the:-
 assah (most sound), or arjah (most preferred)
 or mutaqqaddim (the preceding) and muta'akhhir (the anteceding)
 or of mukhaṣṣas (the particular) and muqayyad (restricted).

Such knowledge is the result of the various branches of Islamic learning, competency in which qualifies an Islamic scholar to pass a hukm (considered judgments) and fatāwā (legal opinions).

Further while such a person may be acting on a ḥadīth in an unrestricted sense, he may even imagine (or may allow others to imagine) that Allah's Messenger (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) used to sometimes forget what he had previously said or did, or that he had later changed what he had previously said or did, despite the fact that the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) was divinely protected from error and that Allah told him, "By degrees shall We teach you to declare (the Message), so you shall not forget." (Q87:6)

On the other hand, we find that some of the great muhaddithūn (ḥadīth specialists) among the salaf al-ṣāliḥīn (pious predecessors) speak in glowing terms about experts skilled in both fields, i.e. (experts of Islamic law and of ḥadīth). They consider that these Al-fuqahā wa al-muḥadithūn saved them (the pious predecessors) from anxiety and dissension concerning the aḥadīth of Allah’s Messenger (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him).

Abd-Allāh ibn Mubārak, the scholar of Khurasān said, “Had Allah, the Exalted, not aided me through Abū Ḥanīfah and Sufyān, I would have been the most shattered of people.”¹

Sufyān ibn Uyaynah said: “The first who let me sit for ḥadīth and made me become a muḥadith was Abū Ḥanīfa.”²

Abd-Allāh ibn Wahb, one of Mālik’s associates (Allah has mercy on them both) said, “I met with 316 scholars, and had it not been for Mālik and Layth, I would have gone astray in the field of learning.”³

He also said, “I followed four in knowledge; two in Egypt and two in Medina. In Egypt the two were Layth bin Sa’d and ‘Amr bin Ḥārith and in Medina they were Mālik and Mājšūn. If it were not for these four, I would have gone astray”.

The very learned scholar, Al-Kawtharī, in his commentary on the book Al-Intiqā by Ibn ‘Abdul Barr (he is the author who quoted the above sayings of Abd-Allah ibn Wahb), said, “Ibn ‘Asākir, in his chain of transmission, quotes ibn Wahb as follows: “Had it not been for Mālik and Layth bin Sa’d, I would have perished. I used to think that everything that came from Allah’s Messenger (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) must be acted upon.” And in another narration he is quoted as saying: “I would have gone astray”-meaning, because of differences in the aḥadīth.”

Al-Kawtharī then adds with regard to the foregoing, “...as happened with many narrators who had little acquaintance with Islamic law, being unable to distinguish between the aḥadīth which required to be acted upon and those that did not.”⁴

A narration of Qāḍī ‘Iyād’s contains an explanation by Ibn Wahb as follows: “Ibn Wahb said, “Had Allah not saved me through Mālik and Layth, I would have gone astray.”

Qāḍī ‘Iyād was then asked, “How was this so?”

He replied: “I had studied ḥadīth to such an extent that I became confused. Then I presented the aḥadīth to Mālik and Layth and they used to say to me, “Take this one and leave that one.”⁵

Sufyān bin Uyaynah said: “Ḥadīth can be a pitfall if one is not a jurist. Non jurists may consider a ḥadīth literally while, in fact, it needs to be explained by reference to another ḥadīth. Or there might be other evidence available that is not apparent from the outer meaning. Or the ruling in

¹ Tabyīd as Ṣaḥīfah, 16.

² Al-jawāhir al-Mudīyyah 1/13.

³ Ibn Ḥibbān in the introduction to his book: ‘*Al-Majrūḥīn*’

⁴ Al Intiqā fī Fadā’il al-Thalāthah al-Fuqahā, 27-28

⁵ Tartīb al-Madārik 2/427

the ḥadīth may have been discarded necessitating that it be left alone. There is none that can undertake this except those who are immersed in and deeply conversant with Islamic law.”⁶

The following quotes have been extracted from the works of Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Kīrānawī. Ibn Rushd was asked, “Ḥadīth is a pitfall except for the jurists. What does this mean, since a jurist cannot be categorized as a jurist unless he has knowledge of ḥadīth?”

Ibn Rushd replied, “Attributing the aforementioned saying to the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him), is not sound as it is a saying of Ibn Uyaynah and other jurists. However, its meaning is sound and correct because a ḥadīth may have been transmitted regarding a particular issue but it has a general intent, or it may have been transmitted in a general way but has a particular intent, or it may be abrogating or abrogated, or it may be of those aḥadīth that are not required to be acted upon, or it may be of those that require the literal to be explained in a figurative manner, such as the ḥadīth that speaks about “descent” and “form” with regard to Allah’s proximity, i.e. “Whoever comes to Me a hand span, I come to him by an arm pan.....”.

Then there are those aḥadīth concerning which the meanings are asked since no-one except the jurists know their meanings. Therefore whoever collects aḥadīth and does not understand them fundamentally in a legal sense, such a person carries over the ḥadīth in an outward and undiscerning sense, i.e. he does not distinguish between the general and particular, etc. Thus saying that a jurist cannot be called a jurist unless he has knowledge of ḥadīth is of no consequence since a jurist does not attain that title by simply having knowledge of aḥadīth but rather through his legal understanding thereof. If he has no such legal understanding then he cannot be called a jurist, even if he has gathered many aḥadīth. Indeed he has to place a specific ḥadīth in its proper position and context as Ibn Uyaynah has indicated.”⁷

Al Faḍl ibn Dukn, who is among the famous teachers of Imām Bukhārī, said, “I used to pass by Zufar ibn al-Hudhayl, who was one of the well-known students of Abū Ḥanīfah, and he, draped in a thawb, would say, “Oh fool! Come so that I may sift through your aḥadīth.” I would show him what I had heard and he would respond by saying, “This one can be taken, this one cannot be taken, this is abrogating and that is abrogated.....”⁸

Concerning the Fiqh of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Abdullah ibn Mubārak used to say, “Do not say the opinion of Abū Ḥanīfah, but say his explanation of the ḥadīth.”⁹

Some collectors of ḥadīth who simply read the texts of the aḥadīth and do not particularly concern themselves with the statements of the jurists pertaining to these texts, have inclined towards, and have passed legal verdicts in accordance with that which is regarded as shudhūdh (solitary, non-mainstream) opinions and rulings; and /or in accordance with those rulings and opinions that have no precedent among the distinguished Imams of the classical period. Indeed, these scholars’ preoccupation with the soundness of a ḥadīth might simply lead them to think ill of the great Imams and scholars, or to accuse them of ignorance regarding ḥadīth. Their self-

⁶ Al Jāmi’ li al Imām ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī, 118

⁷ Al-Ma’āyir al-Ma’rib li Abi al ‘Abbās al-Wanshirīsi, 12/314

⁸ Al Khaṭīb al Baghdadī

⁹ Manāqib ul Muwaffaq al-Makkī, 234

delusion might even provoke them into believing that these Imams were ignorant of the ḥadīth of the Messenger of Allah (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him). What a dangerous accusation this is!

Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, (may Allah have mercy on him) said, “It is necessary that a person who gives legal verdicts be well-versed in the various aspects of the Qur’an, sound chains of transmission, and the Sunnah.”¹⁰ (Narrated by Ṣālih, his son)

Imam Ahmad’s son Abdullah, said, “I asked my father about a person who has authored books containing the sayings of the Messenger of Allah (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, the saḥābah (companions) and the tābi‘īn (followers)) but, does not have insight into weak and discarded aḥadīth, or does not have the ability to distinguish strong chains of transmission from weak ones. I asked whether such a person may do as he likes, i.e. choosing from such texts, acting upon and passing legal verdicts according to his knowledge only”. My father replied, saying, “No. Not until he has asked what aḥadīth he can take in order that he can act according to them in a sound manner. He needs to ask the people of knowledge about them.”¹¹

Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, (Allah be pleased with him), has said that, “It is not permissible for anyone to give legal verdicts in the religion of Allah unless he is one who is fully cognizant with the word of Allah; with what is abrogating and abrogated; what is clear and ambiguous; the interpretation of verses and the occasions for their revelation; with what (verses) are Makkan and what are Madinan, and its intent. He also has to have full insight into the ḥadīth of Allah’s Messenger (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him); with what is abrogating and abrogated among them and other similar matters (as mentioned in connection to the Qur’an.) Further he has to have deep insight into the Arabic language, be conversant with its poetry, particularly that which is required of the language in order to understand the Qur’an and Sunnah and he must be able to employ all of these in a manner which is fair. In addition he has to have command of the differences among the scholars as well an inherent talent for this field. Finally if he possesses all of the above, then he may speak, and pass legal verdicts upon matters relating to ḥalāl (permissible) and ḥarām (forbidden). If he does not possess any of the foregoing, he may not pass legal verdicts in this regard.”¹²

Khalaf ibn ‘Amr said that he heard Mālik ibn Anas say, “I did not give legal verdicts until I asked those who were more knowledgeable than me as to whether I was fit for the task. I asked Rabī‘a and Yahyā ibn Sa‘īd and they ordered me to give legal verdicts.”

Khalaf asked him, “And if they had prevented you, oh Father of Abdullah?”

He replied, “Then I would have ceased. It is not proper that a man sees himself as capable of something until he asks those more knowledgeable than he.”¹³

Shaykh Ḥabīb al-Kīrānawī concludes, “In all of the above quotes is a clear refutation of those fools who compel each individual to do his own ijtihād. Perhaps they seize upon the understanding of one of the scholars on parts of the primary texts where this understanding differs from the majority. They will adopt and repeat this understanding, speaking, believing,

¹⁰ I‘lām ul Mawqī‘īn, 2/252

¹¹ Qawā‘id fi ulūm il fiqh lil muḥaddith al-faqīh al-Shaykh Ḥabīb Aḥmad al-Kayrānawī, p5, quoting from I‘lām ul Mawqī‘īn

¹² The previous reference p6, quoting from “Al Faqīh al-Mutaffaqah” by Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī.

¹³ The previous reference, p6, quoting from “Tazayīn al Mamālīk” by Suyūfī. (pp 7-8).

passing legal verdicts, and calling others in accordance with this understanding. As a result they fall into (and cause others to fall into) confusion.

Indeed, they are the cause of enmity, bad blood, ridicule and backbiting among the scholarly community. We seek refuge in Allah from this.”

In this treatise we discuss an issue that has led, and continues to lead, to mutual aversion between students of dīn (religion), to their distancing themselves from each other, and perhaps also to the breaking of ties among fellow believers, ties which Allah has enjoined upon all believers when He, Glory be to Him, says, “Indeed the believers are one brotherhood, so encourage peace and reconciliation between two (contending) brothers, and fear Allah that you may receive Mercy.” Q 49:10

Further, by this treatise, we intend nothing other than sincere advice, guidance and clarification of the truth as opined by the majority of the scholars. Therefore whosoever of the Islamic scholars (among its noble readers) see some truth in it let him follow it; and whosoever among the scholars does not see this, let him excuse it rather than fall into enmity, and think and speak badly of this book. Rather let him say, “To each is a direction goal towards which Allah turns him. So hasten towards all that is good”.

Q 2:148

As for the laypeople; they are not in the position to judge with authority, perform ijtihād (independent personal reasoning) and give rulings in accordance with the textual sources, i.e. Qur’an and Sunnah. Therefore they fall under the following command of Allah, “So ask of those who know the scriptures (the learned men) if you know not.” Q 16:43

So the issue under discussion is; **“Bid’ah (innovation) and the rulings pertaining thereto”**.

CHAPTER TWO: PRIMARY TEXTS DISCUSSING INNOVATION

(Comprising pages 11- 30 of the original book. Pages 11-20 was translated by Fadihl Emandien and pages 20-30 by Faldie Solomon)

Jābir ibn ‘Abd Allāh (Allāh be pleased with both of them) said; When the Prophet, (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) used to addressed us from the pulpit, his eyes would become red and he would raise his voice, saying: “Verily the best of speech is the Book of Allāh (Qur’ān) and the best of guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him). Evil matters are those that are invented, and everything invented is an innovation and every innovation leads to misguidance.” [Narrated by Muslim]

Al-‘Arbād ibn Sāriyah (Allāh be pleased with him), said, The Prophet (the Salutations and peace of Allāh be upon him) addressed us with such an eloquent speech that our hearts shook and tears came to our eyes. We said: “O Messenger of Allāh, this is like a farewell speech.” He (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) responded, saying: “I advise you to fear Allāh the Exalted, listen and obey, even if it is a black slave that leads you. Those who will come after me will witness many differences. Hold steadfast to my sunnah and the sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs after me, bite onto it with your molars. I warn you about matters newly innovated, and every new thing innovated is a bid’ah, and every bid’ah is misleading leads to misguidance.” [Narrated by Abū Dāwūd, and Al-Tirmidhī grades this narration to be Ḥasan Sahīh].

Qāsim said: I heard ‘A’īshah (May Allāh be pleased with her) saying, The Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) said that, “Whoever innovates in this matter of ours, it is not accepted.” [Narrated by al-Bukhārī]

The ‘ulamā’ say that the Messenger of Allāh (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) reminded us that we should abstain from innovations such as those issues introduced into our religion which oppose the Principles of the Religion or disagree with the spirit or rules thereof. They have therefore stipulated the following conditions for these innovations:

1. They are innovations which are in the religion, i.e. the laws of the religion regarding worship and [other] laws and are not related to daily affairs and permissibility to work. The ‘ulamā’ are in agreement that those innovations regarding worldly matters, such as means of transport, traveling and carrying, building and establishing places of business and roads, and those generally conducive to facilitating personal ease and comfort; the means of establishing schools, colleges and universities for the acquisition of knowledge and certain specialities (within the sphere of knowledge), the compilation and publishing of books; the means of food preparation, the cultivation of various types of plants, vegetables, fruits, the manufacture of clothes

for covering the body, including different types and styles; and other similar examples (not mentioned here);- all of these are not included in the prohibited bid'ah.. Thus, the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) saying: "Everything new thing is innovation, and every innovation is misguidance" is specific to innovations in religion. The strict rejecter of bid'ah does not reject the above mentioned innovations, and there is no proof against these from the sunnah. Rather, it is the actions of the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him), then the actions of the companions and then the people who came after them [which constitute the proof in this regard].

2. The second condition is that which opposes any of the Principles of the Religion and should not enter the confines of the religion and what it contains. An established Principle of Religion or an innovation which agrees with the spirit or laws of Religion, do not fall within the ambit of the Prophet's (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) saying, "Every new matter is an innovation and all innovations leads to misguidance."

Sayings of the 'Ulamā' on the Meaning of Bid'ah

Literally, the meaning of Bid'ah is 'bringing something new'. It refers to everything new for which there is no previous example. Allāh says in the Qur'ān, "I created the heavens and the earth", meaning that He was the One Who created it first and there is no prior example of creation. Similarly, the word Bid'ah is derived from the noun badi' which means 'one who brings into existence'.

Technically, Bid'ah refers to that which contrary to the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allāh, as He (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) is reported to have said, "Whoever innovates in this matter of ours that which is not part of it, such is not accepted." [Narrated by al-Bukhārī and others]. This means that which conforms to our way is accepted.

1. Imām Muhammad ibin Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī (may Allāh be pleased with him) said,; "Innovations are of two kinds; those that are praiseworthy and those that are blameworthy. Those innovations in agreement with the Sunnah of the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) are praiseworthy, and those that differ from it, are blameworthy."

This division is due to the factual meaning of the word in the Arabic language. Thus those innovations within the parameters of the Principles of Religion, are praiseworthy, e.g., printing, capturing and recitation of the Qur'ān, the science and narration of Hadīth and the compilation of fiqh and history books. Anything other or outside the parameters of the religion, is blameworthy and is rejected; such as innovating belief systems, other forms of worship, etc.

Al- Hāfidh ibn Hajr al-Asqalāni, when the discussing `Umar's (ra) statement on the salāh al-tarāwīh "An innovation, but what a great innovation!" says,; "Bid'ah originally refers to something introduced without any previous example and in the Shari'ah is used in contrast to Sunnah and applying it in the law and in the Sunnah is not blameworthy. In reality, when it falls within the parameters of goodness in the law it is considered good and when it falls within the parameters of the disliked, it is considered disliked, and if not then it falls within realm of permissibility.

2. Al-Qādī Abū Bakr ibn al-`Arabī (ra) in his book `Aridat al-ahwadhi fi Sharh Sahih al-Tirmidhi says, in his explanation of the saying, “Beware of new things!” that, innovation is of two kinds; i.e.
 - a. Innovation that has its origin only in desire, and acting on desire is wrong (i.e. the aim and intention of the innovation is to misguide), and
 - b. Innovation that is supported by wisdom- this type is from the Rightly Guided Caliphs and other excellent learned scholars, i.e. those who do not innovate with the intention to misguide.
3. Imām al-Nawawī (ra) says in his book Tahzīb al-Asmā` al-Lughāt regarding innovation in the Shari`ah: ‘Introducing anything (into the practice of the religion) that was not in practice during the Prophetic era, may be divided into two kinds only, i.e. good and bad.
4. Shaykh `Abdul Aziz bin `Abd al-Salām (ra). in the concluding chapter of his book Al-Qawā`id says : “Innovation is divided into wājib (compulsory), muharramah (forbidden), mandūb (recommended), makrūh (abominable) and mubāh (allowed). The way to ascertain that is to present before the principles of the Shari`ah. If it falls within the principles of compulsion then it is wājib and likewise for the other four Shari`ah rulings. **Examples:** To engage in the study of Arabic Grammar because through it one is able to understand the words of Allah and His Messenger. This is wājib and the preservation of the Shari`ah is also wājib. The preservation will take place through the language and therefore to learn this branch of the language is also wājib. It is wājib; secondly, to memorize the strange words in the Qur`ān and Sunnah; thirdly, to compile the Principles of Religion and the Principles of Jurisprudence; fourthly, to study jarh wa al- ta`dīl in distinguishing between sound and unacceptable ahādīth. The principles of the Shari`ah indicate that the protection and preservation of the Shari`ah is Fard Kifayah especially that much which is beyond the requirement of every individual. This will only be realized by what was mentioned above. **Examples of bid`ah ḥarām** (forbidden innovations) are: the schools of the Qādariyyah, Jabbariyyah, Murji`ah and Mujsamah. To refute these schools, is a bid`ah that is wājib.

Example of bid`ah mandūb (recommended innovation) is: to establish organizations, schools and all good things that were not prevalent during the Prophetic era; these include:- tarāwih, tassawwuf and constructive debates – for which it is permissible for the people to gather in groups for the purpose of proving their views providing the intention is seeking reward from Allāh, or simply for Allāh.

Example of bid`ah makrūh (abominable innovation) is: decorating the masājid (mosques) and the covers and pages of books.

Examples of bid`ah mubāh(allowed innovations) are: –shaking hands (in greeting) after the salāh al-Fajr and `Asr; to give space to those who are eating and drinking, to dress in nice loose fitting clothing - (although the scholars differ herein, some categorise this as mubāh whilst others categorise it as a sunnah practiced during the Prophetic era); as well as the recitation of the isti`āthah and the basmAllāh in the salāh.

5. Ibn al-Athir said in al-Nihayah fi Gharib al-Hadith when commenting on the word Bid`ah:

“Bid`ah is of two types, it is included in what is blameworthy and that which is included among those things which Allah and His Messenger have encouraged.

Those actions which are praiseworthy are actions for which the Prophet has mentioned some reward. In this regard he said: “Whoever introduces in Islam a good practice, then for him is its reward and the reward of those who practice upon it, and whoever introduces in Islam a bad practice then for him is the sin and the sin of those who practice upon it.” This refers to those actions that are contrary to what Allah and His Messenger have taught. So in the light of the above we look at the statement of ‘Umar since it was a good deed and it is included in the broader spectrum of good he classified it as Bid’ah and praised it. The Prophet did not make it a Sunnah. Instead he performed this Salat some nights and then he left it and he was not particular about it and neither did he gather people to perform this Salat. So ‘Umar called it Bid’ah but in reality it is Sunnah because of the Hadith wherein the Prophet said: “Follow my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the righteous Khulafa after me.”

As well as the Hadith “Follow the two after me; Abu Bakr and ‘Umar”. This will be the basis for interpreting the other Hadith which would mean that everything that is contrary to the principles of the Shari’ah and does not conform to the Sunnah is Bid’ah.

5. Al-Qadi Zayn al-Dīn ibn Rajab (ra) from the Hanbali jurists said, “The real meaning of bid’ah is that which is innovated and has no source in the Sharī’ah which proves it (the authenticity). Anything which has its source in the Sharī’ah and is not proven to be Shar’an, is considered a bid’ah”.

6. Imam Ahmad ibn Hajr al-Haytami, the author of Al-Fatāwā al-Hadīthiyah, Al-Fatāwā al-Fiqhīyyah, Kuf Ri’ā’ and other books said, “Innovation literally means everything that is new, Juristically it means anything that is innovated and contradicts the matters of Sharī’ah and the proof is general and specific”.

7. Shaykh Muhammad Bakhīt al-Mut’ī (ra) said, “Innovation in Sharī’ah is that which leads to misguidance and blameworthy actions, or innovations that scholars classify as wājib and harām, this is the literal meaning and is general in Sharī’ah because the law classifies it as that”.

General and Specific

We have previously mentioned that everything new is a bid’ah; this is specific and does not refer to innovation in worldly matters; i.e. those things innovated generally (in matters) such as human settlements, transport, factories, weapons and others.

The saying that “every bid’ah is a misguidance” does not refer to those innovations which fall within the Principles of Religion and ideology, such as:

“So do good!”, and “Verily! We revealed the Remembrance [the Qur’ān] and We will protect it.”

Much progress and advancement occurred during the time of the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) and he accepted these after some of the people (of this era) accepted it. However, this does not mean that the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) accepted it (the progress) simply for the sake of progress. Progress was also

found during the time of the Ṣaḥābah (companions) (rah) as well as those who came after them, the Tābi'īn (the successors of the companions) (rah). The people took from it (what they could use without contradiction) and did not brand it as rejected innovations.

I. Incidents which happened in the time of the Messenger of Allāh (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him).

1) Abī Hurayrah (ra) reported that the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) asked Bilāl (ra) at the time of Fajr prayer, “O Bilāl, explain to me the great thing that you do in Islām because I heard your footsteps in Jannah.”

Bilāl (ra) replied, “I do nothing special (in my opinion) to cause this, except that I have never performed ablution at any hour of the day or night without immediately praying (thereafter) what I feel Allah has a right over me to pray of two raka'ahs of salah”.

Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajr al-Asqalānī in his book Al-Fatḥ said, “It is concluded from this incident with Bilāl (ra) that it is permissible to make ijtihād in matters of worship (prayer) because Bilāl (ra) reached the level of istinbāt (applying the principles of Islamic law in order to extract a ruling) and the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) acknowledged that he (Bilāl) was correct.

2) Imām Al-Bukhārī and Imām Muslim narrated in their respective authentic compilations in the chapter of ṣalāh that Rifā'ah bin Rāfi' (ra) said, “One day we were performing ṣalāh when the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) raised his head from bowing and said, “Sami' Allāhu liman ḥamidah” (Allāh hears those who sends praises and thanks to Him). A man behind him said, “Rabbanā wa la ka al-ḥamd, ḥamdan kathīran ṭayyiban mubārakan fīhi” (O our Lord! All the praises and thanks are for thee, many good and blessed praises). When the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) completed the ṣalāh he asked, “Who said those words?” The man replied, “I did” The Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) said, “I saw over thirty angels competing to write it first.”

Ibn Ḥajr al-Asqalānī in his book al-Fatḥ said, “It is proven from the above ḥadīth that it is permissible to mention dhikr which is not (mentioned) in the sources in ṣalāh- this is if it does not differ with the sources. It is also permissible to raise one's voice in the dhikr, but not so loud as to disturb the other muṣallīn (worshippers). He states further that, “This is a clear proof.”

3) Imām Al-Bukhārī narrates, on the authority of Anas (ra), in the chapter concerning the joining of two suwar (plural of sūrah) in one raka'ah in the Book of Ṣalāh, “There was a man from the Anṣār who used to lead us in ṣalāh in Maṣjid al-Qubā. In each prayer he led he would recite sūrah al-Fatiḥah and thereafter sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ, and then another sūrah, and he did so in every raka'ah. Then his companion said to him, “You always recite this sūrah with another, do you not feel that one sūrah is sufficient?” He replied, “I will never stop reciting it. If you prefer, I will lead you or leave you.”

They went to the Prophet ((the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) and explained the

situation to him. The Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) said, “O so and so! No one can stop you from doing what your people has ordered you to do. What makes you recite this sūrah?”

The man replied, “I love this sūrah.” The Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) then said, “Your love for this sūrah will cause you to enter Jannah.”

Al-Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajr said, “The reason for him reciting the sūrah was because of his love for it, and it was because of this love that the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) gave him the glad-tidings of Jannah”.

4) Al-Bukhārī narrates in various places in his book on the authority of `Abū Sa`īd al-Khūdri (ra) that a group of Companions of the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) left on a journey and traveled until they reached an Arab village. There they asked for some assistance but were refused. The leader of the village was bitten by a snake and none of the medicine that the villagers gave him helped. Some of the villagers said that they should ask the travelers if they had a remedy. They asked the travelers and one of the travelers replied: “By Allāh! I am able to recite a cure, but by Allāh, when we asked you for assistance you refused us. We will not help you until you give us what we want.” The villagers offered the travelers goats’ meat in return for their assistance. The Companion began blowing and reciting Surah Fatihah until the man stood up as if he had no previous ailment.” The villagers gave the travelers what was promised. The Companions now said that they should divide it (the goats’ meat), but the the one who performed the action said that they should first hear what the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) had to say. When they came to the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) they explained to him the situation. The Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) said, “How do you know you know about this ruqyah (cure)? You are right, divide it and also prepare a piece for me.”

Al-Ḥāfiẓ in his book al-Fath in the chapter al-`Ijāzah said about this saying of the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him), that these words were used in amazement, and the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) was amazed when he made his statement. Shu`bah added in his explanation: “and he (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) never rejected it.” Sulaymān bin Qinnah added: “This is something that is not sinful.” Shaykh `Abd Allāh Maḥfūẓ al-Ḥaddād belonging to the `Alawiyyāh said: “It is clear that the Companions did not use sorcery but only ijtihād (effort) which did not oppose the Sharī`ah. Thus, the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) accepted it because it is his sunnah and it did not lead to misguidance.

5) The aṣḥāb al-sunan and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal in his Musnad narrate, on the authority of ibn Burayḍah who related from his father, “I entered the mosque with the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him). There was a person sitting making du`āh, saying, “O Allāh, I ask You that I bear witness that You are Allāh, there is no one but You, the One, the Eternal, the One who has no offspring and parents and nothing resembles You.” On hearing these words, the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) is reported to have said, “By the one in whose hands my life is, Allāh has been worshipped with these names by which people call upon Him, and He responds to them.” I (Shaykh Ghawijji) say: “The proof here is that the great companion was praising and asking Allāh through what Allāh has inspired him to do without attaining that knowledge from the Messenger of Allāh, and with that the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allāh be upon him) accepted it.

6. Muslim narrates in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* that Abū Sa‘īd al Khudrī (Allah be pleased with him) said: Mu‘āwiyah came across a circle of people in the in the masjid and asked them : “What made you gather here.” They replied: “We sitting, remembering Allah.” He asked: “Are you sitting here for no other reason besides that?” They replied: “It is for Allah that we are sitting here.” He said: “As for me, I will not extract an oath from you confessing to wrongdoing when I have at my disposal a small ḥadīth (which runs as follows). The Messenger of Allah (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) came across a circle of his Companions and asked them: “Why are you sitting here?” They replied: “We are sitting remembering Allah, praising and thanking Him for His guidance and for what He has given us.” The Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, asked: “Is it for Allah alone that you are sitting here?” They replied: “It is for Allah alone that we are sitting here.” The Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, then said: “As for me I will not extract an oath from you confessing to wrongdoing¹⁴. Rather, Jibrīl came to me and informed me that Allah is boasting about you to His angels.”

In the *Riyāḍ us Ṣāliḥīn* Imām Nawawī has compiled a chapter on the gatherings of dhikr. It is a proof for every gathering of good which falls under the category of the remembrance of Allah.

I [the author] say: The point of the evidence is clear. The Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, has confirmed and validated the meetings in Allah’s houses whose object is the remembrance and exaltation of Allah, the Exalted, even though he himself did not order or take part in them. The *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim relates that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “A people would not gather to sit in the remembrance of Allah except that that they are surrounded by angels, the Divine Mercy covers them, tranquility descends upon them and Allah makes mention of them to those in His Presence.”

Some friends say that ‘Abdullāh bin Mas‘ūd, Allah be pleased with him, threw out a group of people from the mosque where they were remembering Allah. This is a narration of Dārimī contained in the *Sunan*.¹⁵ But it has escaped them that this is an athar [a narration regarding a Companion] and it cannot contradict a ḥadīth. Indeed, the athar is rejected when in conflict with a rigorously authenticated ḥadīth. And how can this be even more the case when this athar contains as one of its narrators Al-Hakam bin al-Mubārak. Ibn Abī Ḥātim says with regard to him: “Trustworthy and sometimes doubtful.”¹⁶

The muḥaddīth, the jurist, the scholar, Shaykh ‘Abdul Ḥayy of Lucknow provides a multifold response to the detractors of group dhikr who use this athar:

- i. This athar, even if it was mentioned by a group of legal scholars, finds no trace in the books of aḥadīth. Indeed that which is established and confirmed is the opposite of this view. He then relates Suyūfī who said: “I saw a narration which rejects attributing that athar to ibn Mas‘ūd. It is what Aḥmad ibn Hanbal has narrated in his *Kitāb us Zuhd*: Ḥusayn bin Muḥammad told us through his chain from Abū Wā’il who said: “To these people who claim that ‘Abdullāh (ibn Mas‘ūd) used to forbid the circles of

¹⁴ Literally: “I am not extracting an oath from you accusing yourselves (of wrongdoing)”

¹⁵ 1/69

¹⁶ *Al Jarḥ wal ta ‘dīl* 3/142

dhikr [I say] that I never sat with ‘Abdullah in a gathering except that he used to remember Allah therein.”

- ii. Even if you were to consider it as confirmed, it is still in conflict with clear, rigorously authenticated aḥādīth which permit loud dhikr without excessiveness. And the rigorously-authenticated ḥadīth takes precedence over the athar when there is conflicting evidence.¹⁷

7. Aḥmad, Abū Dawūd and Bukhārī- ta’līqan¹⁸ - narrate the following from ‘Amr bin al ‘Ās, Allah be pleased with him, who when sent to the Battle of Salāsil, said: “I had a wet dream on an extremely cold night and was afraid that, if I were to take the ritual bath, I would perish. So I made tayammum and prayed the dawn prayer with my Companions. When we came to the Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, we mentioned this to him. He, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “Did you pray with your Companions while you were in a state of ritual impurity (janābah)?” I replied: “I remembered the verse of Allah, the Exalted: “And do not destroy yourselves. Allah is very Merciful.” I then made tayammum and performed the ṣalāh.” Then the Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah, laughed and did not say anything.”

Shaykh ‘Abdullah ibn Maḥfūz said: “ The laughter and silence of Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, is the best evidence for the acceptance and correctness of an act. This is since Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, will never consent with anyone in wrongdoing.”¹⁹

8. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and al-Ṭabarānī transmitted, through a reliable chain, from Abū Mūsā al- ‘Ash‘arī , Allah be pleased with him, as follows: “I came to the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, with a group of my people. The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said to us: “Be of glad tidings [because of this] and pass these tidings on to those behind you: namely, that whoever sincerely bears witness that there is no god but Allah- will enter Jannah.” So we left the presence of Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and we gave people these glad tidings. Then we met ‘Umar and he returned with us to the Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him . ‘Umar said: “Oh Messenger of Allah! If this is the case people will be complacent!” The Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, kept silent.”

I [the author]say: The point of the evidence is clear. Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, agreed with the statement uttered by ‘Umar, Allah be pleased with him, out of fear that people will become complacent regarding belief and leave off good deeds.

9. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and al-Ṭabarānī transmitted- through a good chain as has been stated in the Majma‘ah Zawā‘id- from ‘Uqbah bin ‘Āmir that: “The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said to a man named Dhul Bajādīn that he

¹⁷ From a book: “*Sabāḥatul fikr fil jahr bil dhikr*” edited and annotated by the muḥaddith, the jurist, the proof Shaykh ‘Abdul Fattāh Abū Ghuddah, may Allah grant him success, p42.

¹⁸ Tr. *Ta’līq* refers to the fact that one or more transmitters in the chain have been omitted.

¹⁹ *As Sunnah wal Bid‘ah*, p52

(Dhul Bajādīn) is close to Allah. This was because of his abundant remembrance of the Allah, the Honored, the Glorious, through the Quran and because he lifted his voice in supplication.”

I say: The point of the evidence is that Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, confirmed the man’s raising his voice in dhikr and supplication, indeed describing him as being close to Allah [because of it]. And what a grade is that!

10. In his chapter on Jihād, Abū Dawūd, through a chain that reaches Abdur Raḥmān bin Ubayy Laylā, narrates that ibn ‘Umar told the latter (bin Ubayy Laylā) that he was in one of the military expeditions of Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and (in the face of an advancing army) there were soldiers who fled: “I was among those who fled. And when we emerged back into the open we said: “What do we do now since we fled the advance of the army and have to return with the people’s anger upon us?” We told ourselves: “Let us enter al-Madīnah and remain so that no one will see us.” So we entered the city and said: “If we present ourselves to Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, then he will either forgive us and we will stay or otherwise, we will have to leave.” So we waited for the Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, before Fajr ṣalāh. When he emerged we stood up for him and said: “We are the ones who fled.” He came closer to us and said: “Rather, you are the ‘ākīrūn (those who have returned after having originally fled)”. We came nearer to the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and we kissed his hand.” He said: “I am with the party of Muslims.”

The point of the evidence is that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, accepted that they could kiss his hand. Where are those who call such an act a small sajdah?!

II Events in the time of the Companions, Allah be pleased with them

1. Zayd bin Thābit, Allah be pleased with him, said: “The Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, passed away before the Quran was compiled in book form.”

Bukhāri and others narrated Zayd bin Thābit, Allah be pleased with him, as follows: “Abū Bakr As-Siddīq sent for me when the people of Yamāmah had been killed (i.e., a number of the Prophet’s Companions who fought against Musailama). (I went to him) and found ‘Umar bin Al-Khattāb sitting with him. Abū Bakr then said (to me), “Umar has come to me and said: “Casualties were heavy among the Qurra’ of the Qur’an (i.e. those who knew the Quran by heart) on the day of the Battle of Yamāmah, and I am afraid that more heavy casualties may take place among the Qurra’ (reciters and memorizers of the Quran) on other battlefields, whereby a large part of the Qur’an may be lost. Therefore I suggest that you (Abū Bakr) order that the Qur’an be collected.” I said to ‘Umar, “How can you do something which Allah’s Apostle did not do?” ‘Umar said, “By Allah, that is a good project. ‘Umar kept on urging me to accept his proposal till Allah opened my chest for it and I began to realize the good in the idea which ‘Umar had realized.” Then Abū Bakr said (to me). ‘You are a wise young man and we do not have any suspicion about you, and you used to write the Divine Inspiration for Allah’s Apostle. So you should search for (the fragmentary scripts of) the Qur’an and collect it in one book.” By Allah, if they had ordered me to shift one of the mountains, it would not have been heavier for me than this ordering me to collect the Qur’an. Then I said to Abū Bakr,

"How will you do something which Allah's Apostle did not do?" Abū Bakr replied, "By Allah, it is a good project." Abū Bakr kept on urging me to accept his idea until Allah opened my chest for what He had opened in the chests of Abū Bakr and 'Umar...[until the end of this well-known ḥadīth]."

And as 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar, Allah be pleased with him, said: "In this way was the Quran, for the first time, put on sheets of paper."²⁰

2. Bukhārī and others related Anas ibn Mālik, Allah be pleased with him, as follows: "While the people of Shām and Irāq were fighting alongside each other in the conquest of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Hudhayfah ibn Yaman [who had been with them] went to 'Uthman. Hudhayfah had been shocked in the differences he had seen in the way the Quran was recited and said to 'Uthmān: "Make the Ummah aware before they differ like the Jews and Christians differ." 'Uthman then sent a message to Ḥafṣa: "Send us the written Quran, we will write out copies of it and then return it to you." Ḥafṣah sent the text to 'Uthman who ordered Zayd bin Thābit, 'Abdullah bin Zubayr, Sa'īd bin al-'Ās 'and Abdur Raḥmān bin al-Ḥārith bin Hishām in this regard and they wrote out copies...[to the end of this well-known ḥadīth] . He then sent a copy to every Muslim region and ordered that all other written Quran material be burnt."

Hārith al-Muḥāsibī, Allah have mercy on him, said: "It is known among people that 'Uthman was the gatherer of the Quran. It is not like that. What he really did was to make people recite in a single manner, a choice exercised by himself and those who bore witness to this from among the Muhājirūn and Anṣār, due to what they feared of corruption due to the different readings of letters by the people of Shām, on the one hand, and the people of Iraq on the other. As for what was before this: the copies, with respect to the recitations, were compiled according to the seven dialects in which the Quran was revealed. And the first to gather the Quran was as-Siddīq. 'Alī said: "If I was in charge, I would have worked with the copies in the way 'Uthmān had done."²¹

3. Bukhārī and others narrate Abū Hurayrah as follows: "When Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, passed on Abū Bakr succeeded him. There were those among the Arabs who became disbelievers (by withholding zakāh). 'Umar said to Abū Bakr, Allah be pleased with both of them: "How can you fight against the people given that Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "I have been commanded to fight the people until they say there is no god but Allah. Whosoever says that, his property and life are safe from me except that which is due from him"? Abū Bakr, Allah be pleased with him, replied: "I will fight those who differentiate between ṣālāh and zakāh. Indeed zakāh is that which is due on wealth. By Allah, if they withhold from me even one young she-goat that they used to give to Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, I will indeed fight them for withholding such." 'Umar said (of the discussion): "It was only that Allah had expanded the breast of Abū Bakr, Allah be pleased with him, towards fighting. I knew then it was the truth (that Abū Bakr had been guided by Allah)."

The point of the evidence is clear. Abū Bakr and the Companions, Allah be pleased with them, did something that Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, did not

²⁰ *Al Itqān fī ulūmil Qurān*, Volume 1, p59

²¹ *Al Itqān fī ulūmil Qurān*, Volume 1, p60

do by fighting those who withheld the giving of zakāh. And the taking of a life is a great matter in Islam (which the Companions would never have easily done).

4. Bukhārī and Mālik narrate ‘Abdur Raḥmān bin ‘Abdil Qārī as follows: “I went with ‘Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb on a night in Ramaḍān to the mosque and the people were scattered about. One person would pray on his own, another led others in prayer. ‘Umar, Allah be pleased with him, said: “I believe that if all the people can be led by one prayer leader then that would be the best.” Then he decided upon that course of action and gathered all the people under the leadership of ‘Ubayy bin Ka‘b. Then I went again with him on another night and the people were all making their prayers behind one prayer leader. ‘Umar commented: “What an excellent innovation is this! It is better to sleep in the last part of the night than to stand for [group] prayer. The people stood for this prayer in the first part of the night.”

The point of the evidence is clear: it was ‘Umar who for the first time gathered the people together for such a prayer [tarāwīḥ]. ‘Uthman, and then ‘Alī, did the same after him, Allah be pleased with them. And this sunnah of ‘Umar, Allah be pleased with him, is still carried out in all Muslim lands. Praise be to Allah!

I [the author] say: Isma‘īl al-Amīr al-San‘ānī has shown bad manners and has departed from the understanding of the Imams in his following comment on this saying of ‘Umar, Allah be pleased with him: “The intent was his gathering them behind one Imām, and for their continuation behind that Imam. He did not intend that gathering together in a group prayer is an innovation, since Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, used to gather the people together [in group prayer] as you know. If you know this, then know that ‘Umar is the one that began to gather people behind a specific Imām and called it an innovation. As for his saying: “What an excellent innovation!” there is nothing that is praiseworthy in innovation.

I say: Is this not bad manners towards a man upon whose tongue and heart Allah has placed the truth, as communicated to us by Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him?! It is as if there is in the man enmity for ‘Umar, Allah be pleased with him, that he has inherited from his predecessors. Then he amazingly deviates from the text! And what about the ḥadīth: “Keep to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly-guided Khulafā after me, hold on to it firmly, biting on to it with one’s molars.”

Abū Dāwūd, ibn Mājah, ibn Hibbān and Tirmidhī have transmitted this ḥadīth. Hākim graded this ḥadīth as rigorously authenticated (ṣaḥīḥ) saying: “It is so according to the conditions set out by Bukhārī and Muslim.”

Similar to this ḥadīth is the following: “Follow those who come after me- Abū Bakr and ‘Umar.” Tirmidhī has transmitted this ḥadīth and graded it as ḥasan (well authenticated). It has also been transmitted by Aḥmad, ibn Mājah and ibn Hibbān. It has different chains of narrations each reinforcing the other. And the intent of the ḥadīth is nothing other than communicating that the sunnah of the khulafā-i-rāshidīn is in conformity with the manner of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, in fighting Islam’s enemies, in strengthening the signs of the religion etc. Such a Khalīf will not follow a path other than that of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him. Given this: ‘Umar, who himself was one of the

rightly guided Khulafā, named what he saw of the gathering together for the prayer as a bid'ah, not a sunnah. Then reflect upon this!²²

An Imām of the Ahl us Sunnah, Qāḍī Abū Bakr ibn al-‘Arabī, in his commentary on the Sunan of Tirmidhī (entitled ‘Āriḍatul Uḥūdhī), and while explaining the ḥadīth: “Follow my sunnah and the sunnah of the Khulafā-i-Rāshidīn”,²³ says: “The khulafā-i-Rāshidīn are by consensus four: Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī. They are the ones through whom Allah executed His promise and He made known His divine statute in saying: “Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will of a surety grant them in the land inheritance (of power), as He granted it to those before them; that He will establish in authority their religion- the one which He has chosen for them; and that He will change (their state) after the fear in which they (lived), to one of security and peace.”[Quran 24:55]. Furthermore, regarding his saying: “Follow those who come after me- Abū Bakr and ‘Umar”- this a command to return to the Sunnah of the Khulafā for two reasons: (1) in making following them [an obligation] for the unqualified (2) to make their views the preferred one in case of differences among the Companions. And thus the aḥādīth of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar take precedence over others....”²⁴

In his I‘lām ul mawaqqi‘īn ibn Qayyim says: “We testify to Allah in a testimony concerning which Allah will question us on the Day of Judgment that we will not abandon that which is rigorously authenticated pertaining to the first two Khulafā –i-Rāshidīn whom Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, ordered us to follow even if everyone else were to disagree.”²⁵

I say: We can see from the two transmissions how San‘ānī has deviated from the text. And we seek refuge in Allah from that.

5. Tabarānī, through a sound chain as stated in the Majmū‘as Zawā’id, narrates Al Maqbarī as follows: “I was with Abū Hurayrah when Ḥasan bin ‘Alī, Allah be pleased with both of them, came and greeted. The people replied to his greeting. Abū Hurayrah who was with us did not know this and it was said to him: ‘This is Ḥasan bin ‘Alī who is greeting.’” Abū Hurayrah caught up with him and: “And upon you (be peace), oh my master.” It was said to Abū Hurayrah: “Are you saying “my master” [Sayyidī]. He replied: “I bear witness that Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, called him a master [Sayyid].”

Abū Hurayrah, Allah be pleased with him, is referring to the ḥadīth: “This son of mine is a Sayyid (master). It may be that Allah, the Exalted, unites two factions of Muslims because of him.” Narrated by Bukhārī.

The point of the evidence is as follows: “This is a profound understanding by a great Companion of Allah’s Messenger’s statement about Ḥasan, Allah be pleased with him, when the latter was still a youth. It also shows his elevated manners with him.”

²² *Subul us Salām* 2/11

²³ Narrated by Tirmidhī and graded as *ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ* (a ḥadīth that is at a grade between ḥasan (well-authenticated) and *ṣaḥīḥ* (rigorously authenticated).

²⁴ Volume 10, pp 146-147

²⁵ *Qawā’id fi ulūm il fiqh.. Muqaddimah ‘ilā is sunan* by the Shaykh, *muḥaddith, faqīh and nāqid* (critic) Ḥabīb Aḥmad al-Qayrānawī, Allah the Exalted have mercy upon him, p32.

6. Tabarānī, through a sound chain as stated in the Majmū‘as Zawā‘id, narrates the Companion Abū Madīnah al-Dārimī, Allah be pleased with him, as follows: “When two men of the Companions of Allah’s Messenger, Allah be pleased with him, met they did not take leave of one another until one on them recited the sūrah “By Time! Indeed humankind is in a state of loss...”

The point of the evidence is that it is a reminder of the greatness of this sūrah. Imām Shāfi‘ī, Allah the Exalted have mercy upon him, said: “Had Allah the Exalted revealed only this one sūrah, it would have sufficed for humankind.” This is stated in the “Şafwatus Tafāsīr”.²⁶

7. Similarly, Tabarānī transmitted- through a sound chain- that Anas bin Mālik, Allah be pleased with him, said that when he completed a Quran, he gathered his people and children together and supplicated for them.

The point of the evidence is that this noble act was started by Anas bin Mālik, Allah be pleased with him, without any precedent for it to be found in the actions of our master Muhammad, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him. Imām Nawawī, Allah the Exalted, have mercy upon him, said: “The presence of a gathering at the completion of the Quran is a confirmed recommended act. It is established in Bukhārī and Muslim that Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, ordered those who were menstruating to come out on ‘Īd day and to witness the blessings and attend the invitation of Muslims.”²⁷

8. Imām Bayhaqī says in the Sunan: Abū ‘Abdullāh al-Ḥāfiẓ from Abul ‘Abbās ibn Ya‘qūb from ‘Abbās ibn Muhammad informed us: “I asked Yahyā ibn Mu‘ayn about the recitation of the Quran at the graveside. He replied: “I was told by Mubashir ibn ‘Isma‘īl from ‘Abdallah bin ‘Alā bin al-Lajlāj from his father who said to his sons: “When I pass away, put me in my grave and say: In the Name of Allah and according to the Sunnah of Allah’s Messenger, Allah be pleased with him. Cover me with dust as per the custom and then read the first and last parts of Sūrah Baqarah at my head. I have seen ibn ‘Umar recommend that.” Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar in his Amālī yul Adhkār said that it is a narration that is mawqūf ḥasan.²⁸

I say: the point of the evidence is clear. ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar was of the Companions that adhered most closely to the actions of Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him.

9. In his Kitāb us Zuhd Imām Aḥmad narrates that Abū Hurayrah, Allah be pleased with him, said: “I seek forgiveness and turn in repentance to Allah, the Honoured, the Glorious, 12 000 times a day. That is in accordance with my sin.”²⁹

Shaykh ‘Abdullāh ibn Maḥfūz said: “It is confirmed that Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: “Oh people: Turn to Allah in repentance and seek his

²⁶ By Shaykh Muhammad ‘Alī as-Şābūnī, Volume 3, p600

²⁷ Refer to the “*Tilāwatul Qurān il Majīd*” by the pious muḥaddith, Shaykh ‘Abdullāh Sirājjuddīn, p118.

²⁸ That is, that is traceable to a Companion through a chain of reliable narrators.

²⁹ Narrated by Ḥāfiẓ ibn Ḥajar in the *Maʿālib il ‘Āliyah*, Volume 4, p94 and by Dhahabī in his “*Tadhkiratul Ḥuffāz*” when discussing the biography of Abū Hurayrah, Allah be pleased with him, p156.

forgiveness. Indeed I turn in repentance towards Him more than seventy times a day.” Narrated by Muslim. In another ḥadīth, narrated by Abū Dāwūd, he sought forgiveness one hundred times in one gathering. And there are other narrations that spur one on to increase the amount of istighfār. For this reason they understood that an abundance of seeking forgiveness is required without any restrictions to be put thereupon. The ḥadīth of Abū Hurayrah informs us that he fixed this as a wird (litany) for himself to be read every day. And this can never enter into the category of bid‘ah.

10. In his Musannaf Abd al Razzāq narrates from Mu‘ammar who relates from Qatādah that ‘Abdullāh ibn Mas‘ūd, Allah be pleased with him, used to pray four raka‘āt before and after Jumu‘ah. He also narrates, with a chain of transmission traced to Abdur Raḥmān as-Sulamī who said: “‘Abdullah used to order us to pray four raka‘āt before Jumu‘ah until ‘Alī came and ordered us to pray two raka‘āt after Jumu‘ah and then four.

This has also been transmitted by ibn Shaybah using the same chain of transmission and who has this addition: “Then I adopted the position of ‘Alī and left that of ‘Abdullāh.”

I say: the point of the evidence is clear- the prayer established by a great Companion was followed. Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, desired for his ummah what ibn Mas‘ud then wished for it in creating a resemblance between the Jumu‘ah and Dhuhur prayers. Ibn Mas‘ūd used to pray four raka‘āt before Dhuhur and thus did the same before Jumu‘ah. And that was never counted against him as a blameworthy innovation. And Allah knows best.

CHAPTER THREE: SAYINGS AND EVENTS WHICH OCCURRED AFTER THE ERA OF THE COMPANIONS (RAH)

(Comprising Pages 30 – 41 of the original book. Translated by Munowar Harnekar)

1) Multiplicity of Jumu'ahs were not prevalent in the time of the Messenger of Allah (saw), nor in the time of the Companions and the Successors. al-Baihaqi says in al-Sunan: "It was never reported that permission was given to anyone to establish Jumu'ah in any of the mosques of Madinah or in the towns close to it." And ibn al-Mundhir said: "People did not differ in that Jumu'ah was never performed in the time of the Prophet (saw) and that of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs except in the mosque of the Prophet (saw). In their abandoning their mosques on the day of Jumu'ah and their gathering in one mosque is an indication that Jumu'ah differs from the other prayers, and it is not to be performed except in one place."³⁰

al-Khatib says in Tarikh Baghdad: "The first Jumu'ah established in Islam in one place with a preceding Jumu'ah was in the time of al-Mu'tadid in the capital of the Caliphate, meaning Baghdad, without having had a mosque built specifically for the performance of Jumu'ah. The reason for that was the fear the Caliphs had for (the safety of) their lives. That was in the year two hundred and eighty. Thereafter in the time of al-Muktafi a mosque was built in which Jumu'ah was performed."

And the Muslims continued to have multiple Jumu'ahs in different places. Nobody said that it was a misguided innovation or that those who permitted it were misguided innovators, because it is one of the branches of jurisprudence. The views of the scholars differed concerning the issue due to what was apparent to them from the evidences.³¹

And he said before: "As for the innovation which belongs to the subsidiary matters, then it is not misguidance because it is part of those events which differ with the passing of time. And its ruling is found from the evidences of the Sacred Law and its established general principles in respect to that which is beneficial and that which causes corruption."³²

The number of mosques for Jumu'ah multiplied and increased until the prayers of Jumu'ah became numerous in one part of a city which goes against the wisdom behind it. Nevertheless no one said anything to prevent it.

2) The mosque of the Messenger of Allah (saw) became filled to capacity with worshippers during his time. So the Messenger of Allah (saw) enlarged it after his return from the battle of

³⁰ *Itqan al-San'ah*, p. 36.

³¹ From *Itqan al-San'ah fi Tahqiq ma'na al-Bid'ah* by the muhaddith, the legist, the jurist Shaikh 'Abd Allah al-Sadiq al-Ghumari, p. 36.

³² *al-Masdar Nafsuhu*, p. 34.

Khaibar – we see the marks of this addition in the pillars on which is written until now: “The limits of the mosque of the Prophet.” Then after him ‘Umar (ra) widened it, and then ‘Uthman (ra) specifically from the direction of the Qiblah. The big extension happened during the time when ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz (rah) was the governor of al-Madinah al-Munawwarah, during the Caliphate of al-Walid bin ‘Abd al-Malik (rah).

Certainly, the Successor ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz enlarged the mosque of the Prophet (saw) greatly. So he combined the houses of the wives of the Prophet (saw) with the mosque³³ and included in this was the site of his grave (saw). And he established for the mosque four minarets. And no one at that time said that ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz had committed an innovation by placing the grave of the Messenger of Allah (saw) inside the mosque. It did not occur to anybody in that era, which is known for its goodness, that it would be a disturbance to the Prophet (saw) whilst he is alive in his grave. And nobody said that ‘Umar bin ‘Abd al-‘Aziz had innovated by building four minarets for the mosque of the Prophet (saw) after its having no minarets. For certainly the wisdom behind the expansion (of the mosque) and the raising of minarets on its edges is clear: to make the mosque large enough to accommodate the people and to cause the mu’adhdhins voice to reach those houses far away from the noble sanctuary of the Prophet (saw). Malik relates from those whom he regarded as reliable: “That people used to enter the chambers of the wives of the Prophet (saw) and prayed Salah al-Jumu’ah in them after the death of the Prophet (saw). The mosque had become cramped for the worshippers and the chambers of the wives of the Prophet (saw) were [at that time] not inside the mosque but their doors were adjacent to it.”³⁴

Muhammad bin Mu’adh al-Ansari said: I hear ‘Ata’ al-Khurasani say in a gathering in which ‘Imran bin Abu Anas was present – and he was between the grave and the pulpit: “The chambers of the wives of the Prophet (saw) were covered with palm branches. On its door was a musuh of black fur – musuh is a garment of fur like the robes of monks – so the order of al-Walid bin ‘Abul Malik was read out, commanding us to destroy the rooms of the wives of the Prophet (saw). I did not see a day in which more weeping took place than that day. ‘Ata’ said: I heard Sa’id ibn al-Musayyib say: By Allah, I wished that they would leave it as it was so that anyone from Madinah or anyone arriving from a faraway place would see that which sufficed the Prophet (saw) in his lifetime. And people would then abstain from boasting.”³⁵

I read one of the contemporaries who had an incorrect understanding of the speech of Sa’id ibn al-Musayyib (rah) which was related previously. He determined that he cried because of the Successor (tabi’) ‘Umar, in the presence of the other tabi’in’, placing the grave of the Messenger of Allah (saw) inside his noble mosque. And it is an (incorrect) understanding as you can see.

And I read from something from another contemporary scholar that was worse than that, in that he [this scholar] sought to remove the Prophet (saw) from his noble mosque. And he knows that the prophets are alive in their graves; and that the earth does not devour their bodies – since he is occupied with the noble ahadith! Is this not blameworthy conduct? And it is a worse form of bad conduct with the Prophet, whom Allah (swt) never addressed by his name only. And He – glorified be He – commanded us with that and said: “Do not make the calling of the Messenger

³³ al-Suhaili said: The rooms and houses were included in the mosque during the time of ‘Abd al-Malik bin Marwan. *Maqalat al-Kawthari hawla musta’alah al-Mihrab*, p. 152.

³⁴ *Wafa’ al-Wafa’ bi Akhbar Dar al-Mustafa (saw)* by Nur al-Din al-Samhudi, Vol. 1, p. 517.

³⁵ al-Masdar Nafsuhi, Vol. 1, p. 461.

among yourselves like your calling to one another.”³⁶ Meaning, do not say: “O Muhammad (saw)”.

3) One of us may turn the pages of “Tahdhib al-Tahdhib” of ibn Hajr, and “Mizan al-I’tidal” of al-Dhahabi and “Lisan al-Mizan” – a commentary on al-Mizan – of ibn Hajr and others like it of the books of narrators of ahadith and information. He would find that these great scholars copied the words of other scholars like them. And it includes allegations and accusations - accusations of mistakes and bad memory and lying.

And he would turn the pages (of books) such as “Nazhat al-Nazar” of ibn Hajr or “Tadrib al-Rawi” of Suyuti and others like them of the books of the science of hadith. He would find different ranks for the narrators: so-and-so is reliable; so-and-so is credible; so-and-so is truthful; this one is pious and that one is not so pious and so on. The specialists – and not the generality and majority of reciters from the scholars of the time – passed judgment according to the verdicts of these leaders in the sphere of al-rijal of acceptance and rejection. And they classified the narrators in different ranks and grades because of that.

We do not find any rejection or acceptable objection against those leading scholars, (claiming) that they have slandered people, and that they have spoken badly about the dead and that we should reject them. No, rather we respect those sayings and verdicts of theirs which inform us about people and which are a testimony against them. And they will be responsible for it-except if some of them are biased in speech against another causing him to view it as acceptable while the generality of scholars reject it as we find in “Qa’idah fi Jarh wa al-Ta’dil” of al-Subki³⁷ for example. The truth is not concerned with defending partisanship or prejudice, or conflicts based on different schools of thought or lack of verification; this is something else and does not fall under informing about the truth or witnessing to it. The one who engages in that will have to answer for it to Allah (swt). And we did not find any rejection of this division in the ruling upon narrators, or any allegation that it is a reprehensible and misguided innovation. Rather we find the scholars of all ages saying: “May Allah (swt) reward those pious predecessors with good” for they, by their sayings and verdicts concerning the grades of narrators, preserved the sayings of the Messenger of Allah (saw) and repelled from it that which is not of it. And that is sought after in the religion. And all praise be to Allah.

4) Bukhari and Muslim related with a chain up till ibn ‘Abbas (ra) who said: the Prophet (saw) said: “Jibril recited the Qur'an to me in one way. Then I requested him (to read it in another way), and I did not stop asking him for more until he read it in seven different ways.”

Bukhari and Muslim related from ‘Umar bin al-Khattab (ra) who said: “I heard Hisham bin Hakim reciting Surah al-Furqan during the life of the Messenger of Allah (saw). So I listened to his recitation and he recited in many different ways which the Messenger of Allah (saw) had not taught me. I was about to jump on him and fight him during his prayer but I remained patient until he had completed his prayer, and then I tied his upper garment around his neck, seized him by it and said: ‘Who taught you this Surah I heard you reciting?’ He replied: ‘The Messenger of Allah (saw) taught it to me.’ I said: ‘You lie, for the Messenger of Allah (saw) taught it to me in a way different from yours.’ So I took him to the Messenger of Allah (saw) and said: ‘I heard

³⁶ Surah al-Nur, Ayah 63.

³⁷ Shaikh ‘Abd al-Fattah Abu Ghaddah printed it, verified it and made a commentary on it so may Allah reward him well.

this person reciting Surah al-Furqan in a way which you did not teach me.’ He (saw) said: ‘Release him’ and ‘Umar (ra) let him free. Then he said to Hisham: ‘Read, O Hisham’ and he recited the same recitation I heard him reciting. The Messenger of Allah (saw) then said: ‘In this way was it revealed.’ Then he said: ‘Read, O ‘Umar’ and I recited it as he had taught me. The Messenger of Allah (saw) then said: ‘In this way was it revealed. Certainly, this Qur’an was revealed in seven different ways, so recite of it whichever (way) is easier for you.’”

Tirmidhi relates – with a chain till Ubay bin Ka’b – and he [Tirmidhi] regarded it as a hadith that is fair and sound-that Ubay bin Ka’b (ra) said: “The Messenger of Allah (saw) met Jibril and said: ‘O Jibril, I was sent to a nation of unlettered people. Of them are old women and old men, and young slave-boys and slave-girls, and men who have never read a book before.’ He replied: ‘O Muhammad, certainly the Qur’an was revealed in seven different ways.’”

We find that the scholars have differed concerning what is intended by the seven ahurf holding up to as much as ten different views around the topic. These were compiled by Shaikh Dr. Muhammad Salim Muhaisin who added to this another view and others beside him added more to this number.

Similarly we find them differing about what is intended by the seven and ten modes of reciting which have been mass transmitted. Some say that the ten modes of reciting which have been mass transmitted are regarded as only one of the seven ahurf which were revealed to the Messenger of Allah (saw)-as mentioned by al-Tabari and others. Others say that the ten modes of reciting are regarded as some of the seven ahurf revealed to the Messenger of Allah (saw)-as mentioned by Makki ibn Abi Talib and others.

The scholars and the lovers of the Qur’an and its sciences, have especially praised the benefit of books (written) about the seven ahurf and what is intended by it; and also the seven and ten recitations and what is intended by it-even though these books originated during the third century upon the hand of al-Hafiz, the jurist, the linguist, the reciter: Abu ‘Ubaid al-Qasim ibn Salam (rah). And they praise the good deeds of those who write (such books) up till the present day and until the Day of Resurrection. Nobody said that that is not from that which came from the Prophet (saw) textually and by statement. The Companions of the Prophet (saw) did not spend much time on this topic so it is not permissible to be absorbed in discussions about it. Nobody said that it is a reprehensible innovation and that it is misguidance in the religion, Allah forbid! They only said that all of that is a form of protection of the Noble Qur’an and conveying of it to mankind. Allah (swt) says: “It is We who have sent down the Reminder and We Who will preserve it.”³⁸ Allah (swt) protects the Book by inspiring the people of the Qur’an to have meticulous care for it and retention of it. And all praise be to Allah.

And say the same about the actions of the scholars of the Arabic language, regarding its grammar, morphology, rhetoric and expression- and the same for jurisprudence, its sciences and instruments; and the history of the Prophet (saw) and its recording; and other disciplines besides that. The scholars appreciated the efforts of those who engaged in it. They did not consider it to be an innovation which did not happen in the time of the Prophet (saw), thereby making it a misguided innovation, Allah forbid!

³⁸ Surah al-Hijr, Ayah 9.

Ahadith Supporting the Agreement of the Scholars Concerning the Specification of the Hadith “Every Innovation is Misguidance”

1) Muslim, al-Nasa’i and ibn Majah relate from Jarir bin ‘Abdullah al-Bajali who said: the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: “Whoever introduces some good practice in Islam will have the reward of it, as well as the reward of those who act on it after him, without their rewards being diminished in any respect. And whoever introduces some evil practice in Islam will bear the burden of it as well as the burden of those who act on it after him, without theirs being diminished in any respect.”

al-Nawawi said: In it is encouragement for originating good deeds and enacting good practices and a warning against baseless and repugnant acts. In the hadith is a specification of his (saw) saying: “Every new matter is an innovation and every innovation is misguidance.” What is meant by it are new matters which are baseless and innovations which are blameworthy.”

Sundi said in a commentary on ibn Majah: “His saying “a good practice” means an accepted path which people follow. The distinction between a good and bad practice is in its accordance with the foundations of the Law or its failure to do so.”

2) ibn Majah relates with a sound chain that Abu Hurairah (ra) said: the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: “Whoever introduces something good and is followed (by others) will have the reward of it completely. As for the reward of those who follow him, their reward will not be diminished at all. And whoever introduces something evil and is followed (by others) will carry the burden of it completely. As for the burden of those who follow him, their burden will not be diminished at all.”

3) Ahmad, al-Bazzar and al-Tabrani in al-Awsat – with a fair chain – relate that Hudhaifah (ra) said: the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: “Whoever introduces something good and is followed (by others); he will have the reward of it as well as the reward of those who follow him, without their reward being diminished at all. And whoever introduces something evil and is followed (by others); he will carry the burden of it as well as the burden of those who follow him, without their burden being diminished at all”

4) Tabrani relates – with a fair chain also – from Wathilah bin al-Asqa’ (ra) from the Prophet (saw) who said: “Whoever introduces a good practice will have reward for it for whoever acts on it during his lifetime and after his death, until it is left off. And whoever introduces an evil practice will bear the sin of it, until it is left off. And whoever dies defending (the land of the Muslims) in the path of Allah, the act of defending continues (to be written) for him, until he is resurrected on the Day of Resurrection.”

The muhaddith, the jurist, ‘Abdullah al-Sadiq, after mentioning the preceding ahadith said: So these ahadith speak clearly about the division of innovation into good and bad: the good (innovation) is that which is in conformity with the foundation of the Shari’ah. And this is even if it is a new matter with regard to its form for it is permissible according to its type because of its coming within the rules of the Shari’ah or the generality of ayat or hadith. For this reason it is termed good and the reward of it continues with those who practice it after his death. The bad (innovation) is that which contradicts the rules of the Shari’ah and it is reprehensible and a misguided innovation.

al-Ubbiyy said in a commentary on Sahih Muslim: Included in a good practice is an approved innovation such as the standing (for Tarawih) in Ramadan; and being present in the minaret in the time immediately after the adhan and at the central doors and when the Imam enters; and performing subh at the rising of dawn. All of that are things which assist acts of worship which the Shari'ah testifies to. And 'Ali and 'Umar used to encourage people to perform Salah of subh after the rising of dawn.³⁹

And the meaning of establishing a practice is to originate it by means of exertion and derivation from the rules of Shari'ah or the generality of the texts.

5) Bukhari and Muslim relate from 'A'ishah (ra) who said: the Messenger of Allah (saw) said: "He who innovates something in this matter of ours that is not of it, will have it rejected." And in the narration of Muslim: "He who does an act which our matter is not (in agreement) with, will have it rejected." And in some versions: "He who innovates something in our religion that is not of it, will have it rejected"

Ibn Rajab said: "This hadith indicates by its wording that every action without a basis in the Shari'ah is rejected. And it indicates by its understanding that every action which does have a basis in the Shari'ah is not rejected." As for Hanfi scholars who do not accept the reverse of the text as evidence, it can be said: "Certainly the text is silent concerning everything besides that which it speaks about. The acceptability of a newly innovated matter which is in conformity with the principles of the religion can then be derived from other texts."

al-Hafiz says in al-Fath: "This hadith is counted as one of the foundations of Islam, and as one of its maxims, for its meaning is: whoever originates something in the religion which does not have any support in the fundamentals (of the religion) then he should not pay any attention to it."

Shaikh 'Abdullah al-Sadiq said: This hadith specifies the hadith: "Every innovation is misguidance" and clarifies what is meant by it as is evident. Because if every innovation is misguidance without exception the hadith would have said: "Whoever innovates anything in this matter of ours, will have it rejected." However since he said: "Whoever innovates something in this matter of ours that is not of it, will have it rejected" it informs us that innovations are of two kinds: that which is not of the religion because it conflicts with its rules and evidences so it is rejected and it is a misguided innovation. And that which is of the religion because it has support from the principles (of religion) or is supported by evidence so it is acceptable and correct. And it is a good practice.

6) Ahmad, Abu Dawud and ibn Abi Shaibah relate – with a sound, continuous chain – to Mu'adh ibn Jabal (ra) who said: "We were performing Salah when a man arrived who had missed part of the Salah. The person next to him indicated to him: 'You missed such-and-such' so he performed it." He said: "We were between bowing and prostrating and standing and

³⁹ *Itqan al-San'ah fi Tahqiq ma'na al-Bid'ah*, p. 17 and what follows.

sitting. So I came and had missed part of the Salah.⁴⁰ It was indicated to me what I had missed.” I said: “I do not find him in any state except that I am in that state. So I was with them in the state which I found them upon. Then when the Prophet (saw) completed, I stood and prayed.” The Messenger of Allah (saw) faced the people and said: “Who said such-and-such?” They replied: “Mu’adh ibn Jabal.” So he said: “Mu’adh has initiated a practice for you so follow him in it. If any of you comes and has missed something of the Salah, then let him pray with the Imam. Then when the Imam completes (the Salah) let him perform that which he missed out.” And its chain is authentic.

Shaikh ‘Abdullah al-Sadiq said: “It is understood from the hadith of Mu’adh that the ma’mums differing with the Imam in the actions of Salah was allowed since the man used to pray that which he had missed (of the Salah) and he differed with the Imam in Ruku’ or Sujud or Qiyam. Thereafter he completed (the Salah) with him. Then when Mu’adh did what he did and the Prophet (saw) commanded following (the Imam), the permissibility of differing (with the Imam) was abrogated and it became obligatory to follow him in the actions of Salah. And that which is abrogated is not permitted to act upon by consensus of the scholars.”

From this it is known that the view of ibn Hazm, that the traveler should shorten his Salah when praying behind an Imam who is a resident, is invalid. For if he shortens his Salah then he differs with the Imam, and this has been abrogated and acting on something abrogated is invalid. Therefore his Salah is invalid. Just as if he had faced Bait al-Muqaddas in his Salah, then it would be invalid.⁴¹ And the invalidity of his view is also known from another angle: it is known from necessity that a delegation of Arabs visited the Prophet (saw) in Madinah and performed Salah with him. Nobody said: “Shorten the Salah” although the Prophet (saw) did say to the people of Makkah during his pilgrimage: “Complete your Salah for we are travelers.” From this we know that the delegation completed the Salah with the Prophet (saw) since it is incomprehensible that he ordered them to shorten the Salah and this has not been related to us. Rather this is impossible for the Sahabah, who were eager to relate his sayings and actions, especially those which were connected to Salah, which is one of the most important pillars of religion. And this is an unavoidable proof against the followers of ibn Hazm which they are incapable of escaping.⁴²

7) Ahmad relates – with a chain, the narrators of which are reliable – from Abu Sa’id al-Khudri (ra) that he saw a vision: He was writing (Surah) Sad and when he reached the point of prostration he saw the inkpot, the pen and everything in his presence fall down prostrate. He said: ‘I narrated it to the Prophet (saw) and he never left off prostrating (at this point).’ The commentator on al-Targhib, Shaikh Mustafa ‘Ammarah said: “This was when he arrived at His saying: “He begged forgiveness from his Lord and fell down prone, prostrating, and repented.”⁴³

8) ibn Majah relates in his Sunan – with a chain whose narrators are reliable – from Sa’id ibn al-Musayyib, that Bilal (ra) came to the Prophet (saw) to call him to the Salah of Fajr. It was said

⁴⁰ Meaning, and Allah knows best, that whoever had missed the *Ruku’* for example, would enter the *Salah* and make *Qiyam*, then *Ruku’* and continue praying on his own in the *Salah* until he completed that which the Imam had preceded him in, and then he would complete the *Salah* with him.

⁴¹ It indicates that the facing towards *Bait al-Muqaddas* was once allowed but then it became abrogated.

⁴² *Itqan al-San’ah*, p. 25.

⁴³ *Al-Targhib wa al-Tarhib*, Vol. 2, p. 356.

to him: “He is sleeping.” He replied: “Salah is better than sleep, Salah is better than sleep.” So it became established as part of the adhan of Fajr and the matter became confirmed upon that. And in the narration of al-Tabrani the Prophet (saw) said to Bilal: “How excellent this is! Include it in your adhan.”

9) al-Bukhari relates from Rifa’ah bin Rafi’ (ra) that he said: “We were praying one day behind the Prophet (saw). When he raised his head from Ruku’ he said: ‘Allah listens to the one who praises Him.’ So a man behind him said: ‘Our Lord to You is all praise - many, good and blessed praise.’ Then when he completed (the Salah) the Prophet (saw) said: “Who is the one who said that?” The man replied: “I.” He (saw) said: “I saw more than thirty angels rushing to see which of them would write it down first.”

al-Hafiz ibn Hajr said in al-Fath al-Bari: “It is inferred from this the permissibility of originating dhikr in the Salah which is not transmitted, if it does not conflict with those which are transmitted.”⁴⁴

10) The Messenger of Allah (saw) grieved over Khubaib bin ‘Adi al-Awsi and the five who were martyred with him in the expedition of al-Raji’, even though Khubaib introduced a Salah which may be rightly termed as the Salah of death. It is mentioned that when he was about to be killed he said to the polytheists: “Allow me to perform two raka’at of Salah.” So they left him and he prayed the Salah. It then became a practice for all those about to be killed to pray two raka’at of Salah. Thereafter Khubaib said: “Were it not that you would have said, ‘He is afraid of death’ I would have increased the Salah. I don’t care about any hardship – my death is for Allah.” Then he recited:

“I do not care – when I am being killed as a Muslim -
In which way I die for the sake of Allah
Because this is for the Essence of God, and if He wishes
He will bless my torn limbs and broken joints”

⁴⁴ *Itqan al-San’ah fi Tahqiq ma’na al-Bid’ah*, p. 17 – 27

CHAPTER FOUR: A GIFT

(Comprising pages 42-51 of the original book. Translated by Mahendo Hamisi)

This is a gift to Isma‘īl ‘Amr bin San‘ānī and others who claim that there is no benefit in bid‘ah at all.

Allah says: “Then in their wake We followed them up with others of our Messengers: We sent after them Jesus the son of Mary and bestowed on him the Gospel; and We ordained in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy. But the monasticism which they invented, We did not prescribe for them: (We commanded) only the seeking of Allah’s Good Pleasure; but that they did not foster as they should have done. Yet We bestowed, on those among them who believed, their (due) reward, but many of them are rebellious transgressors.”⁴⁵

Qurtubī commented (on the verse as follows): **“But the monasticism which they invented”**- that is, by themselves. Qatādah said: “The monasticism that they invented rejected women and adopted monk’s cells.” A marfū‘ tradition states: “They retreated to the deserts and mountains.” **“We did not prescribe (it) to them”**: That is, we did not obligate and order them to do it. “(We commanded) only the seeking of Allah’s Good Pleasure.” It is said that the exception here [i.e. only] is incomplete and the implication (of the missing grammatical component) is : “We did not prescribe it to them but they invented it seeking the pleasure of Allah.” **“But that they did not foster as they should have done”**- that is, they did do establish it as truly as it should have been established. And this is specific- because some of them did not observe it correctly, but rather used it to assume leadership among people and consume their wealth.

Then he said: “The third issue: This verse points to the fact that everything developed after what is clearly prescribed has been laid down is an innovation. It is desirable for one who has invented something good to be continuous therein and not turn away towards its opposite.

Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī- whose name was Šuddī bin ‘Ujlān, said: “Did you not innovate the group tarāwīh prayer in Ramaḍān which was not prescribed for you. Fasting was prescribed for you- so continue in the group prayer that you were doing and do not leave it. Indeed, people of the Banī Isrā‘īl innovated practices which were not prescribed by Allah. They hoped thereby for Allah’s pleasure but did not observe as it truly should be observed. Allah found fault with their abandoning (of its true spirit) and He said: “But the monasticism which they invented, We did not prescribe it for them: (We commanded) only the seeking of Allah’s Good Pleasure; but that they did not foster as they should have done.”

I (the author) say: From this we understand the error of Quranic commentator ibn Kathīr when he said on this subject: “but that they did not foster as they should have done”- that, they did not hold on to it as it truly should have been done. This was an error from two points of view: (1) inventing something in Allah’s religion which He did not order (2) in not adhering truly to something that they claimed would bring them closer to Allah, the Honoured, the Glorious.”

⁴⁵ Quran 57:27

[end of quote]. Now, if this was the case- how can he blame them for abandoning a bid'ah when such abandonment is fundamentally deemed to be praiseworthy! If he had relied upon what the Companion Abū Umāmah al-Bāhilī, Allah be pleased with him, had said then that would have been correct. And Allah knows best.

Bukhāri relates Mujāhid, through a chain reaching ibn 'Umar, Allah be pleased with both of them, on the chapter concerning the Ḍuḥā ṣalāh as saying: “Urwa bin al-Zubayr and I [Mujāhid] entered the mosque and 'Abdullāh ibn 'Umar was there sitting towards the cell of 'Āishah. People were performing the Ḍuḥā ṣalāh and we asked him about it. He replied: “An innovation.”

Shaykh 'Abdullāh Maḥfūz said: “It is certain that he could never mean by this a blameworthy bid'ah. The evidence for this is that he did not prevent them from performing this prayer. It is also through the evidence narrated by ibn Abī Shaybah- through a rigorously authenticated chain as Hafīz says- that he (ibn 'Umar) said: “What an excellent innovation” as his father had said of the tarāwīḥ. He saw, as the Khalīfah had seen- that bid'ah is of two kinds: praiseworthy and blameworthy. That which is good, which is not in conflict with the Sharī'ah, and does not contravene any prohibitions is praiseworthy. That which is other than this is the intent of the ḥadīth of Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him (i.e. “every innovation is a misguidance.”) Given this, the ḥadīth in his opinion was specified by innovations allowed by the Sharī'ah. It [the bid'ah] mentioned in the ḥadīth is a misguided innovation that contravenes the explicit texts and is in conflict with that which is legislated. Likewise, it is a Sunnah and manner of Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, to accept that which is beneficial into Islam. Abdur Razzāq narrates- through a rigorously authenticated chain as mentioned by Ḥāfīz- that ibn 'Umar said “Uthman was killed and no one praised it- and people did not bring anything new that was more beloved to me than that (i.e. the non-praising)”.

Leaving off is not a ruling in the Sharī'ah

Some people are happy to rush into judging everything that Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, did not do as rejected. And with harsh severity they declare it as a bid'ah that was not done by Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him. They, of course, exclude the things of this world, so that they have fast cars, good salaries and fancy houses. And they converse about matters of the world with expertise with the aim advancing in it.

They also make exclude the well-known customary means by which they can attain these ends. So they search after certificates and authorization from others. They will not study under those who cannot give him this certificate, even if he happens to be a great scholar.

They, similarly, exclude [from the notion of bid'ah] the organization of the different grades at school, the subjects taught there, the administration of written and oral examinations, the ways to assess whether a student passes or fails, the year plan, rules of expulsion and so forth. They do not prevent - Praise be to Allah!- the right and duty of Muslims to progress in the different man-made sciences and excel others in obtaining the means of strength, in politics, in administration, in establishing factories and industries and excellence in all fields permitted to pursue, there being no danger in these.

I say: They make these exceptions and they say that Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, did none of the things that I have mentioned (previously in the book). And after the scholars have discussed (the above objections) with them they say, like the majority of scholars- and how excellent is what they say!-“Bid‘ah refers to only things that are innovated in religion.”

We have earlier expounded, with many proofs, that something innovated in the religion which is in agreement with the principles of the Sharī‘ah is acceptable. Nothing remains except for them to accept and return to this perspective. May Allah protect the believers from quarreling which muddles thought, leads to conflict and results in dissension and the exchange of insults as opposed to the realization of brotherhood for the sake of Allah, the Exalted, and co-operating in righteousness and piety as commanded by Him.

Another matter remains, namely, Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, leaving off of a matter. What is the meaning of “leaving off” (al-tark)? And what is its ruling in the Sharī‘ah?

Al-Tark: It is the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, leaving off something and not doing it. It is also the pious predecessors leaving off something and not doing it without there being any textual prohibition in the matter, necessitating that such an action be seen as detestable or forbidden.

When the ‘ulamāh of jurisprudence (uṣūl ul fiqh) enumerate the kinds of legal rulings necessitated by Islamic law (ḥukm taklīfī) “leaving off” does not form part of them. In the “Al wajīz fī uṣūl istinbāt il-ahkām fil Sharī‘at il Islāmīyyah” legal rulings are divided into seven divisions: compulsory (fard)⁴⁶, compulsory (wājib)⁴⁷, recommended (mandūb), forbidden (muḥarram), greatly detestable (makrūh taḥrīmī)⁴⁸, detestable (makrūh tanzīhī) and permitted (mubāḥ). Many scholars in this field have made it five: compulsory, recommended, permitted, detested and forbidden. And none of them make “leaving off” one of these categories. So how can some colleagues rush into saying that the ruling concerning actions which are left off is that they are an innovation!

In reality, the basic ruling regarding an act which is left off is that it is permitted, or it may become preferred or recommended. And we mean by an act which has been left off (al-matrūk) - as we have said previously- a matter which has not been explicitly prohibited by Islamic law. If this was the case then it would be detestable or forbidden.

1. The leaving off of an act which is permitted such as in matters of eating, drinking, transport and habitation. No one can claim that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, did every permitted thing and that which he left alone in this regard was not permitted.
2. The leaving off of matters in things that are preferred and recommended. Here there are many things that have been presented which the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, used to like on the basis of his confirmation of such things among his Companions, without he himself- my mother and father be

⁴⁶ Compulsory based on incontrovertible evidence (one who denies this is a kāfir)

⁴⁷ Compulsory based probable evidence (one who denies this is disobedient (fāsiq) but not a kāfir.

⁴⁸ If done, its liable to punishment unlike the next one

sacrificed for him!- doing all such acts. Examples here include the recital of Sūrah Ikh̄lās in every raka‘ah of the Jumu‘ah ṣalāh. Similarly, there are so many litanies that have been transmitted from him, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and he was not continuous in all of those. This is because such continuance would have taken up much of his time while he, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, had many other responsibilities.

3. Leaving off that constitutes a recommended practice (masnūnah) as it involves removing a difficulty off the Ummah or fear that it will be a farḍ upon them. Examples here include the tarāwīḥ prayer in congregation. The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, prayed a number of raka‘āt on one of the nights of Ramaḍān. A group of Companions prayed with him. The following night, when the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah, prayed these raka‘āt the great majority of Companions joined him. On the third or fourth night the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, did not emerge so his Companions could not pray with him. They waited a long time for Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, without any result. When he did emerge he said to them: “I noticed your fervour, but I feared this prayer would become compulsory on you. So pray, oh people, in your homes.” This narration is to be found in the Ṣiḥāḥ and the Sunan.”

Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, praised Bilāl, Allah be pleased with him, and asked him: “Inform me of the most hopeful deed you have done after embracing Islam for I heard the sound of your footsteps in Paradise.” He replied: “I have performed nothing more hopeful than the fact that whenever I perform ablution, whether day or night, I pray (ṣalāh) afterward as much as Allah has written for me.”

Abū Dāwūd, Tirmidhī and ibn Mājah narrate that the Prophet answered the call of nature. Then ‘Umar came behind him with a jug of water. The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, asked: “What is this?” He replied: “This is water so that you may make wuḍū.” Allah’s Messenger, Allah be pleased with him, said: “I have not been commanded that after I answer the call of nature I should take wuḍū. But if I were to do so it would be a sunnah.”

Ibn ‘Abbās, Allah be pleased with both of them, related that food was brought to Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, after he had finished answering the call of nature. They asked: “Should we bring you water to perform ablution?” He replied: “I have been ordered to take wuḍū when I stand for ṣalāh.” Narrated in the four Sunan and classed by Tirmidhī as a ḥadīth ḥasan. Bukhari and others related from ‘Āishah, Allah be pleased with her, who said: “Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon, used to leave off acts although he loved those acts being done out of fear that people would perform them as an obligation (farḍ). He did not make a litany of God’s glorification at the time of Duḥā on a continuous basis although I have.” Muslim narrated her as saying: “Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, used to make four raka‘āt of the Duḥā prayer and used to increase it as Allah willed.” This points to the fact that Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, did not persist in the Duḥā Salāh. As Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī, Allah be pleased with him, said: “The

Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, used to perform it until we used to say that he does not leave it off. And he used to leave it off until we used to say that he does not perform it.”

4. The leaving off of things that are forbidden. There is no scope in this regard as they are forbidden by explicit texts.

Shaykh ‘Abdullah as-Saḍīq, in his fine treatise *Husn ut tafahhum wal dark li mas’alatil tark* says the following:

“If the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, left off something, it is treated in relation to various aspects without any of them falling under the category of the forbidden.

1. The leaving off may have been a customary act. A roasted lizard was presented to the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him. He extended his noble hand to eat from it when it was said: “It is a lizard.” He then stopped. He was asked: “Is this forbidden?” He replied: “No, but it is not found in my land and I feel that I have no liking for it.”

This ḥadīth is in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn* and constitutes evidence for two issues. One: that his leaving off something, even after originally having accepted it, is not evidence that it is forbidden. Two: Something that is deemed dirty is not (necessarily) viewed as forbidden as well.

2. The leaving off may have been out of forgetfulness. The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, forgot to do something in ṣalāh. He was asked: “Did something happen to the ṣalāh?” He replied: “I am a human being. I forget like you forget. So when I forget remind me.”
3. The leaving off that is due to fear that it will be made obligatory on his ummah. For example, he left off the Ṣalāh of tarāwīḥ when the Companions gathered to pray it with him.
4. The leaving off of a matter without thinking much of it and because of something unanticipated. (For example), he, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, used to give the khutbah for Jumu‘ah on a palm stump and did not concern himself with standing on a chair during that time. When it was suggested to him that he lecture from a pulpit (minbar) he agreed and established it for it could project the voice further. The Companions also suggested to him that they make a clay bench upon which he could sit so that foreign delegates could recognize him. He agreed with them and this was not contemplated previously by him.
5. The leaving off of a matter because they fall under general Quranic verses and aḥadīth. An example would be his leaving of the Ṣalāh of ḍuḥā and many other recommended practices (mandūbāt) because they all contained under Allah’s Command: “And do good so that you may prosper.” There are many examples in this regard.
6. The leaving off of a matter out of fear that it will change the hearts of his Companions or [at least] some of them. The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said to ‘Ā’ishah, Allah be pleased with her: “Had it not been for your nation having recently emerged from unbelief, I would have destroyed the House and built it anew upon the foundation of Ibrāhīm, upon whom be peace. For indeed the Quraysh restricted its building.” This is in the *Ṣaḥīḥayn*. So he, the Salutations and

Peace of Allah be upon him, left off destroying and rebuilding the House in order to preserve [the feelings] of his Companions new to Islam from among the people of Makkah.

The leaving off of the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, has other aspects of which those who follow the books of Sunnah are aware. There is nothing to be found in any ḥadīth or athar (saying of a Companion) declaring that the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah, left off something because it was forbidden.

He (Shaykh ‘Abdullah as-Ṣadīq) continues: Leaving off is not evidence for something being forbidden, a point I confirmed in the book “Al Rad al-muḥkam al-matīn”. This is what I said there:

“Leaving off by itself is not proof that something is forbidden, if not accompanied by an explicit text indicating such prohibition. The most that we can say is that it indicates that such leaving off is permitted. If that left off act is forbidden, then this is not deduced from leaving off in itself. It is deduced from evidence that points to its prohibition. Then I found out that Imām Abū Sa‘īd bin Lubb also mentioned this principle. He said in his refutation of those who detest the du‘ā following the ṣalāh: “The most that one who disavows the supplication that follows the daily prayers can say is that its adherence in this manner was not a practice of the pious predecessors- if such transmission is indeed assumed to be true. It is not compulsory to follow whatever has been left off. [What is meant by leaving off] is permission to leave off and its annulment as an obligation. This is especially so for something like supplication which has comprehensive roots in Islamic law.”⁴⁹

Ibn Qayyim said: “As for the recital of the Quran and voluntarily gifting the reward of its recitation to [the deceased] without taking payment, this will reach [the deceased] in the same way as the reward of fasting and Ḥajj [reaches him]. It may be objected: “This was not known among the pious predecessors. It is not possible to transmit this from even one of them despite their intense proclivity to the good. The Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, did not instruct them in this. However, he instructed them with regard to supplication, seeking forgiveness, charity, Ḥajj and fasting [as rewards that can be given to the deceased]. If he had instructed them with regard to [such] reward in regard to Quranic recitation then they should have certainly done it. The answer is that the origin of this question recognizes the reaching of the reward of fasting, supplication and seeking forgiveness [to the deceased]. Then he continues: “Anyone who says that no one among the Salaf [conveyed the reward of recital to the deceased] has said something without knowledge. It is an argument for the denial [of a practice] that he cannot know [happened or did not happen]. He cannot know if the Salaf carried out the practice or witnessed it among those in their presence. The knowledge of especially their intent and objectives is with the Knower of the Unseen.”

An appropriate tradition:

⁴⁹ Pp 140-142

Dawūd bin Abī Šāliḥ said : Marwān approached one day and found a man laying his face down on the grave. He asked the man if he knew what he was doing and when he came closer he saw that the man was Abū Ayyūb. He replied: “Yes, I came to the Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and I did not come to the grave. I heard Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah upon him, say: “Do not cry about the religion if its guardian is suitable. But cry for it if its guardian is unsuitable.”

Shaykh Dr Yūsuf al-Qarḏāwī says: “Anyone with a different point of view, or different path, from these people will be accused of group-consciousness, or innovation, or disregard for the Sunnah or other negative traits. They do not simply confine holding a poor opinion of others to the ordinary person. But they go beyond that in attacking the elect and the elect of the elect. A jurist, propagator of Islam or intellectual would be on the verge of succeeding when they come under attack from these people’s accusations.

I say: And how they abuse others! One of them said to those who disagreed with him: “May Allah paralyze your hands and cut off your tongue.” Another said to someone else: “Liar and falsifier.” They accuse many Muslim scholars of innovation and other charges of greater magnitude. And there is no strength or power except with Allah.

CHAPTER FIVE: COMMANDING GOOD AND PROHIBITING EVIL

(Comprising pp52-78 of the original book. Pages 52-61 was translated by Roshaan Dawood. Pages 62-71 was translated by Soraya Salie. Pages 71-78 was translated by Firdaws Chilwan)

Commanding good and prohibiting evil is one of the foundations and pillars of Islām. Indeed, there are numerous Sharī'ah (Islamic law) texts which point out the necessity of commanding good and prohibiting evil. The Ummah (people/community) that does not consult its individuals concerning commanding good and prohibiting evil will clearly be at a great loss. And how can a peaceful community (people) who reject evil, deal with the trials of those among them who are sinful and rebellious? Verily, the Prophet (saw) describes more accurately in a hadīth as to the meaning of the above, and also mentions the evil result (bad end) of the one who is wrapped up in the darkness of evil and those whom Allāh has pardoned:

‘An al-Nu mān ibn Bashīr (ra) said that the Messenger of Allāh (swt) said: “The example of a person abiding by Allāh’s orders and restrictions in comparison to those who violate them, is like the example of those persons who drew lots for their seats in a boat. Some of them got seats in the upper part and the others in the lower. When the latter needed water, they had to go up to bring water (and that troubled the others), so they said: “Let us make a hole in our share of the ship (and get water) saving those whom are above us from troubling them. So, if the people of the upper part left the others to do as they suggested, all the people of the ship would be destroyed, but if they prevented them, all would be safe.” Transmitted by: al-Bukhārī and Tirmidhī.

The ‘Ulamā’ (Scholars) mention that it is necessary to regard the culture of the people when commanding good and prohibiting evil, i.e. after the general practice of the people has been established. The ‘Ulamā’ say: ‘It is necessary for the ‘Ulamā’ to agree upon that which is to be classed as good and and that which is to be classed as evil so that the appropriate action can be taken in this regard. As to what falls within the sphere of ijthād (independent judgement in a legal or theological question)- and regarding which the ulama differ- this does not necessitate commanding the good or prohibiting the evil. Each mujtahid will be responsible for his decision and he will present evidence in support of his decision, and he will lead (or be an example) by way of his words and actions.

Commanding the good and prohibiting evil has to be done in a wise manner- a manner duly acquainted with the ways of establishing such good and prohibiting such evil, a manner cognizant with human psychology.

The ‘Ulamā’ say that a man came to the Khalīfah al-Ma’ mūn, and he said to him: “Oh Commander of the faithful! I am going to tell you something which is going to be harsh, so don’t get angry.” Ma’ mun said: “Don’t do it because Allah sent someone better than you to someone worse than me. Allah sent the Prophet’s Musa and Harun to Fir’awn and instructed

them: “And speak unto him a gentle word, that perhaps he may heed or fear.” (Al-Qur’ān 20:44).

I (author) said: “To the one who is in charge (he who commands and prohibits) the above is a beautiful lesson and good advice:

“And he, to whom wisdom is granted, is indeed granted abundant good.” (Al-Qur’ān 2:26).

And after this introduction I want to mention some of the bid’ahs upon which the ‘ulama and propagators of the religion need to agree as being prohibited since these are blameworthy innovations concerning which there cannot be silence:

1. The innovation of separating religion from the state was flung on to us by others but which have been latched on to by some Muslims. Its form is that the ‘Ulamā’ and the rulers agree between themselves that their duties will be divided. The ‘Ulamā’ will provide guidance in the religious sphere as well as command the good and forbid the evil while the rulers will have complete sovereignty and power over the economy, politics and administration etc. However, the Prophet (saw) combined religious and state authority and he was a guide in economic, politics, in religion and propagation, and as such he was the perfect example: “for those who look forward to (meeting with) Allāh and the Last Day” (Al-Qur’ān 60:6). Another evil practice upon which we cannot be silent until it is removed by Allah’s permission is that of building interest-based banks in Muslim countries- the buildings of which are even taller than minarets!. Interest/usury is one of the major sins, even worse than fornication and adultery (may Allāh protect us from these evils). And, similarly, we need to address the issue of gambling dens, brothels and other such vices in Muslim states.
2. Another blameworthy bid’ah is to restrict Islam to a specific inclination, a specific ideology or to a few specific issues and to claim only these as Islam or to what matters to Muslims today. On the contrary, Islam is a broad religion into which various ideas, views and inclinations enter, even if the ‘ulama differ concerning some of these. Islām as a religion is a way of life and it is the answer to all questions. It is the solution to every problem, and it is the guiding principle to the good in everything. If there is such restriction taking place, it is incumbent on the ‘ulama to rectify this notion and inform people concerning Islam’s vastness.
3. Another blameworthy innovation is to treat Islām as a table laden with food. The Muslim can take from it as he wishes, or believe of it whatever he wants, or leave off of it as he desires due to the following the maslahah (public good), or what is claimed to be the needs of the age, or out of supposed courtesy to others. These kind of Muslims can be compared to the kind of Jews Allah, the Exalted, describes when He says::

“Then do they believe in apart of the scripture and reject the rest? Then what is the recompense for those who do so among you, except disgrace in the life of this world, and on the Day of Resurrection they shall be consigned to the most grievous torment. And Allāh is not unaware of what you do”

(Al-Qur’ān 2:85).

Such Muslims have a poor understanding of the the hadīth of the Prophet (saw):
 “If I command you with a matter, carry out of it what you are able to do”.

The “what you are able to do” in this hadīth refers to the recommended and Sunnah acts. It is not permissible for one to abandon any of the Farāid or Wājibāt, because the Sharī’ah necessitates it. There are plenty of opportunities for co-operation between ‘Ulamā’ in this sphere. And Allah is the Granter of success..

4. Of the bid’ah that is rejected is to hold the opinion that the texts revealed regarding the disbelievers and polytheists also apply those Muslims who differ in some respect or another or have committed some wrongs. This is a great disaster. Some of the Muslims firmly believe that many Muslims are polytheists because they do certain deeds out of ignorance but with a good intention. However, it should be noted that the polytheists and disbelievers do it with the belief and knowledge of their gods. Allāh says in the Qur’ān:

“And most of them believe not in All’āh except that they attribute partners to Him” (Al-Qur’ān 12:106)

Regarding this category of Muslims – Allāh forbid-, Al-Qurtubī says on a commentary of the above verse: Allāh revealed this verse regarding a people who affirmed that He created them and everything else and yet they believed in idols. Among them were good fighters and civilized people. Some of “The People of the Book” committed polytheism, yet they had īmān, they believed in Allāh but rejected the Prophet Muhammad (saw).

Muslims throughout history suffered at the hands of zealots who though ignorance and delusion deemed other Muslims committed sins, or had different beliefs, to be unbelievers and fought them. It started with the Kharijites and the Rafidites (Shi’ite sect) and their arrival into the religious community. They forbid any form of transaction with people who were not of their group. They issued these ignorant rulings without any hesitation or attention to other viewpoints.

Some of them said: Verily the one who abandons his salāh has become an unbeliever and has abandoned his religion. And it is not permissible for his wife to be with him, and he will have no authority over her and abandons his children, etc. A more preferable opinion is that of the Hanābilah, like Ibn Qudāmah who writes in the book “Al-Mughni, and it is also the opinion of Imām Mālik and Shāfi’ ̄: the person who does not make salāh due to laziness given respite until the last and if still does not make salah his punishment is death but he will not be out of the fold of Islām. Imām Abū Hanīfah is of the opinion that such a person should be hit until the blood flows and that he should be imprisoned until he performs salāh. We have a number of times witnessed the one who abandons his salāh being lashed in the courtyard of the Masjid al-Nabawī and not killed. However, if he rejects his salāh entirely and insistently, then indeed he is a disbeliever, just like the one who rejects the necessary commands of the religion. If one presents such opinions (as above) and then says that it is his opinion that the one who abandons salaah under any circumstances is an unbeliever, this will not matter since it serves as a warning against those who abandon their salāh due to laziness since perhaps this might lead to disbelief if one persists in going astray, Allāh forbid!

The sinner in this case is not to be classified as a disbeliever (unless he declares his sinning as lawful).. The Scholars of the Ahl al-Sunnah have agreed upon this decision. The Muslims who disobey Allāh and die without repentance are not placed in the fire of hell forever. Allāh shows mercy to this person, because Allāh states in the Qur' ān: “Verily, Allāh forgives not that partners should be set up with Him (in worship), but He forgives except that (anything else) to whom He wills” (Al-Qur’ān 4:48)

5. Another blameworthy bid’ah is to engage in backbiting, especially of the ‘ulama, under the guise of giving good advice and to persist in mentioning things about them which are irrelevant, leading to lying and attributing statements and opinions to them which they did not make or incline towards, not even for a day. And we found this in some biographies of the great ‘ulama such as Imām Abū Hanīfah, Mālik, Shāfi’ī, Ahmad, al-‘Ash’arī, Bukhārī, ibn Taymiyyah and others. When one reads, for example, the book “The virtues the three fuqaha Imāms” one finds a bit of this. When one reads “The history of Baghdad” one comes across a lot of this!

How repulsive it is to mention these shortcomings in public gatherings and from the pulpit. It is the duty of the ‘Ulamā’ to check and verify their information. They have to be wary of slander, and they should avoid the lies and falsities in what they come across in books which have not been verified, and they should not act upon this false information. Allāh forbids us to listen and to follow these people, as He (swt) states:

“And obey not everyone who swears much-and is considered worthless, a slanderer going about his calumnies” (Al-Qur’ān 68:10-11).

They (the tale bearers) might find some ‘uilama giving ear to them since deprecating other ‘ulama and perhaps even call to persist in these-since the deprecation of the ulama will show his sickness for all to see. However, the more worthy ‘Ulamā’ first established the truth in what they read and hear and they comply with the words of Allāh:

“Oh you who believe! If a rebellious evil person comes to you with news, verify it, lest you harm people in ignorance, and afterwards you became regretful to what you have done” (Al-Qur’ān 49:6).

People should be cautioned against this slander, Praise be to Allāh!

The statements of the hypocrites and the betrayal of the slanderers result in the restriction of sustenance, the taking of life and the loss of safety on the part of those who now have to fear disagreeing with some other ‘ulama on an issue. And this while the disbelievers live in peace in their lands!

6. Of the blameworthy bid’ah that are necessary to mention are those found in the books of knowledge where the faults of ‘Ulamā’ and transmitters of hadith among the venerable ancestors (al-Salf al-sālīh) without due mention of those who agreed with them . Al-Dhahabī (ra) said in a biographical notice of Ibān bin Zayd al-Atār: “Abū al-Farj ibn al-Jawzī in his Dua’fa marked him as a weak narrator, and he (ibn Jawzi) did not mention those who confirmed him (as a good narrator). This is one of the faults in his work which points out the faults but is silent about that which is positive.”

I read that one of the contemporaries who, when providing a biographical notice for Abū Hanīfah (ra), said: “Al-Nasā’ī said that Abū Hanīfah (ra) was weak and he44

remained silent (on the matter), except on those hadīth which were accounted for by his Shaykh. And he added: They made weak his hadīth with regard to his memory.”

Shaykh`Abd al-Fatāh responded to this statement and he said Allāh guarded and protected him after he recounted the words of a man: “They made weak his hadīth with regards to his memory”. This is contradictory to scholarly integrity as it is a statement of a weak narrator and it is not correct to rely upon it. Shu`bah bin al-Hajjāj said regarding Abū Hanīfah (ra): “Verily, by Allāh! His understanding was good and his memory was good”.

Two highly regarded teachers of Imam Bukhari’s - who, by consensus, surpassed him in this knowledge- made similar comments. Imam Yahyā bin Mu`ayn said with regards to the Imām Abu hanifah: “He was a reliable narrator and I did not hear any weak narration of him”. And `Ali al-Madanī said that: “Al-Thawr ī and Ibn al-Mubārak narrated from him (Imam Abu Hanifah) and he was reliable and there is no doubt about that.”

The exacting jurist Shaykh Muhammad Awwamah, in his comments to the biographical notice of Imam Abu hanifah to be found in the “Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb” – which Shaykh Awwamah himself printed from an original copy in the handwriting of the author himself- stated: “Al-Mīzzi (the author) spent three pages, comprising 50 long lines each. This was equivalent to the biographical notice given to Imam Shafī`i and far more than the space accorded to Imam Malik. Among that which this notice contains is the following statement by Dāwūd bin `Abd Allāh al-Kharibi, one of the trustworthy believers, who said: “It is necessary upon the Muslim people to make du`ā to Allāh for Abū Hanīfah (ra) in their salāh .He mentioned how he preserved the Sunnah and fīqh for his people. In the book; “Sair `alam al-Nubala” Vol: 2 p.104, Abī Mu`miyah Muhammad bin Khazim al-Darīr one of the trustworthy men, said: “Love of Abū Hanīfah (ra) is part of the sunnah”.

Ibn Hajr and those before him Al-Mīzzi and Al-Dhahabī - they were the A`immah who were specialists in their disciplines at the time, and not one of them mentioned even a slight indication in terms of a shortcoming which brings doubts with regards to Abū Hanīfah (ra) in terms of his character, memory or leadership. There is nothing mentioned in these authors’ three books or any other book of theirs. . It was concluded in the literary work “al-Tahdhīb” : “The virtuous\glorious deeds of Abū Hanīfah (ra) are numerous indeed, may Allāh be satisfied with him and grant him a high place in paradise, āmin.” Al-Dhahabī concluded in the book “al-Sayr” Vol:2 p.403, by stating: “His life needs to be written in two volumes, may Allāh be pleased with him and have mercy on him”.

One must look at the book “Al-Albāni, its anomalies\irregularities and mistakes” by the muhaddith of India, Mawlanā` Hubayb al-Rahmān al-`Adhami, which addresses those- particularly one of the contemporary scholars- who wish to cast doubt on the status of Imam Abu Hanifa- and he does so in the manner of the experts in Hadith, may Allāh reward him with good.

7. Of the bid'ah that are necessary to mention as prohibited is: joining anything other than Allāh (swt) with Him (swt) out of ignorance. An example being (to believe) that sustenance he has is due to his salary; that were it not for that he would have starved; ; that so and so has accomplished something for you and had it not been for this the result would have been such and such; and were it not from his savings he would have been unable to afford things now that their prices have risen. There are many other such examples where matters are not related to Allah, the Exalted Who is in truth the One Who gives as He wishes. He (swt) HE determines as He wishes: be it (you are provided) through the hand of a friend or of an enemy, through one beloved or one despised. He is the One Who subjects some people in service to others through His Grace and Generosity. Relating things to their secondary causes is not prohibited. But it is incumbent that we not forget, under any circumstances, the Causer of causes. He is the One Who does as He wishes. And in a noble hadīth it is narrated:

“The one who is not thankful to man is not thankful to Allāh” Transmitted by: al-Bukhārī and Tirmizī, and it is a good hadīth.

And Allāh(swt) states:

“Give thanks to Me and your parents- unto Me is the Final destination” (Al-Qur’ān 31:14).

The ‘Ulamā’ and propagators should guide those who are at fault and ignorant to the truth by educating and instructing, rather than labeling them as mushrik as this would only widen the door of controversy. This approach prevents ‘Ulamā’ from sharing in the reward when someone is guided through them. As it has been related in a hadīth:

“Even if a single man is led on the right path (of Islām) by Allāh (swt), through you, then that will be more better for you than red camels” And in another version it reads:

“It is better than the earth and all that is in it”

At the same time the ignorant people will also be prevented from returning to the truth and both sides would then lose. Allāh(swt) protect us from that!

8. Of the bid'ah is that which some of the ignorant people do when visiting the grave: They ask the dead to cure them of their illnesses and to fulfill their needs. They tie strings of material to the material of the graves of saints and pious people, with the intention of making barren women fall pregnant or that an estranged husband should return to his wife and love her again, and other examples like this. But if these ignorant people were to be asked in a mild tone: “Do they really believe that a pious man has power over anything after he has returned to the Mercy of Allāh?!” The answer to them is: “No, we believe that nobody else besides Allāh(swt), causes any real benefit or harm- none being able to cause such in their life or after their death. But this pious man is blessed, in that he has an honorable position in the sight of Allāh and we are asking him because of that.” The truth is with those who teach and say to them: “Ask Allāh the One. And it is acceptable if you ask Allah through the piety of that Friend of Allah (walī), or through the religious uprightness of the devout pious man that Allāh that fulfills your needs. By the Will of Allāh they will return to the lawful commands. They are thus being returned to something permissible, and they will be so returned Inshallah.

9. Of such bid'ah is that of adhering to the outer meaning of the texts (Qur'ān and established sunnah) regarding the Attributes of Allah. This applies to issues such as "Allah's sitting", His descent, His laughing and so on of the allegorical traits. This is because adhering to the outer meanings of the text in this regard- that is, to believe that they have the well-known meanings they have for human beings- is of bid'ah that leads to disbelief. This is since it describes God in terms of His creation and ignores other texts which point to His transcendence:

"There is none like unto Him (Allāh)"

Similarly, believing that these texts carry only one specific meaning, to cling on to this and hold that it does not intend anything else- this is fanaticism and it is a blameworthy bid'ah. This is since interpretation is a matter of supposition, and merely to suppose in regards to the Glorious Attributes of Allah is not permitted. It could be that our single interpretation of these verses could deviate from its true meaning intended by the Creator. And thus what this fanatic sees as its true meaning might be considered otherwise by someone else. Therefore, the Mufassir Al-Alūsī passed over a literal approach to these verses without specifying another meaning- in accordance with the position of the Maturidiyyah..

The other innovation connected to this area is to group all such descriptions together- as ibn Khuzaymah has done in his Kitāb al-Tawhīd- because such was not done by Allah's Messenger, the salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, nor by the Companions. Indeed, those who have grouped such descriptions together are the anthropomorphists and the innovators. Its grouping as such is the outcome whims and deceptive understanding.

Another innovation also connected to this area is making al-qiyās (analytical deduction) of them and, in so doing, affirming that which is not found in the primary texts such as asserting that there must be a forearm or upper arm or shoulder [to the Almighty] since these are inseparable parts of a hand. This is manifest anthropomorphism. Indeed, any research connected with such attributes and what they mean in themselves is a blameworthy innovation.

Al-Alūsī, after mentioning some of the textual attributes of Allāh (swt), like "Allāh (swt) sitting (on the throne)", said:

"The position of the salaf is that they affirm these attributes beyond human understanding. We are obligated with nothing other than to affirm these attributes but in a non-anthropomorphic sense in order that what is transmitted does not conflict with the intellect. In fact, it is also so that such transmission does not conflict with what else has been transmitted, such as Allah's saying: "Nothing is like Him" and "There is none like unto Him".

10. Amongst these innovations, in which the 'ulama and religious propagators need to cooperate in order to remove it from the minds of Muslims is the view that the three major

religions, i.e. Judaism, Christianity and Islam are in fact one religion, since the reality of religion is one and all members of these religions can agree on this, away from fanaticism and dispute.

The first person known to have advocated unity (between the three major religions) was Jamāl al-Dīn Asad al-Afghānī (1839-1897)- who advocated this following his Freemasonry ideology- and after him, his student Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905).

Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghani said:

“I consulted the people in the local community and enquired (from them) what was most important to them. Their strong passion was “The Religion”. So I acquired knowledge of the three major religions, researched it and considered (the teachings of) Mūsā, Īsā, and Muhammad (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him). I found that there existed (within the three religions) agreement in ideology and goals, and there was also in each (religion) some need to command towards good. It was apparent to me that the possibility of uniting these three religions does exist. I hurriedly formulated a plan of action detailing the method and theory to be applied and I identified communication of propagation (as the key).

I convened those who had diverse opinions, and reconciled and straightened out the confusing issues. I studied the people of the East, discovered their shortcomings and tried to find a cure for it. I found a remedy for the fighting and discord among the people. They (those who convened the meeting) came to an agreement about differences, without turning against their support base.”⁵⁰

Despite Al-Afghānī’s knowledge of the Islāmic ban on accepting the support of Jews and Christians, he nevertheless appointed Ya’qūb Sanū`, an Israeli Jew, as his assistant in this project. He also accepted support from Abū Nazārah Adīb Ishāq, a Lebanese Christian, whom he (Al-Afghānī) celebrated in an elegy⁵¹ in the “The firm Tie”, as well as Salīm Anjuwayrī, another Lebanese Christian, who published a paper, “Mirror of the East” by Ibrahīm al-Qayātī, on the recommendation of Al-Afghānī. He (Salim Anjuwayrī) clarified Al-Afghānī’s position in the latter part of this book, saying, “Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghani was appealing to the Freemasons, calling toward the unity of the three world religions under the slogan ‘equality, brotherhood and justice’”.

Those scholars, who knew Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghani well, played a significant role in his life. However, some parts of his life, relating to the true nature of the man, remained unknown to most people.

Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghani came from India to Egypt where he entered into official Freemasonry. He later left it and established a special Masonic Lodge.

Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghani’s call for the unity of the three major religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islām is not a strange concept. It is similar to the call of the Freemasons, and delaying a decision therein was harmful to Muslims, Christians, as well as Jews. However, whether or not Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghani was aware of their intention to destroy Islām, is another topic.

Further what is most harmful to this concept; i.e. the unity of the three religions, is in fact what was passed on by the close students of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghani.

⁵⁰ From a book ‘*Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn*’ written by Asfar Mahdī and his Persian friend
See also; ‘*Sahwah al-Rajlu al-Marīdu*’ (*Healing the Sick Man*) page 345.

⁵¹ Funeral song

The teacher, Mustafā Fawzī Ghazāl said, “In the latter part of 1888CE Mirza Bāqir returned to Beirut in order to visit his daughter, and there he met Shaykh Muhammad Abduh for the second time. He also met the long time servant of Al-Afghānī, Ārif Abū Turāb. The three of them reached an agreement to establish an organization, named “**The Commission for**

Unification and Approximation”

The aim of this association was to establish the approximation of the three divinely revealed religions namely, Islam, Judaism and Christianity, as well as speaking out against fanaticism in religion. They also intended to publish books in order to illustrate the spirit of justice and love within the three religions. In addition the association called for co-operation in removing European colonisation of the East, as well as communicating the truth of Islam to foreigners.

The association grew in the number of its intellectuals from diverse origin, i.e. Iranians, Turks, Indians, English, as well as Jews, amongst whom were, the priest, Isaac Taylor from London; minister, Mu’ayad al-Mulk from Tehran, Hasan Khan the Iranian ambassador in Istanbul, as well as Mr. Laynatar, inspector of schools in India. Mirza Bāqir and the priest, Isaac Taylor were amongst the foremost members, contributing to the organization with great enthusiasm, both in speech and writing.

It is said that Shaykh Muhammad Abduh, along with a group of ‘ulamā’ from Syria and Palestine had despatched a communiqué to the priest, Taylor regarding the matter of approximation that he was working on in London. When (the Ottoman) Sultan Abd al-Hamīd (1849-1918CE) came to know about this communiqué, he instructed his ambassador in London to ascertain and verify the names of those who had written it (the communiqué). After receiving the list of names the Sultan ordered the repudiation of these persons under any conditions. As a result Mirzā Bāqir was totally ostracized. He therefore returned to Iran where he later passed away sometime during the year 1890CE / 1307 AH or shortly thereafter.”

The second student of Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghani, Sa’d Zaghūlū said that, “My father reared me and my brothers, ‘Alī and Mahrūs, who were farmers, but Jamāl al-Dīn gave me a life in which I shared with Muhammad (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him), Ibrahim, Mūsā, and ‘Īsā (upon them be peace), the saints, and the pious.”⁵²

His tone suggested that he was referring to the three religions as one entity.

One of the learned scholars said that, “history departed with those who claimed it (i.e. claimants of unity in three religions) and no sign remains of it.”

I (the author) say, “Sadly it still remains leaving its mark and it surfaces from time to time, afflicting some Muslims”.

The people were well aware of the Cordova Convention, established by a French Muslim, Rajā’ Jārūdī, at which time he wished to combine the three religions. The people were also aware of someone who made a humiliating pact with the Jews, i.e. he tried to initiate a meeting between the Shaykh of al-Azhar, the notables of the Jews, and the Christians in the Sinai.

But what is more dangerous than (all of) the above is that a scholar propagated, “There is no Power and no Might, except with Allah”. This scholar was Dr Muhyī al-Dīn Abd al-Halim, a lecturer at the well-known Al-Azhar University in Cairo. He quoted the following āyah along with the previous āyāt (in support of his view); “O people of the Book! Believe in what We have now revealed confirming what was (already) with you”.

Thus, he insisted that the Book of Allāh emphasizes the reality of the oneness of religion, and that perhaps the theologians and scholars can agree on it, free from prejudice and dispute. He then made the following speech: “The letters that the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) despatched to the various established kingdoms of those who followed the divinely revealed religions, included words that conveyed the meaning of love and compassion.

⁵² *Zu`amā` al-Islāh*, Ahmad Amīn, p 293

The objective of the āyah under discussion is interfaith dialogue and encouraging the spirit of brotherhood for the sake of Allāh.

He concluded, “So when we make a comparison between the three great (books of) divine revelations we find that the foundation of all the religions is based on one and that its origin is one. So the Qur’an makes mention of and refers to the link between the (three) religions.”⁵³

I (the author) comment briefly, Allāh says: “Say: Oh People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but God, that we associate no partners with Him, that we erect not from among ourselves lords and patrons other than God. If then they turn back, say ye: ‘Bear witness that we (at least) are Muslims bowing to the will of Allāh’.”⁵⁴

Do we find (in this āyah) love and affection being mentioned toward them, or is it meant as a definite and general separation between Muslims and non-Muslims in respect of their religion?

Says Allāh, Glorified is He, in several verses of the Noble Qur’an:

“Oh, you who believe, take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors. They are but friends and protectors for each other, and he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship) is of them. Verily God guides not a people unjust”.⁵⁵

“Fight those who believe not in God, and the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by God and His Apostle, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth (even if they are) from amongst the people of the Book; until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued”.⁵⁶

“Say oh people of the Book! You have no ground to stand upon unless you stand fast by the Law, the Gospel, and the Revelation that have come to you from your Lord. It is the Revelation that comes to thee from thy Lord, that increases in most of them their obstinate rebellion and blasphemy. But sorrow thou not over (these) people without faith”⁵⁷

There are many other Qur’anic verses that express the order of shunning them.

The Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him), said:

“I swear by Him in whose Hands my life is, those of the Jews and Christians who listen to me, then do not believe in that which I have been sent with, they are indeed the inmates of the Fire” (narrated by Bukhārī and Muslim).

The one who rejects the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) is a disbeliever. Allāh Most High does not accept the disbeliever’s faith and his ibadāt (acts of worship) even if he clings truthfully to his own religion (as it was revealed), for as long as he does not believe in the final Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him). For certainly the final Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) is the one who distinguishes between mankind.

So unite in your opinion, oh you learned scholars, in one voice (against those who propagate unity in religion) and co-operate in disseminating the true teaching to mankind. Indeed Islām does not befriend other religions, nor do Muslims befriend non-Muslims, but they cling firmly together in their religion. They are not content with any other religion besides their own, and the degree of their holding fast (to their own) is not diminished under any circumstances.

Allāh Most High says, “So be steadfast as you have been commanded with those who (repent) are repentant with you”, and, “Hold fast unto that which has been revealed to you”.

Inform them that the difference between Islām and other religions is in the fundamentals of its creed. So if nothing prevents it, dispute with them in a beautiful manner, except with those who

⁵³ Sahīfah al-Ittihād, 6 Dhil-Qa’da 1409 AH.

⁵⁴ *Al-Qur’ān* 3:64

⁵⁵ *Al-Qur’ān* 5:51”

⁵⁶ *Al-Qur’ān* 9:29

⁵⁷ *Al-Qur’ān* 7:71

persist in their obstinacy. Those who attend religious conferences must solicit encouragement towards Islām for those simple minded and weak Muslims who consider their own creed and that of their enemies to be but one brotherhood.

When the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) came (with his message), the Jews stood firm on their principles; i.e. that Allah Most High is a father in some of their views; and they stood firm in their rejection of the propagation of Jesus (Peace be upon him) as well as that of our Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him), and they accused him (Jesus) of being illegitimate. So let them say what they say about Allāh Most High, He, Allāh says about them in the Qur’ān; they claim that Allāh has a body like all other (created) bodies and; they reject the final Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) and his prophet-hood to all creation.

When the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) came (with his message), the Christians stood firm on their principles of associating divinity with Jesus (peace be upon him). They also stood firm in their belief that Jesus (peace be upon him) was crucified by his enemies in order to redeem from the Fire all those who believed in him and his crucifixion, and thus safeguard humanity from the calamity of the original sin of Ādam (peace be upon him). May Allāh protect us!

The Jews and the Christians (both) reject the final Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) and his prophet-hood to all of humanity. Did these two religions change and turn towards unity and belief in the final Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him)? “The Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) who has been mentioned in their Books in the Torah and Injīl (the previous scriptures)?”

By Allāh No!

Or has anyone read that our Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) called for the assistance of the Jews and Christians in opposing the idolatrous Arabs or fire worshippers (Zoroastrians)?

By Allāh No!

Indeed we find that the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) disputed with the Christians of Najrān calling them toward monotheism and Islām until they were cut off. As Allāh Most High mentions in the Qur’ān, “The similitude of Jesus before God is that of Ādam. He created him from dust. Then said to him Be! And he was. The truth comes from God alone so be not of those who doubt. If any one dispute in this matter with thee now after (full) knowledge hath come to thee say! “Come: Let us gather together our sons and your sons, and our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then let us earnestly pray and invoke the curse of God on those who lie”.⁵⁸

So read the reality of those disputes, in the interpretation of these verses in Rūh al-Ma’ānī and others.

Inviting the notables of the Jews as well as the general public has at all times been (a call) towards acceptance of the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him), without consideration and affection for them in their disbelief under any circumstances. This is well known with no need for examples.

11. And what is even more dangerous than the previous allegations is to support the propagation introduced to us by the enemies of Islām, in order to destroy us. May Allah protect us!

These propagations include (amongst others) that the Jews, the Christians and the Sabians will be saved by Allāh Most High and that; the reward for their faith and their deeds will be the same

⁵⁸ *Al-Qur’ān* 3:59-61

as that of the Muslims without distinction, without them being required to accept Islam nor believe in the Prophet (the Salutations and peace of Allah be upon him).

Indeed one of them visited the West and he read them verses in the Book of Allāh Most High (the Qur’ān) to them, expressing that non-Muslims are the brothers of Muslims, despite their having previously embraced a divinely religion revealed by Allāh Most High.

I read something to this effect in the translation of the meanings of the Noble Qur’ān in the German language. They use the proof of Allāh Most High saying; “Surely those who believe [in the Oneness Allāh and His Messenger (the salutation and peace of Allah be upon him) and all that was revealed to him from Allāh], and those who are Jews, Sabians and Christians – whosoever believe in Allāh and the Last Day and do righteous deeds, on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve”⁵⁹

This is a very serious claim. It as though you are saying to our Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) that his calling the People of the Book to Islam, the battles against them when they refused to believe or give the jizyah were all futile- since they already have an accepted religion and will be saved by Allah. And if it as if you are saying to the Companions: “Until the day Judgment Day you should be calling people to their own heavenly religions! (and every one is upon the religion Allah has appointed for him).”

And , Allāh forbid, they will even say the following verse is incorrect: “Say oh People of the Book: Come to the word that is just between us and you. That we worship none but Allāh, the same, and that we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us take lords besides Allāh, then if they turn away, say, ‘bear witness that we are Muslims””

Oh scholars (of Islām) the Qur’ān carries a multitude of meanings. There is another interpretation of the verse: “Surely those who believe [in the Oneness Allāh and His Messenger (the salutation and peace of Allah be upon him) and all that was revealed to him from Allāh], and those who are Jews, Sabians and Christians – whosoever believe in Allāh and the Last Day and do righteous deeds, on them shall be no fear nor shall they grieve.”

The Prophet’s (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) interpretation of the Qurān is manifested in his speech, propagation, character, and actions, i.e. his Sunnah.

Thus the Muslims were through it (the Prophetic Sunnah) in possession of clear proof. Hereunder follows what is said about this verse by some of the later mufasssirin (exegesists /interpreters of the Qur’ān).

Ibn Kathir said, “With regard to the revelation of the verse, ‘O you who believe!’ al-Suddi said it was revealed regarding the companions of Salman al-Fārisī (may Allāh be pleased with him) who was speaking to the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) and told “They are of the people of the Fire”. Salman (ra) aid that they prayed and they fasted, and they believed in the Prophet’s coming.’ Salmān continued with his praise of them and the Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him) said, “Oh Salmān they are of the people of the Fire”. This was difficult for Salman so Allah revealed the above verse. So the belief required of the Jews is that they clung to the Torah and the teachings of Moses (peace be upon him) until the arrival of Jesus (peace be upon him). But once he came and they still clung on to their old teachings they were lost.

⁵⁹ *Al-Qurān* 2:63

And the belief required of the Christians is that they cling to the Gospel, the canonical law of Jesus (peace be upon him) until the arrival of Muhammad (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him). So whoever does not believe in Muhammad (SAW) is doomed.”

In my opinion (i.e. the author), this does not contradict the narration of Ibn `Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) in his commentary of the above verse that after it Allāh Most High revealed the following verse, “And whoever seeks a religion other than Islām, it will never be accepted of him, and in the Hereafter he will be of the losers”.

Ibn `Abbās (may Allah be pleased with him) further expounds saying that, this verse informs him that Allāh Most High accepts no other way (religion) nor deeds, except from those who accept the Shari`ah of Muhammad (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him). Indeed all of the previous peoples followed the prophets of their times whom Allah had placed on the path of guidance and salvation, as the Jews followed Moses (peace be upon him) and the laws of the Torah, in their time. But, he said, with the coming of Jesus (peace be upon him) it was compulsory upon the Jews to follow and obey him and his disciples, and the followers of his religion are the Christians.

Ibn Abbas concludes saying, “With the coming of Muhammad (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him), the seal of prophet-hood and the Messenger to all of humanity without exception, it was compulsory upon them (both Jews and Christians) to accept him in what he propagated, and to obey what he commanded, and to abstain from that which he prohibited. Indeed they are the true believers”.⁶⁰

Allāh Most High says in His Noble Book; “Say: oh mankind: I am sent unto you all, as the Apostle of God, to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. There is no god but He: It is He that gives both life and death. So believe in God and His Apostle, the unlettered prophet, who believes in God and His words: So follow him that ye may be guided”.⁶¹

I (the author) opine: religions are many, but belief is one, and every new religion abrogates the one before it, thus it is compulsory for the people present in that time to follow the existing and abrogating religion. The mission of our Prophet (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him), was the final (one) to mankind, and Allāh does not accept any other religion besides Islām and, He does not accept any other Shari`ah except the Shari`ah of Muhammad (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him).

Finally, it was previously clarified that, linguistically, the word bid`ah means an innovation without any preceding model or prototype. It was also noted that such innovations are incorporated into Islam under the general ruling of acting upon the good and steering clear of evil. The following is included among these:

- Institutions study and research of the various Islamic sciences and the compilation of books in those categories of sciences
- The compilation of the Book of Allah Most High into one mushaf (text) and its punctuation, vowelization and lettering, etc.

⁶⁰ Tafsir Ibn Kathīr (Abridged) Volume 1 pp. 71-72.

⁶¹ *Al-Qur`ān* 7:158

- The establishment of institutions for study of the Noble Qur'an together with the rules of Tajwid and the practice of it, as well as the teaching of the various modes of recitation
- protection of the Qur'an in its different divisions, themes and other facets
- establishment of institutions for the study and research of the various sciences of the Arabic language, servicing the study of the Qur'an and clarifying its meanings,
- care of the Arabic language in its arrangement, nuances and classification
- study and research of the classification of the ancient/early sciences
- concern with the unique biography of the Prophet Muhammad (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him), its compilation in books and theses and to ensure that this knowledge is disseminated to the people,
- establishment of specialised studies concerned with the biography of the Chosen Beloved (the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him),
- study of the complete history of Islam and the history of mankind in its various epochs and whatever else of these sciences and knowledge
- concern with the history of Islam and the general history of mankind.

No Muslim would that what we have enumerated above is not an innovation that has taken place after the time of Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him. But, I hasten to add, none would also say that they are what are intended when Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, said: "Every newly invented thing is a bid'ah, and every bid'ah is a misguidance."

The muhaddith and jurist, the pious and God-Fearing, the one one who invites to Allah with wisdom, the servant of the Pure Sunnah in the Masjid ul Haram and Holy Lands, and its servant in Indonesia and many Muslim lands, Dr Sayyid Muhammad ibn `Alawī al-Mālīkī al-Hasanī , may Allāh preserve him and increase his success, says in his beneficial and enjoyable book 'Mafāhīm Yajibu an Tasahhaha' ('Perceptions that must be rectified')⁶² :

"The necessary difference between legal and etymological meanings of "bid 'ah": Some of them criticize the division of "bid 'ah" into praiseworthy and blameworthy. And they severely repudiate those who make such a distinction. Indeed they charge them with sinfulness and deviation because they are in conflict with the clear pronouncement of Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, that: "Every innovation is a misguidance." This pronouncement in general and is clear in describing innovation as a misguidance.

Then we see that they say: "Is it proper, after this pronouncement by the one who brought the Sharī'ah that a mujtahid or jurist (faqīh) – whatever his level- comes and says: "No, no- not

⁶² The *Mafahim* was a response to a "Hiwar ma al Maliki" which criticized the standpoints of Sayyid Muhammad ibn 'Alawi.

every innovation is a misguidance. Rather, some of them are a misguidance, some of them are praiseworthy, and some of them are sinful.”?!)

In this way many people become deluded, shouting with those who shout, repudiating with those who repudiate.

One finds the majority of those who act in this way increasing- those who have not understood the objectives of the Sharī‘ah nor tasted the soul of the religion of Islam.

Then they do not hold steadfastly on to their position except for a little while when they are compelled into manufacturing an outlet to solve the difficulties that they encounter. They explain the situation they find themselves in as follows: it compels them to manufacture another means [of living]. If this was not the case he would not be able to eat or drink, or reside-indeed not even clothe him or herself. He would not be able to take leisure, or to marry, or to deal with himself, or his family, or his friends and associates and with society. Regarding this means he clearly says: “Bid‘ah is indeed divided in “religious” and “worldly” innovations.”!

Oh God! He has authorized playing these games with himself in order to manufacture this distinction or, at the very least, to manufacture this label.

Even if accept that a distinction in meaning [between the two] was made in the Prophetic era, it nevertheless remains that this labeling- “religious” and “worldly” was never present in the time of the Prophetic legislation.

So where did this division come from? And where did this innovated labeling emerge!

The one who conveyed the Sharī‘ah says: “Every innovation is a misguidance.” This is stated in absolute terms. But such a one [who makes the distinction] says: “No. Not all innovations are a misguidance in absolute terms. Indeed, bid‘ah is divided into two categories: religious, which is sinful bid‘ah, and worldly, which is acceptable.”

Here it becomes necessary that we explain an important issue- one by which many difficulties are removed. Its clarification will end confusion, if Allah wills. It is that the speaker here is the wise conveyer of the Law. His language is the language of Islamic law. There is no doubt that his speech must be understood at the level of the law with which he came.

If you know that “bid‘ah” in its essence is any thing that has been produced or manufactured without their being any precedent for this, then it cannot escape your understanding that the addition or blameworthy invention meant here is addition in the matter of religion in order for it to also become a matter of the religion. And the addition to the Sharī‘ah is in order for this addition to be regarded as an aspect of the Sharī‘ah, followed and practiced by its conveyer. This is what our Leader, the Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah, cautioned against when he says: “Whosoever invents something new in this matter of ours that which is not of it, will have it rejected.” The demarcating boundary in this subject area is his words: “In this matter of ours”.

For this reason: in our understanding the division of bid‘ah into praiseworthy and sinful is linked to none other than the linguistic meaning of bid‘ah which is defined purely as manufacture and invention. We do not doubt, all of us, that the legal (shar‘ī) meaning of

bid'ah is not only blameworthy, rejected and odious deviance and corruption. If those who repudiate [the distinction between praiseworthy and blameworthy bid'ah] understand this it will be apparent for them that the room for concurrence [between the two camps] is vast while the scope for controversy is narrow.

In addition to developing proximity between the various understandings, I see that those who repudiate the division are indeed repudiating legal innovation [al-bid'ah al-sharī'ah] due to their division of innovation into worldly and religious and their view that such a division is necessary [since the sharī'ah does not make a distinction between the "religious" and "worldly"].

Those who say that bid'ah can be divided into the praiseworthy and sinful see this as being due to its connection with the linguistic meaning of bid'ah. This is because they say: "Indeed, any addition to the religion and the Sharī'ah is a grave deviance and sin." There is no doubt among them concerning this. Therefore the dispute between the two camps is one of form [as opposed to essence].

However, I have not seen our brothers who repudiate the division of bid'ah into praiseworthy and sinful, and who say that it can be divided into "religious" and "worldly", fortuitously coming together in refining the expression. This is because when they rule that religious innovation is a misguidance- and this is the truth- and that worldly innovation is unproblematic, then they have erred. This is because they have ruled that all worldly innovation is allowed- and in this is a great danger. Corruption and disobedience comes about due to this. Therefore this issue needs to be explained carefully. It is that they should say: worldly innovation can be both good and sinful- as we see in reality and which none can deny except the blind ignoramus. And this additional explanation is indeed necessary. It suffices to realize this fact through the saying of the one who says bid'ah can be divided into praiseworthy and sinful! It is known that the intent of this division is linguistic- as previously said- and it is that which is expressed by those who repudiate them as "worldly".

This [statement of those who divide bid'ah into praiseworthy and sinful] is a very exacting and cautious view. It calls upon every new thing to be regulated and yield to the ruling of the Sharī'ah and the principles of the religion. It requires that Muslims subject everything new pertaining to them and that has been newly invented for both their general and specific worldly concerns, to the Sharī'ah. This is so that it can be judged in accordance with the Islamic ruling- whatever the innovation happens to be. And this cannot be realized except through the magnificent schemata developed by the Imams of jurisprudence (uṣūl).

May Allah reward the Imams of jurisprudence and for their employment of rigorously authentic, detailed terminology that leads to sound and accurate meanings- without any shortfalls, distortions or fanciful interpretations.⁶³

I [the author] say: Indeed, in dividing bid'ah into "religious" and "worldly" there is a great danger. It is necessary that a Muslim reflects thoroughly before speaking about it, let alone viewing it as Islamic. A few examples will clarify this.

⁶³ Mafāhīm yajibi an tuṣāhhihu, pp 113-115, from the edited text which contains many important additions and beneficial supplements. It was published by "Matba'ah al-masāḥah" in Khartoum in 1304.

Some people are of the view that authority in Islam be divided into: (1) a religious authority that commands the good and forbids from evil, that warns and advises, but who has no power, strength or ownership except that which he has been given and who, furthermore, does not participate in running the affairs of the people; (2) a worldly authority that counsels with and takes from the religious authority as it wishes, but which alone has [true] authority, strength and ownership and who has control over the affairs, of the people, including those charged with religious authority, according to what it views as the broader interests of society [maṣlahah]. This is in addition to its overall political authority over the internal affairs of a country and its foreign relations, according to what it again sees as the best interests. And the first consequential breach among Muslims in history was precisely this division between religious and worldly authority. There is no power nor strength except with Allah! As is well known, Allah's Messenger [the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him] and his khulafā who came after him had joined the two functions.

Then, based upon this distinction between worldly and religious authority in the lives of Muslims, some strange terminology began being applied in relation to Islam. For example: "The religion is for Allah, the country belongs to the people"; 'National Unity'; "The religious ruling-or ruling of the religious authorities- and the ruling of the state or of the authorities in worldly affairs." This then escalates into what is termed strife between the 'ulamā and the rulers. "The rulers have resources and strength and specific policies for administering the affairs of the country and for ordering the different relationships [to be found in society]. The 'ulamā lack these resources and strength. They are responsible for spreading the word of Islam and nothing else." Upon this imbalance is known who possesses the resources to finally end this dispute.

Similarly, the wording of the following ḥadīth has been misapplied: "You know best your worldly affairs." This poor, incorrect understanding of the ḥadīth has spread. It is an understanding that calls to independence from Islamic rulings in issues relating to administering the affairs of people and the different internal and foreign relationships. And there is no strength nor power except with Allah.

Some biased people have thought that Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, did not know much about worldly affairs- thus he did not even know what would let the date palm best thrive, even though it was the most fundamental tree and fruit in their lives. This is despite the fact that he was given knowledge that specialists in language, history, trade, administration and politics and specifically matters of the unseen, did not know. There are many examples of this but we will confine ourselves to the issue of the date palm.

Some of the delegation of 'Abdu'l-Qays heard him mention the following: "When it became clear to us that we should go to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, we travelled until we were in sight of our destination. We were met by a man on a young camel. He greeted us and we returned the greeting. Then he stopped and asked, 'Which tribe are you from?' We replied, 'We are the delegation of 'Abdu'l-Qays.' The man said, 'Welcome. I was looking for you. I came to give you good news. Yesterday the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, looked towards the east and told us, 'Tomorrow from that direction (i.e. the east) there will come the best delegation of

the Arabs." I spent the night preparing to leave. This morning I rode long and hard on my camel until dawn rose. Then I thought of returning, but I caught sight of the heads of your mounts.'

"Then he turned his mount with his reins and went back the way he had come until he reached the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, who was surrounded by his Companions from both the Muhajirun and the Ansar. The man said, 'May my father and mother be your ransom, I have come to give you the good news of the delegation of the 'Abdu'l-Qays!' The Prophet said, "'Umar, where did you see them?' He said, 'They are coming after me.' When he mentioned that, the Prophet said, 'Allah gives you good news of blessings.' The people prepared their places. The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, was sitting and took the end of his robe in his hand. He was lying on it with his feet stretched out.

"The delegation arrived and the Muhajirun and Ansar expressed joy at seeing them. When they (the delegation) saw the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, the Companions, they made

their mounts prance for joy. They came forward swiftly. The people made room for them while the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, remained reclining. Al-Ashajj, who is Mundhir ibn 'A'idh ibn Mundhir ibn al-Harith ibn an-Nu'man ibn Ziyad ibn 'Asar, stayed back. He rounded up their mounts and made them kneel. He removed their loads and collected their baggage together. Then he took out a bag which belonged to him, removed his travel garments, and put on a robe. Then he came walking slowly.

The Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, asked,, 'Who is your master and leader and the one in command?' They all pointed at al-Ashajj. He said, 'Is this man the son of your leaders?' They replied, 'His fathers were our masters in the time of the Jahiliyya and he led us to Islam.' When al-Ashajj arrived, he wanted to sit in a corner, but the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, sat upright and said, 'Here, Ashajj!' It was the first day that al-Ashajj was called that. He had got some redness in his skin when he was weaned. It was like a moon on his face. The Prophet seated al-Ashajj at his side and was kind to him and acknowledged his higher position over them. People came to the Prophet, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, to ask him things and he answered them.

After the conversation the Prophet asked, 'Is there someone with you who will give you anything to eat?' 'Yes,' they said. They got up quickly, every man going to his load. They brought a heap of dates in their hands and placed them on a mat before him. Also in front of him there was a palm branch less than two arm-spans and more than one span long. He was sorting them. When he had divided them up, he pointed with it to a pile of those dates and said, 'You called these Ta'dud?' 'Yes,' they said. He said, 'And you call these ones Sarafan?' 'Yes,' they replied. He continued, 'And you call these ones Barni?' 'Yes,' they said. He said, 'They are the best of your dates and the one beneficial for you.'

"One of the shaykhs of area said, 'They have the greatest blessing. We had a lot which we used to feed our camels and donkeys. When we returned from the delegation, that increased our desire for them and we asked for them until their price increased. We saw the blessing in them.'"⁶⁴

⁶⁴ *Al Adab al Mufrad* p225. The excellent commentator, Shaykh Hishām al-Burhānī has said that it has also been extracted by Ahmad [in his *Musnad*] in two places, one of which is in Volume 3, p432. [Translator: In conveying this *ḥadīth* we have relied, with a small adaptation, on the Aishah Bewley's translation of the

If this is the case, what is the intent of the words: “You know best your worldly affairs.”? The pious muḥaddith, the honourable and very learned Shaykh ‘Abdullāh Sirāj ud-ḍīn, may Allah the Exalted preserve him, has answered this question.

He says: regarding the issue of the pollination of the date palms, there is a ḥadīth in *Sahīh Muslim* and the *Musnad* where Anas, Allah be pleased with him, narrates that Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, passed by a people who were manually fecundating date palms. He remarked: “If you did not do this, it would be better.” He [Anas] said: “They were left unfecundated”. The Prophet, the Salutations and peace of Allah be upon him, passed by them again and asked: “What happened to your date palms?” They replied: “You said such and such.” He replied: “You know best your worldly affairs.”

Some people understood, from this ḥadīth, that Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, erred in relation to matters of the world begin to say: “Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, erred in such and such.”

But it is more proper that you should follow the truth and that is that the speech and actions of Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, used to each explain or resemble another. You should also know that Allah, the Exalted, preserved him from faults just as He preserved him from even lapses.

Firstly: Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, grew up in those blessed lands where the date palms grew and among a people who knew the art of growing them and what they needed in terms of care and pollination. So how can it be imagined that he, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, would not be acquainted with this unvarying manner of producing the date palms and the necessity of its pollination as demanded by the fundamentals of agriculture- given the fact that this is not concealed or obscure agricultural information regarding palm trees?! Then [we must concede] that he must have known this as they would have known it. However, he intended [by his advice] to manifest a matter to them which they could not attain to by themselves.

Secondly: Indeed, the Noble Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, attained the sciences to which he attained. And Allah poured down upon him that which He poured in overflowing measure so that he talk about each and every thing to his Companions. *Tabarānī* narrates *Abū Dharr*, Allah be pleased with him, as saying: “Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, left us and there was not a bird in the air that used to flap its wings except that he informed us knowledgeably about it.” So how can it be imagined that the fact that date palms need pollination- as dictated by the customary practice in agriculture- was unknown to him?! Rather, Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, has intended another objective [by his advice to them].

Adab al Mufrad which, *inter alia*, can be found on the following site:

<http://www.sunnipath.com/library/Hadith/H0003P0000.aspx>

Ḥadīth number 1198, Chapter :Sitting and lying down Accessed the 19th March 2010.

Thirdly: that which leads us to believe that Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, intended another objective is the consideration of other similar situations and of these is the ḥadīth "Pass me the shoulder." The Musnad narrates from Abul Rāfi' who said: "A roasted sheep was made for Allah's Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and I brought it to him. He said: "Oh Abū Rāfi', pass me the shoulder." I passed it on to him. Then he said: "Pass me the shoulder." I passed it on to him." Then he again said: "Pass me the shoulder." I said: "Oh Messenger of Allah, does a sheep not only have two shoulders?" He, the salutations and Peace of Allah replied: "If you had kept silent, you would have given me the shoulder which I had called for."

He [Shaykh Burhānī] said: "This is likewise the case regarding the pollination of date palms when the Prophet, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, passed by people who were pollinating them- he intended to honour and bestow a gift upon them by manifesting to them a miracle by breaking with customary practice in this regard. He would have honoured them especially by the success of their crop without any pollination having had to take place. This is since he, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, knew what they knew regarding the need for the date palms to be pollinated as he was knowledgeable about their affairs.

However, when some among those people could not accept and fully submit to his word, namely, "If you did not do this [pollination], it would be better"- and preferred to cling to their habitual manner of pollination- this honour became unsuitable [for them]and he returned. It is for this reason that he, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, recommended them afterwards to their habitual manner upon which they were based and by which they were bounded. Thus he said to them: ""You know best your worldly affairs" that is, return to your work due to such work being a necessity for your affairs."⁶⁵

This is from the book [by Shaykh Burhānī] entitled: "Sayyidinā Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, p367 [Section] "Research on Allah's, the Exalted, protection of His Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, from every error and falsehood, his guiding to the truth, and his accuracy and correctness in all his states." Look also at this book's research on the expansiveness of his knowledge, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and the plenitude of sciences Allah has bestowed upon him, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, and which none knows except Allah, pages 90 to 114. This is research that rewarding and rich with examples and evidence. Indeed the whole book is a gift of knowledge. May Allah reward the author with goodness and benefit the Muslims through his knowledge of the sciences in health, and honour us and him with a beautiful outcome.

⁶⁵ (Tr) That is, due to their limitations and lack of faith, they were bound by the laws of cause and effect. 60

CHAPTER SIX: A KIND ADMONISHMENT TO ONE OF THE SCHOLARS

(Comprising pp 78 to 90. Translated by Maida Asad)

Many people in their haste and rash behaviour have accused some scholars of heresy in various matters. Al-Imām ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd has previously said:

“Innovation related to worldly matters is not disliked in its origin, but the majority of it is decided by the absence of dislike. If we study the bid`ah related to secondary laws it is not on the same level of the bid`ah related to the principles of `Aqīdah (belief).”

One of our students from one of the Tarīqah (path/way Sufi order) associations died in a car accident whilst on his way for `umrah (minor pilgrimage). He was buried at Baqī in Madīnah al-Munawwarah. I stood at his grave and recited the talqīn (instruction to the deceased) as it is a noble tradition in our country. Whilst I was reciting, a group of people stood by and loudly voiced their disapproval, but I continued with my recital. After completing the talqīn, I recited Surah Yasin as well, as this practice is recommended in a ḥadīth related by Aḥmad in his Musnad, namely: “Recite Yā-sīn over your dead.”

My actions amazed a person from amongst the `ulamā`. He addressed me disapprovingly and accused me of innovating among the students of his association. He called me aside and said, “Indeed, this matter is from the forbidden bid`ah”.

I responded, saying, “O honourable Shaykh, in our madh`hab (school of thought) we do not order that the talqīn be recited but neither do we prohibit it, and it is the madh`hab of Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥanbal and this madh`hab is a madh`hab of Fiqh (Islamic Law). Indeed this great scholar allowed the recital of talqīn. Then I mentioned to him what came in al-furū` (branches) and so on, but did not elaborate on all it contained and covered. After I had spoken, we both remained silent for a while, but despite his non-rebuttal of my speech, he did not want to accept my opinion and continued to harass me. I then decided to relate some of the suitable sayings of the Hanābilah relevant to the topic of the day:

Al-Athram wrote in Al-Mughnī, that he informed Abī Abd Allāh about what the people do when they buried their dead. A man responded, saying, “Oh so and so, mention what you recite on the deceased.” He replied: The Shahādah, bearing witness that there is no god except Allah.”

The man said that he had not witnessed this action, except from the people of Shām. When Abu al-Mughīrah died, a man came and said that Abu al-Mughīrah related it from Abu Bakr ibn Abī Maryam from their shuyūkh (elders, teachers) that they used to this particular action.

Al-Qādī Abu al-Khattāb said, that it is permissible to do that and so on. Al-Tabarānī related the talqīn as related by ibn Shahīn (with a sound chain of

narration) in the chapter, Remembrance of Death, and Ibn Ḥajr said in Al—Talkhīṣ al-Habīr: “His chain of narration is authentic.” I said that to recite talqīn on the mayyit (deceased) is also established in the madh’hab of al-Imām al-Shāfi’ī (rah) and asked him whether he still considers the recitation of the talqīn to be a bid’ah after being informed of this narration, unless of course he has no knowledge of this honourable madh’hab.

We discovered that this shaykh had demanded that the Minister of Religious Affairs of his country prohibit the performance of the qunūt in ṣalāh al-Fajr and classify it as a bid’ah.

By Allāh he is audacious! But it is not appropriate for a scholar to acknowledge this, as both Mālik and al-Shāfi’ī hold to the recitation of qunūt in ṣalāh al-Fajr, and they both Leaders in Islamic law. The former was the guiding light [for the latter] and the latter was the teacher of Imām Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal- Allah the Exalted’s mercy be upon all of them.

So the abovementioned scholars negated that qunūt in salah al fajr is a bid’ah.

Ibn al-Qayyim said: The ahlul ḥadīth are in the middle path between those [who prevent it] and those who recommend its performance at certain times and others. And they are the most knowledgeable concerning the hadīth. The perform qunūt whenever the Prophet (saw) did, and they left it whenever he did, and they followed his actions and called it his Sunnah. They never criticised whoever practiced it constantly, nor did they refuse to do it and did not consider it as bid’ah or the one who does it as opposing the Sunnah.....and so on.

The Mughnī states: It is not Sunnah to perform the qunūt in the morning prayer and neither in alāh of witr. Thawrī and Abū Ḥanīfah hold this view. It is narrated from ‘Abbās, ibn ‘Umar, ibn Mas’ūd and Abul Dardā. Mālik, ibn Abī Laylā, Ḥusayn bin Ṣālih and Shāfi’i say: ‘The qunūt is sunnah in the ṣalāh of ṣubḥ for all days because Anas said: “Allah’s Messenger, the Salutations and Peace of Allah be upon him, continued to make qunūt in fajr until he departed this world.” Aḥmad related this in his Musnad. And ‘Umar used to recite the qunūt in ṣubḥ with Companions and others in attendance.”

Can it still be said, after the author of the Mughnī has stated this, that the qunūt is still a bid’ah. It can only be so stated by someone who is ignorant of the acknowledged, honoured and respected madhāhib.

A reprimand to one of the scholars

1. . One of the scholars wrote a treatise on the belief system of the Ahl Sunnah, which was prefaced by another scholar. He describes therein the Hand of Allah in such terms as cannot be repeated. This description created the impression of similarity between Allah, the Exalted and His creation. And God forbid that a firm believer of the Ahl Sunnah should indulge in producing such similarity and anthropomorphism. Indeed, He is the Absolutely Transcendent- and praise be to Allah.

2. It is also written elsewhere in the book: “Our, doctrine is that Allah Ta’alah is with us 62

literally and in His person in a way that is suitable to Him. It is required by His encompassing of all things.” Shaykh ‘Alī bin ‘Abdullāh al Khawwās said: This is a great fault and dangerous lapse emanating from the Shaykh- may Allah guide him and us. Then he (Shaykh Khawwās) continues: “As for witness: it is not transmitted that any of them [the pious predecessors] held that Allah’s “witness” with His creation is in His person. They are free of such a charge. And at the head [of the pious predecessors] stand the four khulafā-i-rāshidīn and the learned authorities of this Ummah such as ibn ‘Abbās, ibn Mas‘ūd and others among the Companions. There is no established report that they said: “Indeed, the witness of Allah with is creation in person.” On the contrary, all of them agree that Allah is with His creation through His knowledge and not through His Person.

I conclude this research in a peaceful spirit by quoting the words of the honourable Shaykh Doctor Sayyid Ramaḍān al-Būṭī. They are words of kind advice word offering a beneficial, reasonable remedy and will heal wounds, if Allah wills. He says:

[This last section was taken, with permission, from the translation done by Shaykh Shoayb Ahmed of Gauteng].

He [Shaykh Sa’id Ramadan al-Bouti] said: “Perhaps the most restricted definitions of Bid’ah will include in it only that upon which there is consensus on classifying it as Bid’ah. There is the meaning implied by the Quran and the Sunnah and this is the definition preferred by Imam al-Shatibi in his book al-I’tisam which is: “An introduced way in the Din which opposes the Shari’ah and is intended to serve as a means to worship Allah.”

He defined it with another definition which is broader in its implication and with the result some issues about which there is some difference of opinion may be included. We will commence from the first definition trying to spell out the area of disagreement and the area of consensus.

The scholars are unanimous that Bid’ah is Haram (prohibited) and there is no doubt that any way introduced in the name of religion irrespective whether in Aqidah or in acts of worship is certainly Bid’ah. So to introduce another Salat over and above the obligatory and confined voluntary Salat, or to introduce fasting on another specific day without anything reported in the Quran or in the Sunnah, or even to confine oneself to one form of food regarding it as an act of devotion, or to raise the voice reciting Qasidah’s and adhkaar in front of the Janazah. Or even to call out the adhan in front of the grave. This will included introducing some aspects of belief like assuming that Jahannam will perish and the punishment of the disbelievers will end or even to maintain that their punishment is only one of disgrace. All of this is Bid’ah by consensus and therefore to adopt any of this is a deviation as was explained by the Messenger of Allah.

So where then is the disagreement in this matter?

The essence of the disagreement may be confined to two points:

a) Habits/Norms/customs: Does the word Bid’ah apply to these? With the result every habit/norm which the people have become accustomed to and is contrary to what the Sahaba were familiar with or even the Messenger of Allah, then it is a Bid’ah and with the result a deviation which must be avoided. The pious predecessors did not concur on this matter. Among them (Sahaba and the Tab’in) there were those who disallowed any practice/custom introduced after the Messenger of Allah irrespective whether it concerned food, dress or even

one's abode. There were those amongst them who did not see any relationship between the norms/customs that had developed in peoples lives and the prohibited Bid'ah. So according to this it is acceptable for a Muslim to introduce norms/customs even if they are contrary to the practices at the time of the Messenger of Allah.

This is because customs and norms in itself have no Shari'ah implication and are not in any way a source of the Shari'ah especially those norms and customs which are physical actions. We have mentioned in the introductory chapter of this book various practices that were introduced at the time of the pious predecessors and we mentioned their different views based on their different Ijtihad and their consideration for these norms/customs at the time of the Messenger. Do such actions fall within the meaning of Sunnah or not?

Based on this difference, they differed over the very meaning of Bid'ah. The first definition is one adopted by those who maintain that the customs/norms that existed in the time of the Prophet are not included in the meaning of Bid'ah. There is no harm if people differentiate between norms/customs as long as it does not go against an established ruling based upon the Quran, the Sunnah or the consensus of the Muslim scholars.

The second definition is adopted by those who maintain that the norms/customs that gained the approval of the Messenger of Allah and were practiced during his lifetime are to be considered as a source in the Shari'ah. Thus to abandon it and to initiate a new practice is a Bid'ah and a deviation.

The difference of opinion in this issue originated in the time of the pious predecessors as we had previously mentioned in the introductory chapter and is not an area of disagreement and contention between the pious predecessors and the latter scholars as is assumed by some people.

b) Application of the word Bid'ah to real situations. There is no doubt that practical application and judging on these matters opens the way for greater debate with more possibilities arising. With the result there is difference in the application while there is agreement on the fundamentals. Much of the disagreement is a result of the ability to move from a state of it being a mere concept or idea to actual application and implementation (tahqiq al-manat).

So with this in mind, would research into issues related to predestination (Qada & qadr) and questions about the right to chooser not by a human being be considered as Bid'ah?

Would engaging in such research and discussion be a Bid'ah that must be avoided or not?

Would the usage of logic, and the terminology of the philosophers to defend the fundamentals of the Din be considered a Bid'ah? If so then it needs to be avoided and if not then there is no harm in using it as long as one is mindful not to deviate as is the case with many who have involved in these subjects.

Would debating and engaging with innovators regarding the Bid'ah that they are involved in also be considered a Bid'ah? Or is such a practice permissible as long as one plans on exposing their falsehood? Would it be considered a Bid'ah for a researcher in the Quran to distinguish between the words and meanings of the Quran to an extent where he says that certain words are not created while others are? This distinction was not known at the time of the Messenger of Allah. Therefore it would be necessary to state that the Quran is old and uncreated without any further explanation. And if this is not considered Bid'ah, but rather an explanation of what the Sahaba knew then there is no objection, particularly in teaching.

Would Tawassul with the position and rank of the Messenger of Allah after his demise or with anyone else who was known for his piety and righteousness be considered Bid'ah simply because it is the introduction of an act that has not been permitted by Allah and it is contrary to the very essence and nature of Tawhid? Or could it be permissible because of the analogy on the permissibility of such an act during the Prophet's lifetime which is well established by authentic Hadith and therefore cannot be considered as a Bid'ah?

What are the rules that govern the introduction of acts of worship? There are examples of this nature and would adopting these be classified as Bid'ah or not? The adhan introduced by 'Uthman for his household when Madinah expanded and the members of the home were in need of some prior notice informing them that the time of Zhuhr had entered, because the adhan that was called out during the Messenger of Allah's time at the door of the masjid, when the Prophet ascended the pulpit. Would this be considered Bid'ah, or a necessity for the benefit of the community which would enable them to perform Jum'ah in the best possible manner?

We are aware of the physical boundaries for anyone who intends to perform Hajj or 'Umrah. These were stipulated by the Messenger of Allah. What would the ruling be for a person who donned his Ihram before arriving at one of these boundaries? Would he be regarded as one involved in Bid'ah for going beyond the limits of prescribed boundaries or not?

Would the observation of the Iid Salat in the masjid instead of the musalla on the outskirts of the town be considered a Bid'ah with due consideration to the changing times and requirements and knowing well that basis of the Shari'ah is on removing difficulty and harm and making matters easy?

These are practical examples where the various proofs are not explicit in indicating that these practices are indeed Bid'ah or they fall outside the scope of Bid'ah. They are left open for research and Ijtihad. With the result there has been difference of opinion in these matters not between the pious predecessors and the latter scholars, but rather this occurred among the early scholars (salaf) from as early as the time of the Sahaba. We will commence by elaborating on some of these examples..."

(Shaykh Sa'id Ramadan al-Bouti from his book 'al-Salafiyah marhalat zamaniyyah mubarakah la madhab islami)

In conclusion, I ask Allah Ta'ala to make this treatise a work sincerely for His pleasure, which would illuminate the path of guidance for me, my parents, my family, my shuyukh and for the Muslims in this world and then enable the crossing of the Bridge upon which there is no light. May Allah make it a voice of truth, calling the people of the Sunnah all over toward unification, and dispelling disunity.

May Allah make us keys and instruments of good, seals againsts evil and people who call towards guidance, who are happy and blissful in both the Worlds.

