

THE REALITY OF BID'AH

EXTRACTED FROM:
DEVIATED SECTS AND IDEOLOGIES OPPOSING THE
BELIEFS OF THE AHLUS-SUNNAH WAL JAMA'AH

DARUL-ULOOM HEIDELBERG

FOREWARD

The Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah are that group of people whose belief and ideology conforms to that of 'the Sunnah as understood by the righteous Sahaabah', a belief and ideology which has been passed on from generation to generation, and will remain protected by Allah till the advent of Qiyaamah. During the course of Islamic history, many groups and sects deviated from this path (on account of various reasons which is beyond the scope of our discussion here) and attempted to introduce into Islam deviations, innovations, alterations, incorrect ideas and fanciful interpretations, by which the very soul and objective of Islam would be destroyed. The Ulama of the Ahlus-Sunnah wal Jama'ah had always opposed such ideologies and worked tirelessly to eradicate or at least cripple them. Allah used them as a means of keeping aloft the light of Islam and the Sunnah, inspite of many efforts to extinguish it.

This kitaab was prepared as a basic introduction to the subject of Bid'ah (innovations) which pertains to amal (practice, as opposed to Bid'ah in beliefs). Since this booklet was prepared in haste, a few important aspects could not be addressed, which will, Insha Allah, be included in subsequent editions.

May Allah accept this weak effort on behalf of the compiler, and make it a means of safeguarding the Aqaaid of the entire Ummah and of refuting innovations and alterations which have been adopted in the name of Islam. O Allah, show us the truth, and grant us the ability of follow it. O Allah, expose to us falsehood, and grant us the ability to abstain and refrain from it. Aameen

For suggestions, enquiries or copies, etc.
please e-mail the compiler at: imrnkajee@gmail.com
or phone: 076 3819030

Bid'ah

When acts that oppose the teachings of Rasulullah ﷺ and the Sahabah ؓ are regarded as part of the Deen and Shari'ah, it is tantamount to altering the Deen, to regarding Bid'ah as Sunnah and an act of sin as an act of virtue. This could be interpreted as saying that the Shari'ah that Rasulullah ﷺ brought was inadequate and incomplete and in need of modification (Allaah forbid!). Therefore, Rasulullah ﷺ and the Sahabah ؓ vehemently opposed such practices.

Sunnah and Bid'ah

Sunnat and Bid'ah are two complete opposites. When it is said that a certain thing is Sunnat, then it means that it is not a Bid'ah and if it is said that a certain thing is Bid'ah, then in other words it implies that that particular thing is contrary to the Sunnat.

Our Deen has been perfected

We have full Imaan (belief) in the fact that, with the coming of Nabi (ﷺ), on the one hand, the Shari'ahs of all the previous prophets were abrogated, and on the other hand, the doors of prophethood was closed until Qiyaamah. With the coming of Nabi (ﷺ), his very being was an example of those things whereby we could ascertain which things are liked and which disliked by Allaah Ta'ala. Besides this there is no other way. Those things which Nabi (ﷺ) showed us which were liked or not by Allaah Ta'ala, this is what is called Deen and Shari'ah. The announcement of the termination of his teachings was made three months before his (ﷺ) demise, on the plains of Arafat. Now, there is absolutely no scope for any deletions or additions to this Deen.

Sunnah includes in its scope the norm prevalent in the first three eras-Khayrul Quroon

Sunnat is also known as *Tariqah* (the way). Hence, "Sunnat" are those things which Nabi (ﷺ) taught, like, Aqaa'id, character, dealings, habits, etc. Together with holding onto the knowledge of *Tariqah-e-Nabawi*, the Qur'aan Majeed and the Ahaadith of Nabi (ﷺ) have exhorted and coupled the Sunnat of the Khulafaa-e- Raashideen. That is, both of them are binding upon us. Hence, the Sunnat of the Khulafaa-e- Raashideen (ؓ) holds the same ruling as the Sunnat of Nabi (ﷺ). Also, Nabi (ﷺ) has stressed greatly upon the virtues of the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam (ؓ). He has certified their reliability and integrity.

It is stated in one Hadith: ***"Honour my companions, because indeed they are the best amongst you. And after them (in importance) are those (Taabieen) who follow them, and after them are those (Tab-e-Taabieen) who follow them. Thereafter falsehood will prevail."*** [Mishkaat, page 554] ***It is also reported in another Hadith that those Sahaabah who pass away in any land, on the day of Qiyaamah, they will rise up and be the leaders and Noor for the people. [Mishkaat].***

There are numerous Ahaadith regarding this topic. On the one hand, the Qur'aan Majeed has classified this venerable group of Sahaabah as *"Believers"* and *"The best of the Ummat"*, and we have been ordered to follow their way. That person who transgresses their way is regarded as having deviated and is warned of Jahannum. On the other hand there are numerous Ahaadith which extol the blessings and virtues of the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam (ؓ). It is for this reason that the Sunnat of the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam is the reflection of the Sunnat of our Nabi (ﷺ). Whatever action they did with consensus and whatever they omitted with consensus is regarded as being absolute (proof). It

is not permissible for anyone to discard their way. Also, whatever some Sahaabah did and it was not rejected by the other Sahaabah, is also regarded as being correct and the truth. There is no scope in any doubt in this. The crux of the matter is that whatever actions the Sahaabah carried out is a proof of it being Sunnat. And since Nabi (ﷺ) has mentioned these three eras, that is, the Sahaabah, Tabieen and Tab-e-Taabieen, without any hesitation, we can classify their actions as being part of the Sunnat.

What is Bid'ah

With the definition of Sunnat, the meaning of Bid'ah becomes apparent. That is, to understand to be part of the Deen whatever actions were not prevalent during the eras of Nabi (ﷺ), the Sahaabah, Taabieen and Tab-ut-Taabieen, is regarded as a Bid'ah.

However, in order to understand it properly, it is imperative that we clarify a few points:

a) Firstly, those Masaa'il wherein more than one option is narrated, all of them will be regarded as Sunnat. It will not be permissible to choose one of them and classify the others as Bid'ah. Except of course if one of them were abrogated. For example, the saying of "Ameen" loudly after (Surah Faatihah) is reported from Nabi (ﷺ) and so is the saying of it softly. Hence both these actions are termed as being Sunnat. It is impermissible to term one of these actions as being Bid'ah.

b) Secondly, if Nabi (ﷺ) executed a certain action often and another rarely, then the one which he did often will be classified as being Sunnat, but the second action, which he (ﷺ) did rarely was done to indicate consent for it, hence it cannot be classified as Bid'ah. This

second action will be classified as being permissible, although the actual Sunnat will be the one which he did often.

c) Thirdly, regarding those things which came into existence after these three eras, they are classified into two categories: one is those which are regarded as an object in themselves and the other which is not regarded as such, rather it is regarded as being a means of attaining some other Deeni objective. For example, many virtues and benefits have been extolled regarding the learning and teaching of the Deeni knowledge of Qur'aan Majeed and Ahaadith. They have been greatly stressed upon. Hence, the attainment of those means of acquiring this knowledge which came into existence after these three noble eras, would not be regarded as Bid'ah (on the condition that the means adopted are permissible in themselves). The reason for this permissibility is that these means are not the actual objective, in fact, they are a means of attaining a Deeni objective. Similarly, the virtues and benefits of Jihad have been greatly extolled in the Qur'aan Majeed and Ahaadith. Hence, it would not be regarded as Bid'ah to utilise those means and weapons for Jihad which were not used the noble eras, because the usage of these means and weapons is not the actual objective and they are also not regarded as being the object of Deen. Similarly, the journey for Hajj is also very meritorious. But, it would not be regarded as Bid'ah to go for Hajj using the aeroplane or ship, since this mode of travel is not regarded as being the Deeni objective, it is merely a means of attaining and reaching one's objective, i.e. Hajj, which is the actual Ibaadat.

In short, the usage of those things which are a means of attaining a Shar'i objective, are permissible. But, to regard such things as being the actual objective and a necessity of Deen, would be a Bid'ah.

Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi has shed further light on the above:

It should be realised that actions and practices innovated after the passage of the first three generations of Muslims (*khayr al-qurun*) are categorised into two types,

First Category: Artificial Bid'ah (which seems like a Bid'ah but is not really so) – Those actions whose rationale is new, but some essential aspects of the Shari'ah (ma'mur bihi) are dependant on it. Hence, without this (so-called) innovation, this aspect of Din will not function effectively.

For example, the compilation and authoring of religious books, the establishment of learning institutes (Madrassahs) and Khanqas etc.

These things were not present during the era of Rasulullah (ﷺ), and their sabab-cause is new, however, an essential part of the *din* depends on [the initiation of] these acts.

It is well established that it is an essential and necessary requirement upon every [Muslim] individual to protect and safeguard the *din*. One should also remember that during the 'best of era's, such means [the above mentioned innovations] did not exist. This was because there was no need for them. That era was permeating with blessings [of Rasulullah (ﷺ)], and the memories of the his blessed Sahaabah (رضي الله عنهم) were so excellent that when they heard or observed Rasulullah (ﷺ), saying or doing anything, it remained embedded and etched in their minds. Their understanding and intellect was also such that there was no need for formal classes wherein prescribed lessons in *din* needed to be taught.

Following this era, in the subsequent Muslim generations, negligence and carelessness [in matters of *din*] crept in, the memories became weaker, deviated and eccentric interpretations and implementations increased. This threatened the gradual destruction of the edifices of the *din*. Hence an urgent need arose to formulate methods to administrate the structures of the *din*, safeguarding all its facets. In this regards, the basic texts of the *din*, the Prophetic tradition (*hadith*), principles of studying the Prophetic tradition (*usul al-hadith*), the rulings of worship (*usul al-fiqh*), and basic belief ('*aqa'id*) needed to be compiled. Hence, learning institutes (*madrassah*) were established in order to teach these sciences of the *din*.

In similar vein, the physicians of the soul (*mashayikh*) saw the need to establish spiritual retreats (*khanqahs*) to revive and nurture the spiritual, perpetual and mutually favourable personal relationship with Allah (*nisbat*) and self-reformation.

Besides these, there was no other means envisaged which would safeguard our *din*.

Hence these are such things whose reasons and causes (*sabab*) are new, and these *sababs* were not prevalent during the *khayr al-qurun*. These are also such matters upon which the existence and preservation of some essential religious matter rests. Hence these things may fit the apparent hue and definition of *bid'ah*, but in reality they are not *bid'ahs*. On the contrary, according to the ruling: the prelude to an essential is also essential itself (*muqaddamah al-wajib wajibun*), they are essential (*wajib*) acts.

Second category: Real bid'ah - In the second category are those innovated actions and practices whose rationale (*sabab*) is old (and was present during the best of era but they were not performed).

For example, the motive (*sabab*) of celebrating the birth of Rasulullah (ﷺ) (*mawlid*), forwarding reward of good deeds to the deceased on specific days (*tija, daswah*), etc. are all old.

The reason for the performance of *mawlid* is expression of happiness at the birth of Rasulullah (ﷺ). This very reason was established and existent during the era of Rasulullah (ﷺ) and his blessed Sahaabah (رضي الله عنهم), but it was never celebrated by any of them. Can we claim that, Allah forbid (*nauthubillah*), their minds did not perceive doing this activity?

However, if the reason (*sabab*) was not present during their era, then at least we could have said that they had no rationale to do it. But since the reason for holding *mawlid* was also present during that time, and neither Rasulullah (ﷺ) nor his blessed Sahaabah (رضي الله عنهم) ever hold or encouraged such activity, we can safely state this to be a *bid'ah* – in word, definition and practice.

This category of innovations fall under the scope of the hadith; “Whosoever innovates anything into our religion, is not from amongst us.” Hence, it is impermissible to participate in and hold such gatherings.

This is the general ruling to recognise and distinguish between Sunnah and *bid'ah*. Rulings about all other matters can be deduced from this explanation. (*Wa'az al-Surur*, p. 27)

d) Fourthly, The principles of many Shar'i Masaa'il have been outlined in the Qur'aan Majeed and Ahaadith. The experts in this field of studying these principles, use these principles to extract many other Masaa'il. Hence, those Masaa'il which are extracted using the Qur'aan Majeed and Ahaadith as a basis would also not be classified as Bid'ah, since this has been established from the Qur'aan Majeed and Sunnat. It is for this reason that the Ijtihad of the Aimmah are also regarded as being a part of the Deen, after that of the Qur'aan Majeed, Sunnat or Nabi (ﷺ), Sahaabah and Tabieen. Ijtihad is also regarded as being one of the proofs of the Deen.

e) Fifthly, those things which are neither proven from the Qur'aan Majeed, nor the Hadith of Nabi (ﷺ), nor the actions of the Sahaabah or Tabieen, nor the Ijtihad of the Fuqahaa of the Ummat nor Qiyaas, are NOT regarded as being part of the Deen. They cannot be made part of the Deen by the *Kashf or Ilhaam* of any buzrug, nor by the whimsical Qiyaas of any learned person. The proofs for the Shariah are those four mentioned previously. Besides these to 'prove' anything as being part of the Deen is in itself a Bid'ah.

An Important Distinction between the different types of Bid'ah

(5) Bid'ah is divided into two types: one regarding beliefs (*I'tiqaadi*) and another regarding actions (*Amali*). *I'tiqaadi* Bid'ah refers to those beliefs and views held by any person or group which differs to the beliefs of Nabi (ﷺ) and the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam.

Further, it is divided into many other categories. Some of them are clear-cut kufr. Like, for example, the belief of the Qadianis that after Nabi (ﷺ) the doors of Nubuwwat are still open (*Nauthubillah*), or that

Isaa (عليه السلام) died, etc. Some *l'tiqaadi* Bid'ahs are not classified as Kufr but they certainly lead to deviation.

Amali Bid'ah would not entail a corruption of beliefs, rather it refers to the execution of those actions which were not carried out by the Salf-e-Saaliheen. It is of a lower level and less severe compared to *l'tiqaadi* bid'ah. However, this too is extremely detested, as can be seen from the following examples:

1. The author of *Majma'ul Bahrain* relates in his commentary that a person once arrived at the place of performing the Eid salaah on the day of Eid and was about to start performing salaah when Ali (عليه السلام) stopped him. "O Ameerul Mu'mineen!" the man said, "I know well that Allah will not punish me for performing salaah (why are you then stopping me?)." Ali (عليه السلام) replied, "I know well that Allah will not reward you for something unless Rasulullah (ﷺ) did it or encouraged it. (Since Rasulullah (ﷺ) did not perform any salaah before the Eid salaah) I fear that your act will be futile and (when it comes to worship) futile acts are Haraam. I therefore fear that Allah may even punish you for it." (*Majaalisul Abraar* pg.129)

Note: Although salaah is an act of Ibaadah, Ali (عليه السلام) stopped the person from performing salaah before the Eid salaah because Rasulullah (ﷺ) never did it. While salaah is filled with Dhikr and recitation of the Qur'aan, does this mean that Ali (عليه السلام) was opposed to Qur'aan and Dhikr? Never!

2. Naafi (رضي الله عنه) reports that Abdullaah bin Umar (رضي الله عنه) once heard a person sneeze and say, "Alhamdulillah was Salaamu alaa Rasulillah". To this, Abdullaah bin Umar (رضي الله عنه) remarked, "Although I also say "Alhamdulillah was Salaamu alaa Rasulillah" (on other occasions as

separate phrases), Rasulullah (ﷺ) did not teach us this (to recite this when sneezing). What Rasulullah (ﷺ) did teach us was to recite "Alhamdulillah alaa Kulli Haal". (Tirmizi v.2 pg.98)

3. When Abdullaah bin Umar (رضي الله عنه) saw people raising their hands above their chests while making du'aa, he said, "Your raising your hands like that is a Bid'ah because Rasulullah (ﷺ) never raised his hands above his chest." (Ahmad, as quoted in *Mishkaat* pg.196)

Because Rasulullah (ﷺ) never raised his hands above his chest in du'aa on any occasion apart from the occasion of Salaatul Istisqaa, Abdullaah bin Umar (رضي الله عنه) did not hesitate to label the act as a Bid'ah.

4. When Umaarah bin Ruwaybah (رضي الله عنه) saw Bishr bin Marwaan raise his hands in du'aa as he delivered a sermon, he made du'aa that Allaah destroy Bishr's hands because he never saw Rasulullah (ﷺ) raise his hands in that manner during the sermon. (Tirmizi v.1 pg.69)

5. Abdullaah bin Zubayr (رضي الله عنه) once saw a person raise his hands in du'aa (during Qa'dah) before completing the salaah. He therefore told the man that Rasulullah (ﷺ) never raised his hands in du'aa until he had completed the salaah.

6. Umar (رضي الله عنه) had sent Abdullaah bin Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه) to Kufa to teach the Qur'aan and Ahadeeth to the people and as a Mufti. It was during this period that when the people waited for the Fajr salaah, they started the practice of sitting in groups with many stones before them. Someone would then tell them to recite Allaahu Akbar a hundred times and they would all do so. He would then tell them to recite Laa Ilaaha Illallaah a hundred times and they would do it. In this manner, they would recite various Adhkaar. When Abdullaah bin Mas'ood heard about this, he approached them and asked what they were

doing. “We are only counting the Tasbeehaat with these stones,” they replied. Abdullaah bin Mas’ood ؓ said to them, “You had rather count your sins on them. There is no need to count the Tasbeehaat because I can assure you that Allaah does not waste a single good deed.” Abdullaah bin Mas’ood ؓ then said in remorse, “O Ummah of Muhammadﷺ! It is so sad to see how fast you are heading for destruction! The companions of Rasulullah ﷺ are still amongst you, Rasulullahﷺ’s clothing is still with you and has not yet become old and even his utensils are present without being broken (yet you have already started going astray). I swear by the Being Who controls my life that you people are either following a way that is more rightly guided than the way of Rasulullah ﷺ (which is impossible) or you have opened the doors to deviation.” “But we have only intended to do good,” the people pleaded. “There are many people who say that they only intend good,” Abdullaah bin Mas’ood ؓ said, “however, they are never blessed with any good at all. Rasulullah ؓ told us that there will be people who will recite the Qur’aan without the Qur’aan going higher than their collarbones (will not be accepted) because their recitation will be done as they want to do it and not as Allah and His Rasul ﷺ want it.” Abdullaah bin Mas’ood ؓ then went away in anger. The narrator of the incident says, “We observed that these people later affiliated with the Khawaarij because they were fighting against us when we waged war against the Khawaarij.” (Izaalatul Khifaaa v.1 pg.130)

7. Mujaahid (ؓ) said that once he entered a Masjid together with Abdullaah Ibn Umar ؓ in order to perform Salaat. The Athaan had already been given. A person began making Tathweeb (i.e. calling out ‘Salaat, Salaat’, thereby calling the people to Salaat). Abdullaah Ibn Umar ؓ commented, ‘Are you mad? Was the call to Salaat which was

incorporated in the Athaan insufficient?’. Ibn Umar ؓ said to Mujaahid (ؓ), ‘Take me away from here, surely this is a bid’ah.’ [Abu Dawood, vol.1, page 79] Ibn Umar ؓ left that Masjid and did not perform Salaat there. It is reported in another narration that he said, ‘Take me away from this innovation.’ He did not perform his Salaat there. [Tirmidhi, vol.1, page 28]

Imaam Nawawi (rahmatullah alayh) states in Sharah Muhazzab, “It has been reported that Ali ؓ once saw a Muatthin making Tathweeb in Esha Salaat, and he exclaimed, ‘Remove this bida’ti from the Masjid!’ A similar incident is reported about Ibn Umar ؓ.” [Bahrur Raa’iq, page 261, vol. 1]

That Tathweeb which is allowed in the Kitaabs of Fiqh refers to making those occupied in (intense Deeni) issues, like the Qaadhi, etc. aware of the impending Salaat, or awakening people who are sleeping etc..

8. Abdullaah Ibn Abbaas ؓ once saw Ta’oos (ؓ) performing Salaat after Asr Salaat and prevented him. (This narration clearly states that this was only a two rakaat Salaat). Ta’oos (ؓ) presented some interpretation for the prohibition of Salaat after Asr. Ibn Abbaas ؓ retorted sternly, “I do not know whether there is punishment or reward (for such a Salaat), because Allaah Ta’ala states, ‘It is not appropriate for a believing man or woman, when Allaah and His Rasul have decreed a matter, that they have a choice in it.’” [Mustadrak, page 110, vol. 1]

In this regard there appears a narration of a man who normally performed two Rakaats after the Asr Salaat asking Sa’eed bin Musayyib ؓ, “O Abu Muhammad! Will Allaah Ta’ala punish me for

my (this) Salaat? He replied, 'No, but He will punish you for acting contrary to the Sunnat.'" [Musnad Daarmi, page 62]

9. Someone once invited Uthmaan bin Abil 'Aas ؓ to a circumcision ceremony, which he clearly turned down. When he was asked the reason for refusing this invitation, he replied in no uncertain terms, "Indeed we never attended circumcisions (ceremonies) during the era of Rasulullaah ﷺ, neither were we invited to such." [Musnad Ahmad, page 217, vol. 4]

10. A Hadith states that three men once approached one of the wives of Rasulullah ﷺ to enquire about Rasulullah's Ibaadah. Upon leaving, they said, "All Rasulullah's past and future errors have been forgiven, so he does not need to exert himself so much." One of them then said, "I shall perform salaah all night without sleeping." The other said, "I shall fast every day without missing any fasts" and the third said, "I shall never get married (so as to devote all my time and energy to Ibaadah)." When Rasulullah ﷺ heard about this, he called them and said, "What is this I hear about you? Listen well! Even though I may be the one who fears Allah most from all of you, yet I sometimes fast and sometimes do not. I perform salaah at night and sleep as well and I also get married. Whoever turns away from my way of life is not from amongst my people." (Bukhari v.2 pg.757) Did Rasulullaah ﷺ not prevent the Sahabah ؓ from doing what is in excess of the Sunnah? Did he not stop them from performing extra salaah, fasting and from not getting married?

Allah addresses Rasulullah ﷺ, saying, "If they do not respond to you, then you should know that they are following only their whims (they have no cause to reject except because they follow their passions). Who can be more unjust (misguided) than the one who follows his

whims without any guidance from Allah? Verily Allah does not guide an oppressive nation (those who do things merely because it appeals to their fancy will not be rightly guided because they refuse to accept any advice)." (Surah Qasas v.20)

Imaam Ghazaali ؒ said, "When you do anything without the command and example of Rasulullah ﷺ, it will be an act of sin and not of Ibaadah even though it may well appear to be an act of Ibaadah." (Maktoob pg.9) The Deen of Islaam is a religion from Allah and is not a fabricated religion. The basis to judge whether any injunction is part of the Deen or not is therefore the Qur'aan, the Ahadeeth and the ways of the Sahabah ؓ. It does not depend on what the mind or whims decide.

The evil of Bid'ah

Nabi (ﷺ) has chastised and castigated Bid`ah to such an extent that in terms of its evil it follows after kufr and *shirk*. The crux of the matter is that Nabi (ﷺ) had termed Bid`ah as being rejected, accursed and deviation. From this one can gauge how degraded a person would be in the sight of Nabi (ﷺ) if he has to innovate a Bid`ah. It is mentioned in a Hadith that the Fardh and Nafl Ibaadat of such a person is not accepted by Allaah Ta`ala. It is mentioned in another Hadith that the person who grants honour to a Bid`ati has aided in the destruction of the Deen. It is reported in another Hadith that the person who moves away from the "Al-Jamaat", even a hand-span, has unyoked Islaam from his neck. [Mishkaat, page 31] From this one can ascertain how hateful even the smallest and most insignificant Bid`ah was to Nabi (ﷺ).

Why is Bid'ah so detestable

This matter remains as to why Bid`ah is such a detestable deed. I will briefly state a few reasons, hereunder:

1) Firstly, the completion and perfection of the Deen of Islaam was made by Nabi (ﷺ). Nabi (ﷺ) had also outlined and expounded on all those actions and ways in which one can gain nearness, proximity and the Pleasure of Allaah Ta`ala. Now if any person innovates any action and calls people towards it, it will be as if he is implying that the Deen of Nabi (ﷺ) is, *Nauthubillaah*, incomplete and deficient. And that this means of gaining proximity to and acquiring the Pleasure of Allaah Ta`ala which was innovated by this idiot was, *Nauthubillaah*, unknown to Nabi (ﷺ). Or it also implies that the intricacies of the Deen was better understood by this Bid`ati than it was by Nabi (ﷺ), his Sahaabah and Tabieen, *Nauthubillaah*.

Imaam Maalik (رحمته الله) mentioned, "He who innovates a bid`ah in Islaam, and he deems it a good deed, is indeed laying claim that Muhammad ﷺ has betrayed the his Messengership, because Allaah Ta`ala stated, 'On this day have I perfected for you your Deen...' therefore whatever was not (a part of) Islaam on that day can most certainly not be (a part of) Islaam today." [Kitaabul I'tisaam, vol. 1, page 47]

In short, if a person makes that action a part of Deen and regards it as an Ibaadat, which neither Nabi (ﷺ) nor the Sahaabah nor Tabieen carried out, is not merely making an assault on the way of the Salf-e-Saaliheen, he is in fact, making an attack on the Deen which was brought by Nabi (ﷺ). Hence, what doubt can there be in this person being accursed and rejected?

2) Secondly, besides Bid`ah, when a person carries out any other sinful action, he does discern that he is doing an incorrect action. He may feel ashamed of his sin and repent. Contrary to this,

Bid`ah is such an evil and despicable act that instead of understanding it as being incorrect, the perpetrator deems it as being meritorious action. Shaitaan presents this act to the perpetrator in such an acceptable form that he will never realise its incorrectness. He will be deprived of repenting therefrom until his death. It is for this reason that great, great sinners eventually gain the guidance of repenting, whereas there is no cure from the disease of Bid`ah, except, if Allaah Ta`ala showers His Special Mercy on that person and he realises the error of his ways.

3) Thirdly, the evilness of Bid`ah deprives a person of the Noor of Sunnat. Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam) said:

"When any nation innovates a Bid`ah, then a Sunnat equal to it is lifted (removed) from them. Therefore, to adhere to even the smallest of Sunnats is by far better than innovating a Bid`ah." [Ahmad v.4 pg.105, Mishkaat, page 31]

It is reported in another Hadith:

"No nation innovates a Bid`ah except that Allaah Ta`ala removes from them a Sunnat equal to it, and it (the Sunnat) will never return to them until the Day of Qiyaamah." [Mishkaat, page 31]

The reason for the removal and eradication of the Sunnat is that once a person practices upon a Bid`ah then the Noor and abilities of the heart are eliminated. A person is unable to differentiate between Haqq and Baatil. The example is like that of an inexperienced stupid person. He desires that his real money be increased. So, he is given a bag full of counterfeit money in exchange for his few genuine coins. This idiot is now happy with himself in that he feels that he has achieved an excellent bargain. However, his happiness will be short-lived. Once he reaches the marketplace, not only will he realise the actual worth of his 'money', he will also be accused of dealing in counterfeit money.

Understand well, on the day of Qiyaamah, only the currency of the Sunnat of Nabi (ﷺ) will be acceptable. Those who will take with them the counterfeit currency of the Aakhirah in the form of Bid`ah will realise its worthlessness. They will also be accused of bargaining away the genuine currency of the Sunnat of Nabi (ﷺ) for the worthless Bid`ah counterfeit. It is stated in a Hadith:

“I will reach the Hawdh-e-Kauther before any of you. Whoever comes to me will drink of its water, and whoever drinks of its water once will never again feel thirsty. Some people will come towards me who I will recognise and they will recognise me, but there will be a barrier between us. I will say that these are my people, whereupon this reply will be given to me: ‘You do not know what these people did after your demise (i.e. what they had innovated into the Deen)’. Upon hearing this reply, I will say: ‘Away with him, away with him who has changed the Deen after me.’” [Bukhari, Muslim, Mishkaat, page 488]

From this narration it is quite evident that those who innovate in the Deen will be deprived of the water of Kauther on the day of Qiyaamah, by Nabi (ﷺ). What bigger deprivation than this can there be? It is for this reason that the pious predecessors have voiced such great dislike and hatred for Bid`ah.

Imaam Ghazaali (رحمته الله), after explaining and encouraging the need for following the habitual traits of Nabi (ﷺ) states: *“Whatever we have mentioned was in order to encourage the following of the habitual traits (Sunan-Aadiyyah) (of Nabi - ﷺ). But, regarding those actions (of Nabi - ﷺ) which are connected with Ibaadat, abandoning any of these, without valid excuse, is nothing other than Kufr-e-Khafi (hidden kufr) or Himaayat-e-Jali (clear and open stupidity).”* [Tableegh-e-Deen Tarjuma Arbaeen, page 42]

It is important to remember that the actions of Rasulallah (ﷺ) were of two types; one was by way of Ibaadat and the other was by habit. As for those actions of his that were done by way of Ibaadat, anything done contrary to this we condemn in the severest terms as Bid`a. We will also vehemently oppose it, because to innovate into our Deen is deplorable and rejected. To act contrary to those actions of Rasulallah (ﷺ) that were from amongst his habits, is not regarded as a Bid`ah (as long as it is not regarded as part of Deen). We will also not oppose it vehemently, although we will make effort to bring alive the Sunnah practice, because if one practices upon those Sunnats that were from amongst the habits of Nabi (ﷺ), this is a praiseworthy matter and worthy of merit.

4) Fourthly, The abovementioned Hadith of Nabi (ﷺ): ***“Away with him, away with him who has changed the Deen after me”*** expounds one other aspect of the accursedness of Bid`ah, and that is this fact

that Bid`ah necessitates the alteration and adulteration of the Deen. Allaah Ta`ala had revealed this Deen (to last) until Qiyaamah. Every human, until the Day of Qiyaamah is bound to this Shariah. This compulsion will remain as long as the Deen is secured upon its original form. Just as the previous nations altered and changed their respective religions to suit their whims and fancies, thereby eradicating its original form, should not happen to this Deen.

Hence those people who innovate Bid`ahs into the Deen are in reality changing the face of the Deen, thereby opening the way for alteration and adulteration in the Deen. Nevertheless, since Allaah Ta`ala has given the undertaking of protecting this Deen, it is through His Mercy and Benevolence that He has made arrangements for its protection. The whims and fancies of people in every era had attempted to change the beautiful face of the Deen, but Allaah Ta`ala had created rightful Ulama in each of these eras to combat these innovations, thereby safeguarding the Deen.

Alhamdulillah, all Praises are due to Allaah Ta`ala that the Baatil of the people of Baatil will never be successful in changing the beautiful face of this Deen, because Allaah Ta`ala had himself formulated the system for its protection. However, it is a matter without doubt that these people who innovate new, new things into the Deen, not only make apparent their wickedness, they lead many ignorant people astray as well.

Why would people ever initiate a Bid`ah

You will probably ask why these people innovate new, new things into the Deen, and how come the fear of Allaah Ta`ala does not

overcome them. To understand this it would be appropriate to take a stock of the reasons for and the machinations of innovating Bid`aat.

a) Firstly, the initial motivating factor of Bid`ah is ignorance. Bid`ah has an external façade of ‘beauty’ and ‘appeal’, and a person by looking at its outward appearance becomes infatuated with it. The naffs consoles one into believing that and interpreting this as a good and virtuous act, and since they believe it to be a good act, how can it ever be prohibited in the Shariah? Hence, by sufficing upon its outward ‘beauty’ a person becomes pleased to do it, whilst being oblivious and blind to its inherent and internal evil. A perfect example of this would be if an ugly and disfigured woman is donned in beautiful and exquisite clothing. Onlookers who are unaware of her actual condition merely look at the outward appearance and are infatuated with her looks. From afar she appears to be a beautiful creature. The general masses are generally restricted to outward facades and appearances, hence they are not as smitten by the Sunnat of Nabi (ﷺ) as they with their innovations.

b) Secondly, the second reason is the deception and bamboozling of shaitaan. You are quite aware that shaitaan is an open enemy of this Deen, the Sunnat and way of Nabi (ﷺ). He is well aware that this is the path which leads the children of Adam (ﷺ) to Jannat. He is also privy of the fact that even though he tediously leads man astray and involves him in sin, but when he (man) frees himself from the snares of sin, he just needs to present himself in the presence of Allaah Ta`ala just once and repent sincerely and all his (shaitaan’s) efforts are washed away. It is reported in a Hadith that when shaitaan was expelled from Allaah Ta`ala’s Court, this accursed took an oath that since he was expelled with the coming of and due to Adam (ﷺ), he

will spare no effort to mislead and deviate the children of Aadam (عليه السلام). Allaah Ta`ala also took an oath upon His Majesty and Grandeur that regardless of what a great sin man commits, as long he sincerely repents and concedes his mistake, he will be forgiven. [Mishkaat, page 204]

Sufyaan Thowri رضى الله عنه said that of all sins, Shaytaan loved Bid`ah practices the most because people practicing it never repent. Since people carrying out other sins realise that they are sinning, there is always hope of them repenting someday. As for the person carrying out acts of Bid`ah, they are never inspired to repent because they think that they are doing good. This is in reality what Iblees himself meant when he said, "I have broken the backs of the son of Aadam with sinning, but he has then broken my back with repentance. I have therefore devised such sins for them from which they will never repent. This is by way of the acts of Bid`ah." (Majaalisul Abraar pg.130)

In short, repentance and Istaghfaar has broken the back of shaitaan. It is for this reason that shaitaan has devised this plot of Bid`ahs, wherein he has no fear that man will ever make Tawbah and repent. Shaitaan was a teacher of the angels. He is aware of all the tricks in the book and he knows the interpretations for making Haraam Halaal, etc. He is also an expert on the nafs of man. He has a way of misleading every type of people in different ways. As you see nowadays, where propaganda is able to portray truth as false and vice versa, and the oppressor as the oppressed, and Haqq as Baatil and Baatil as Haqq. This is a small indication of shaitaan's trickery. It is extremely surprising that we see people deny the Haqq when it is as clear as the daylight, and they open the doors of doubt and

confusion. Some things are so clearly contrary to the Deen and even rationality that even a child will understand, yet people open the Qur`aan Majeed and Ahaadith to substantiate themselves. Now, if this is not the deception and bamboozling of shaitaan, what else can it be? Referring to this, the Qur`aan Majeed states:

"Shaitaan has beautified for them their acts."

In short, in order to create doubt and uncertainty in the hearts of people for the true Deen, and in order to beauty the new innovations, views and Bid`ahs, are all the work and plot of shaitaan, whereby he intends to lead mankind astray without any fear of failure. This matter can be discussed in a voluminous book. Imaams Ghazaali, Ibn Jawzi and Shu`raani (rahmatullahi

alaihim) have written books on this specific subject alone.

c) Thirdly: The third reason which gives rise to Bid`ahs is when the disease of name and fame enters into the people. It is in the natural disposition of man that he is attracted to new things, which he easily adopts. They are therefore on a constant lookout for new things. It is reported in a Hadith that close to Qiyaamah there will be many false (small) dajjaals, who will narrate such things which neither you nor your fathers have not heard before. Be wary of them and save yourself from being led astray by them and from becoming involved in Fitnahs. [Mishkaat, page 28]

d) Fourthly, One of the main reasons for the initiation of Bid`ah is the imitating of other nations. It is a natural principle and trait of civilisation and society that when different cultures intermingle then instinctively one exercises an effect on the other. That nation which does not preserve its culture, will inadvertently lose some of its

characteristics. That nation which is overpowered will fall at the feet of the overpowering one. The Muslim nation, as long as it was victorious over the other nations, protected its culture which remained intact and it had a definite effect on other nations. But, when the Imaan became cold and the cultural protection simmered down, it became susceptible to the other nations. In the present age, the effect of the English culture on the Muslims bears testimony to this fact. One of the effects of this overwhelming of other cultures is that at times the specialities and customs of other cultures, is given a Deeni flavour and stamp. It is a mystery that the Muslims in each area have different Bid`ahs. Those Bid`ahs that are common in India are not so in the Arab lands. And likewise, there are many Bid`ahs that are common in Egypt, Syria, etc, which are not so in India.

Islaam, spread widely and swiftly in India, but unfortunately, no much importance was attached to Deeni Ta`leem and upbringing. This is the reason why those Muslims who left Hinduism and entered the fold of Islaam, could not shake off their Hindi culture. In fact, the intense intermingling of the Muslims with the Hindus introduced other new things in to their (Muslim) culture. It is for this reason that we see the un-Islaamic customs amongst the Indian Muslims on the occasions of marriage, which the womenfolk are more aware than the men would be. This is all the effects and germs of the Hindu culture.

I am not implying that all the ways and customs of the Indian Muslims are from Hindu culture neither am I saying that all Muslims are involved therein. What I am saying is that most of these customs are not amongst the traits of Islaamic Shariah, rather they can be found amongst the Hindu society. There are many areas where the Muslims are greatly outnumbered by the Hindus and these Muslims were

never given an opportunity to learn the Deen properly, that their ignorance is to such an extent that even their names are those of Hindus and they (men) even sport ponytails like the Hindus. It is very clear that when people whose situation is so pathetic, how can they not become involved in Hindu culture and customs. Now, since this foreign (Hindu) culture and customs have become second nature to them (Muslims), they begin to envisage the Shariah as being alien and foreign. Many ignorant and unwary Muslims males and females, when they are made aware of Shar`i Masaa`il, they say: *“New, new Molvis, new, new Mas`alahs”*. It is as though those Hindu customs they have become accustomed to have become an integral part of the Deen and the teachings of Nabi (ﷺ) whereof they have been ignorant all their lives is some new Deen.

These are the few reasons which have given rise to the various Bid`ahs which have crept into the Islaamic Shariah. It is sad to note that the major fault of these innovations lie more with the learned people than the ignorant masses. These (learned) people have given impetus and spurred on these innovations instead of safeguarding the Deen from its evil.

A few Principles to differentiate between Sunnah and Bid`ah

Now I will outline a few principles, which will assist in easily differentiating between Sunnat and Bid`ah. The mother of all principles is the one I have mentioned above, that to understand anything to be part of the Deen which was not practiced by the Self-e-Saaliheen, is a Bid`ah. Now, we will list some corollary principles:

1) Firstly: The Shariah has stipulated certain acts for certain occasions. Now, if we, due to our own logic and desires, decide to enact a stipulated action on another occasion, then it will be a Bid`ah.

For example, Durood Shareef is read in the last sitting (Tashahhud) of Salaat. Now, if we decide through our own 'Ijtihad' that since Durood Shareef is no bad thing, in fact, it is a good thing, there will be no harm if we will incorporate it in the first Tashahhud of Salaat. This 'Ijtihad' of ours will be incorrect and the recital of Durood Shareef in the first Tashahhud will be regarded as a Bid`ah. The Fuqahaa have ruled that if a person mistakenly recites Durood Shareef in the first sitting, then if he only recited *Allaahumma Salli Ala*, it would not be necessary for him to make Sajdah-e-Sahw, but if he recited *Ala Muhammed*, then Sajdah-e-Sahw would be incumbent upon him. If he does not make Sajdah-e-Sahw, then his Salaat will have to be repeated.

Or for example, if a person makes this 'Ijtihad' that since '*As-Salaatu Was Salaamu Alaika Yaa Rasulullaah*' is read at the blessed grave of Nabi (ﷺ), he will recite the same whilst sitting in his house. This 'Ijtihad' of his is incorrect and will be termed a Bid`ah. The reason being that the Fuqahaa of the Ummat have stipulated this specific Durood for this specific occasion, and if its recital at any other occasion was permissible then the Shariah would have consented to it and the Salf-e-Saaliheen would have practiced upon it.

Another example of this is that once in the gathering of the Sahaabi, Saalim Bin Ubaid (رضي الله عنه), a person sneezed and he said: "*As-Salaamu Alaikum*". Saalim (رضي الله عنه) said: "*Upon you and your mother*". This person was astonished. Saalim (رضي الله عنه) then said: "*I have said exactly what I heard Nabi (ﷺ) saying on a similar occasion. Once in a gathering of*

Nabi (ﷺ) a person sneezed and he said 'As-Salaamu Alaikum', whereupon Nabi (ﷺ) said: 'Upon you and your mother'. Thereafter he said: 'If any of you sneezes, then he should say 'Alhamdulillah' and the person who hears this should reply with: 'Yar Hamukallaah', whereupon the sneezer will say: 'Yaghfirullahu Li Walakum'." [Mishkaat, page 406] The message here is that to veer away from the occasion which the Shariah has specified for saying *As-Salaamu Alaikum* and use it for another occasion is a Bid`ah.

Another example of this is to say the Athaan at the graveside. Everyone is well aware that besides the five daily Salaat and Jumuah, to give the Athaan and Iqaamat for the two Eids, Salaat Kusoof and Khusoof (solar and lunar eclipses), Salaatul Istisqaa and Janaazah Salaat is incorrect. The Shariah has not specified this. Now if any person decides to make his own 'Ijtihad' that just as the Athaan is made for people to gather for the five daily Salaat, the same be done here. Hence, Athaan must be called out on these occasions also. Then this 'Ijtihad' of his will be completely wrong, because had the reasoning offered by his honourable brain been worthy of any notice, then the Shariah would have specified the Athaan for all these occasions as well. Or for example, a person makes this 'Ijtihad' that because it is mentioned in a Hadith that shaitaan flees upon hearing the Athaan, so since it is important to keep shaitaan away from the deceased, we will give the Athaan at the graveside after the burial. Then this 'Ijtihad' will also be summarily dismissed and rejected. The reason being that firstly, shaitaan's enticement is only for before death, what work has shaitaan with a person who has already passed away? Secondly, had this reasoning been correct then it would have indeed occurred to Nabi (ﷺ), the Sahaabah and the Taabieen. However, the giving of the Athaan at the graveside is not established

by Nabi (ﷺ), the Sahaabah-e-Kiraam (رضي الله عنهم) or the Tabieen (rahmatullahi alaihim). For this reason have the Fuqahaa of the Ahle Sunnat branded this act a Bid`ah.

Allaamah Shaami (rahmatullahi alaihi) writes under the section *Baabul Athaan*, that it is recorded in the footnote of *Bahrur Raa`iq*, that some Shaafis have proffered the giving of the Athaan on the occasion of death as being Mustahab citing as a proof the giving of the Athaan at the time of birth. However, Ibn Hajar (rahmatullahi alaihi) has rejected this analogy. [Raddul Mukhtaar, page 385, vol.1] He further states under the section of burial of the dead, that the author (of Durrul Mukhtaar) has sufficed upon only stating the Masnoon method of burial. This indicates towards this fact that to give the Athaan on the occasion of burial, as is in vogue nowadays, is NOT Masnoon. Ibn Hajar (rahmatullahi alaihi) has clearly stated in his Fatwa that this act is a Bid`ah. [Ibid. page 235, vol.2]

Another example is the common practice of shaking hands after Salaat. The Shariah has specified Salaam and Musaafahah (shaking hands) for those who have come from outside. But, the futile act of those who are sitting in one gathering to suddenly make Musaafahah and Mu`aanaqah (embrace), was never practiced by the Salf-e-Saaliheen. It is unknown where the practice of the latter people sprung from of making Musaafahah after Fajr, Asr, two Eids and other Salaats. The Ulama of the Ahle Sunnat have clearly branded this act a Bid`ah. Sheikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlwi (rahmatullahi alaihi) states in the commentary of Mishkaat under the section of Musaafahah:

“This practice of some people making Musaafahah after the general Salaats and Jumuah Salaat is no Sunnat. It is a Bid`ah.” [Ash`atul Lam`aat, page 22, vol.4]

Mulla Ali Qaari (رحمته الله) states in the commentary of Mishkaat:

“On this basis, some of our Ulama have stated this act to be Makrooh. In this case it is a contemptible Bid`ah.” [Footnote of Mishkaat, page 401]

Allaamah Ibn Aabideen Shaami (rahmatullahi alaihi) states:

“And some of our (Hanafi) Ulama and others have expressly stated the impermissibility of the customary Musaafahah after Salaat, notwithstanding the fact that Musaafahah is Sunnat. The reason for this impermissibility is nothing other than (the fact that) it is not reported as being an occasion for Musaafahah by the Salf-e-Saaliheen.” [Raddul Mukhtaar, page 235, vol.2]

I have outlined here just a few examples regarding this matter otherwise there are thousands of examples in front of me. The crux of the matter is that it is a Bid`ah to carry out an action at a time other than which the Shariah has specified.

2) Secondly: it is a Bid`ah to stipulate conditions for those things which the Shariah has left general.

For example, the Shariah has not specified any particular occasion for visiting the graveyard. Now, to specify a particular time for visiting the grave of a Buzrug and to understand it as being necessary is a Bid`ah. Shah Abdul Azeez Muhaddith Dehlwi (رحمته الله) was asked whether it was correct to specify a day for visiting the graves or to go there on

the day of *Urs*, which was held on a specific day? Shah Sahib (ﷺ) replied: *“To specify a particular day for visiting the graves is a Bid`ah, whilst actual visiting (of the graves) is permissible. It was not a habit of the Salf-e-Saaliheen to specify a particular day. It is a Bid`ah for this reason that while in reality it is permissible but the specifying of a time is Bid`ah. An example of this is the making of Musaafahah after the Asr Salaat, which is a custom in certain areas. However there is no harm in making Dua for the deceased on the day of Urs, but to deem it as being necessary is a Bid`ah.”* [Fataawa Azeezi, page 89, vol.1]

And nowadays with the nonsense that takes place at the *Urs*, no rational and right-minded person will regard it as being permissible.

Similarly the Shariah has not specified a particular occasion for conveying *Isaal-e-Thawaab* to Nabi (sallAllaahu alaihi wasallam), buzrugs and general Muslims. Whenever a person desires he may convey *Isaal-e-Thawaab*. Therefore it is a Bid`ah to specify a particular time and a particular way and to understand it as being necessary. Shah Abdul Azeez Muhaddith Dehlwi (rahmatullahi alaih) was asked whether it was correct to prepare food as *Isaal-e-Thawaab* in Rabiul Awwal on the occasion of the demise of Rasulullaah (ﷺ) and in Muharram for Hadhrat Hussein (ﷺ) and other Ahle Bait. He replied:

“For this act it is a Bid`ah to specify a certain day and month. Yes, if an action is done at a time when maximum reward is reaped, for example, during the month of Ramadhaan, a believer’s actions are multiplied seventy times. Then there will be no harm (to make Isaal-e-Thawaab), because Nabi (ﷺ) had encouraged it (i.e. to do good actions in this month). According to Hadhrat Ali (ﷺ) those things which Nabi (ﷺ) had not encouraged or specified a time for, are vain and futile acts, and such acts are contrary to the Sunnat of Rasulullaah (ﷺ).

Those things which are contrary to the Sunnat are Haraam. If anyone desires he may give charity secretly on any day he wishes. So that there is no name and fame involved.” [Fataawa Azeezi, page 93]

Based on this rule the Ulama of the Ahle Sunnat have branded the acts of *teeja, saatwa, nowa, chaaliswa* as Bid`ah.

Sheikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddith Dehlwi (ﷺ) states in *Sharhe Safar-e-Sa`aadat*:

“It was not the habit of our beloved Nabi (ﷺ) to gather (the people) for the deceased except for the (Janaazah) Salaat, and to recite Qur`aan Majeed, to make Khatam, neither at the graveside nor any other place. All these acts are Bid`ah and Makrooh. Yes, to make Ta`ziyat, console the bereaved, to exhort them with patience, are Sunnat and Mustahab acts. But the acts of gathering on the third day and other frivolities, and to make use of the wealth of the deceased the right of orphans without bequest are all Haraam and Bid`ah.” [page 273]

From this we understand that the custom of *Rasme Qul* which takes place in our areas where people gather and make khatam and enact other customs are all against the Shariah and Bid`ah.

Without doubt it is correct to convey *Isaal-e-Thawaab* to the deceased by means of Thikr, Tasbeeh, Tilaawat, Durood Shareef and charity. But to gather at the house of the deceased and to eat food which is prepared with his wealth and to feed others are contrary to the Shariah.

Qaadhi Thanaullaah Paani Pati (ﷺ) mentioned in his Final Bequest:

“After my demise worldly customs such as Daswah, Beeswah, Shashma`ee, etc must NOT be carried out, because Nabi (ﷺ) has not made bereaving permissible for more than three days, in fact, it is Haraam.” [Maala Budda Minh, page 160]

Allaamah Shaami (rahmatullahi alaih) states in the footnote of *Fathul Qadeer*:

“It is not permissible for the bereaved to entertain (i.e. invite others for meals). Because indeed this (entertainment – inviting for meals) is done during times of happiness and not on the occasion of grief and sorrow. This is a deplorable Bid`ah. It is reported by Imaan Ahmed and Ibn Majah in an authentic narration from Jareer Bin Abdullaah who said: ‘We used to regard the gathering at the house of the deceased and the preparation of food as Nauhah (customary lamentation).” [Raddul Mukhtaar, page 240, vol. 2]

Allaamah Shaami (rahmatullahi alaih) also states in *Fataawa Bazaaziya* :

“It is Makrooh to prepare food on the first day, the third day, after a week, to take food to the grave, to make arrangements and invite others for Tilaawat of Qur`aan Majeed, to make Khatam, recital of Surah An`aam or Ikhlās, etc. It is Makrooh to gather and feed pious people and Qaaris for recitation of Qur`aan Majeed.”

Further on he states:

“According to us and the Shaafis, this act is Makrooh (-e-Tahrimi), especially when amongst the inheritors there are minor children and persons who are not present. Besides this, there are many other distasteful events that take place at these occasions, for example

many candles and lamps are lit, drums are played, women and beardless boys are gathered, money is paid for the recital of the Qur`aan Majeed, etc., etc. All such things occur in these times. There is absolutely no doubt that these things are Haraam and Baatil.” [Ibid.]

3) Thirdly, it is incumbent to carry out an act of Ibaadat in the way prescribed by the Shariah. It is Haraam and Bid`ah to veer from and change this prescribed way. For example, the Shariah has stipulated that the Qiraat of the daytime Salaat be read softly and that the nighttime, Jumua and Eid Salaats be read in a loud voice. Now if a person out of enthusiasm decides to perform Zuhr and Asr with loud Qiraat then this act is a Bid`ah and impermissible.

Or for example, in the loud Salaats *SubhaanakAllaahumma* and *A`uzu Billaah* are read softly. Now if a person decides to read these loudly then it will be impermissible.

Or for example, the Ahaadith Shareef specify numerous Duas and Thikrs to be recited after the completion of Salaat, but our Nabi (ﷺ) and the Sahaabah (رضي الله عنهم) never recited these in a loud voice. In fact, each person recited them individually. From this we understand that the Shariah has intended this method for these Duas and Thikrs, and the Ummat has been instructed likewise. Contrary to this, you may have noticed that in some Masaajid people sway their heads from side to side and recite the Kalimah Shareef in loud voices. This method is Bid`ah because it is in opposition to the method of Nabi (ﷺ) and the Shariah.

4) Fourthly, it is a Bid`ah to perform those Ibaadaat in a congregational form which the Shariah has specified to be individually

performed. For example, the Fardh Salaat is read in a congregation and the Shariah has intended it to be performed congregationally. However the Shariah has specified the Nafil Salaat be performed individually. It is for this reason that our Fuqahaa have said that it is Makrooh and Bid`ah to perform Nafil Salaat in congregation.

Allaamah Shaami (rahmatullahi alaih) states:

“It is for this reason that the Ulama have prohibited the performance of congregational Nafil Salaat, as has been initiated by some worshippers, because it has not been narrated to be performed in this fashion on these particular nights. Even though Salaat on its own is a commendable and virtuous act.” [Raddul Mukhtaar, page 235, vol. 2]

From this we understand the ruling of performing congregational Salaat on the nights of *Baraat, Mi`raj and Qadr*.

Or for example, it has not been reported from Nabi (ﷺ), the Sahaabah (رضي الله عنهم) or the Taabieen (rahmatullahi alaihim) that they made congregational Dua after Sunnat or Nafil Salaat. Therefore the custom which is prevalent in our midst where the congregation wait for the Imaam after their Sunnat and Nafil Salaat for him to make a Dua whereupon the people will say *Aameen* is incorrect. There will be no harm if this is done very rarely where the people wait for a pious person, so as to join him in Dua. But to make this a habit is Bid`ah.

Or for example, the Shariah has stipulated a specific method for the performance of Janaazah Salaat. However, it has not taught us to make a congregational dua after the Janaazah Salaat neither has this been the practice of our Nabi (ﷺ), the Sahaabah (رضي الله عنهم) or the Taabieen (rahmatullahi alaihim). For this reason, it is a Bid`ah to make a

congregational dua after the Janaazah Salaat and to deem it a Sunnat. If someone wants to make a dua after the Janaazah Salaat, then immediately after the Salaat, without any delay, the bier has to be lifted and taken away. During this procedure each person can make an individual dua. If the desire is to make dua then, at the graveside one may make abundant dua. We do not have permission to veer from or change the method which has been reported from Nabi (ﷺ).

Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi has written the following principles to aid a person in understanding the ruling of certain gatherings which border between permissibility and Bid`ah: “There are certain principles of Islamic law worth mentioning, which will be helpful in understanding the discussion.

First Principle

To consider and believe an unnecessary action to be necessary or to consistently act upon it with such persistence that it equals or exceeds the amount of effort put into obligatory (*fard*) or compulsory (*wajib*) acts — to the extent that it is considered blameworthy to leave this action and the one who leaves it is considered worthy of rebuke — then this action will be prohibited. This is because this involves trespassing the rulings of Shari`ah. To create unnecessary restrictions (*taqyid*), stipulations (*ta`yin*), specifications (*takhsis*), to practice upon it with such fervor and commitment that one takes it as his obligation (*iltizam*), to stipulate limits and restrictions (*tahdid*), etc. are all done because of the above two emotions and sentiments. Allah Most High has said in the Qur`an that whoever exceeds the limits set by Allah Most High is from the oppressors.

Abdullah ibn Mas'ud (رضي الله عنه) said: "You should not give away a part of your salaah to Shaytan by thinking that it is necessary to move away [after finishing the salaah] from one's right side only; I have seen Rasulullah (ﷺ) often leave from the left side" (*Bukhari*). Teebi, the commentator of *Mishkat al-Masabih*, said that it is learned from this *hadith* that whoever insists on a *mustahabb* (recommended) matter and is determined in strictly adhering to it (*'azimah*) without ever making exception and practicing on the concession (*rukhsah*), i.e., acting upon its opposite, then Shaytan takes his part in misguiding this person. So, what can be said regarding that person who insists upon a *bid'ah* or an evil action (i.e., an unlawful belief or action)?

The author of *Majma'* said that it is learned from this *hadith* that sometimes a *mandub* (recommended) action becomes *makruh* if it is thought that it will be taken beyond its position. Based on this, Hanafi jurists have declared the specifying of *surahs* in prayer as *makruh*, regardless if the adherence is in belief or practice. This matter has been clearly mentioned in *Fath al-Qadir*. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Rasulullah (ﷺ) said: "Do not single out the night [preceding] Friday among the nights for prayer and do not single out Friday among days for fasting, except if one of you is accustomed to fast [on dates] which coincide with this day (Friday)." (*Muslim*)

Second Principle

A *mubah* action, in fact even a *mustahabb* one, becomes unlawful and prohibited due to the joining of an unlawful action with it. For example, going to a dinner party [which one is invited to] is *mustahabb*, rather it is a *sunnah*, but the presence of an unlawful action at this gathering will make it prohibited to go there. Similar to

this has been mentioned in the *hadiths* and [books such as] *Al-Hidayah*, etc. Similarly, performing supererogatory (*nafl*) prayer is *mustahabb*, but during *makruh* times it is prohibited and sinful. It is understood from this that a lawful action becomes unlawful due to its association and affiliation with an unlawful action.

Third Principle

If an unnecessary action of the Ulama and pious causes an incorrect belief to be formed in the minds of the masses (*awam*), then this action will become *makruh* and prohibited for them because saving fellow Muslims from harm is an obligation. It is [incumbent] upon the Ulama and pious to abandon this action.

An incident is related in the noble *hadith* about when Rasulullah (ﷺ) made the intention to include the Hatim (round wall near Ka'ba) inside the Ka'ba. Because Rasulullah (ﷺ) felt that those who had recently entered Islam might develop unsoundness in their belief or anxiety in their hearts and to include the Hatim in the structure was not something necessary, he [decided to] put off this matter and explicitly mentioned this reason [i.e., his concern about their reaction]. This is even though to include the Hatim inside the structure [of the Ka'ba] was *mustahsan* (commendable) but to avoid the possibility of causing any harm to the masses, he left a *mustahsan* act.

In *Sunan Ibn Majah*, a narration from Sayyiduna 'Abdullah (رضي الله عنه) is mentioned that to provide food to the household of the deceased person on the first day was a *sunnah* but when people made it a custom, it was abandoned and prohibited. From this it can be

observed that in order to preserve the faith of the masses, the elect also abandoned this act.

The act of doing the *sajdah* (prostration) of thankfulness is *mubah* (permissible) according to the *Hadith*, but Hanafi jurists, as mentioned by ‘Allamah Ibn ‘Abidin al-Shami (رحمته الله), declared this act to be *makruh* in case the masses start considering it a desired *sunnah*. It is mentioned in ‘*Alamgiri (Fatawa Hindiyyah)* that people used to do this (*sajdah*) after prayers and it is *makruh* because ignorant people will begin considering it *sunnah* and *wajib*. Any *mubah* action which comes to this becomes *makruh*.

Yes, if it is necessary or an objective in the Shari’ah, it will not be abandoned. Rather, in this instance, the corrupt traits which have crept in it will be rectified. For instance, the act of accompanying the funeral [procession] will not be abandoned due to the association of a *makruh* action with it such as the presence of a wailing woman; rather the wailing will be prohibited. This is because this (funeral) is something necessary (an objective in Shari’ah) and it will not be abandoned because of a temporary *karahah* (reprehensibility). This is in contrast to accepting the dinner invitation, which should be refused after [one becomes aware of] the *makruh* action’s association with it because the dinner party [in itself] is not something necessary [in the religion]. ‘Allamah Ibn ‘Abidin al-Shami has differentiated [between] these issues as well.

Fourth Principle

If an unlawful action (like bid’ah, etc.) yields benefits, but to acquire those benefits is not necessarily required by the Shari’ah or it is required by the Shari’ah, yet there are other ways to obtain such

benefits, and [this action] is done with the intention of obtaining these benefits, then this is not permissible. A *mubah* [action] performed with a good intention becomes worship (*‘ibadah*) but sin (*ma’siyah*) is not *mubah*, even if it contains thousands of benefits. It is not lawful to commit such an act, nor is it allowed to remain silent on it. This principle is very much self-evident. (Condensed from *Islaahur Rusoom* and slightly modified)

I am certain that big, big Bid`ahs spring up from such sources. The root of all these sources is as I have mentioned earlier, i.e. it is a Bid`ah to introduce as part of the Deen something which was not reported from Nabi (ﷺ), the Sahaabah (رضي الله عنهم) or the Taabieen (rahmatullahi alaihim).

A Few Important Rules

Sufficing upon this we will hereunder list a few important rules.

1) Firstly: some people authenticate Bid`ahs by narrating false and incorrect narrations. It is for this reason the one should remember the following rule which the author of *Durrul Mukhtaar* and Ibn Aabideen Shaami (رحمته الله) have reported. That is, there are three conditions before one practices upon weak narrations. Firstly, the narration must not be excessively weak, for example, none of its narrators must be a liar or accused of lying. Secondly, that thing (stated in the narration) must conform to some general principle of the Shariah. Thirdly, it must not be regarded as a Sunnah practice. [*Raddul Mukhtaar*, page 128, vol. 1]

It is noted that some people kiss their thumbs upon hearing the blessed name of our Nabi (ﷺ) during the Athaan and Iqaamat. In substantiating this act of theirs they cite a narration of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه),

but unfortunately none of the above three conditions apply to this narration.

Firstly, this narration is so fabricated that the experts in the field of *Ilm-e-Hadith* have classified its content as conjured. Secondly, this narration does not conform to any principle of the Deen. Thirdly, the perpetrators of this act not only consider it a Sunnat, in fact, they regard it as a noteworthy *Shi`aar* (hallmark) of Islaam. Allaamah Shaami (رحمته) and other seniors have regarded such acts as a slander against Rasulullaah (ﷺ). The person who fabricated this narration due to his inanity has not considered the fact that the Athaan and Iqaamat is not called out only once in the day, in fact, they are called out ten times. Now, if it was Sunnat to kiss the thumbs at the time of Athaan and Iqaamat, then in the same way as the Athaan and Iqaamat has been transmitted continuously down the annals of Islaamic history so too would this act also have been transmitted likewise. This Hadith would have been reported in all the Kitaabs and it would have been practiced by the entire Ummat from east to west. The Ulama of the Ummat have expressly stated that if there is an authentic Hadith which contradicts a consistent practice of the Ummat (i.e. a practice which has been carried out by the Ummat during all the eras), then we will interpret this narration as having been abrogated or another suitable interpretation will be made. Nevertheless to practice upon a narration which contradicts the continuous practice of the Ummat is incorrect.

Imaam Abu Bakr Raazi (رحمته) has explained this rule in great detail in his Kitaab *Ahkaamal Qur`aan*. He has stated that based on this our Ulama have issued the ruling that if the horizon is completely clear then the testimony of one or two men for the sighting of the moon of

Ramadhāan or Eid is not sufficient. In fact, the group who testify to the sighting of the moon must be so large that there can be no possibility of error. Hence to rely upon the testimony of one or two people would mean that we consider the other thousands of inhabitants of that area to be blind.

Imaam Sarakhsi (rahmatullahi alaih) has listed four reasons for refuting a narration:

1. It is contradictory to the Qur`aan Majeed
2. It is contradictory to the *Sunnat-e-Mutawaatirah* and *Mash-hoorah* (unanimous and authentic Sunnat)
3. It is such a mas`alah which applies to every individual yet it is contrary to the general practice
4. This mas`alah was debated upon by the Salf-e-Saaliheen, but they have not given a definite ruling on it. [Usool Sarakhsi, page 364, vol. 1]

He writes regarding the second type:

“Similarly a rare Hadith from Khabar-e-Aahaad will be rejected in so far as practicing upon it, if it is contradictory to a Sunnat-e-Mash-hoorah (famous narration). The reason for this is, the narration which is continuous and its chain is unbroken or it is unanimously agreed upon falls under the category of the Qur`aan Majeed regarding its being absolutely certain. That which is doubtful would be rejected when compared to something which is absolutely certain.” [Ibid. page 366]

Hereunder, Imaam Sarakhsi (rahmatullahi alaihi) has noted a very delicate point, whose mentioning I feel is necessary at this juncture:

“To differentiate narrations between these two types requires great knowledge. It is also a means of proper safeguarding of the Deen. The root cause of Bid`ahs and whimsical opinion is manifested when weak narrations are pitted against the Qur`aan Majeed and Sunnat-e-Mashhoorah (i.e. there is no proper differentiation between these categories).”

2) Secondly, it is extremely necessary to omit such acts wherein there is imitation of the kuffaar, fujjaar and Bid`atees. Because Nabi (sallAllahu alaihi wasallam) has in many Ahaadith prohibited imitating the kuffaar and fujjaar (open sinners).

In one Hadith it is mentioned: **“Whoever imitates a nation is amongst them.”** [Mishkaat page 375] Based on this principle, the Ulama have prohibited the celebration of *Tazkirah Shahaadat* of Hussein (ؑ) which takes place in Muharram. It is stated in *Usoolus Sifaar* and *Jaami`ur Rumooz*: *“It was asked whether it is permissible to commemorate the occasion of the martyrdom of Hussein (ؑ) on the 10th Muharram. He replied: ‘No! Because indeed this is in imitation of the Rawaafidh.’”* [Page 140]

It is established from this principle that all such actions which resemble the Ahle Bid`ah are necessarily to be refrained from.

3) Thirdly, If there is a doubt in any particular action regarding its being either a Sunnat or Bid`ah, then to omit a Sunnah is better than to commit a Bid`ah [Bahrur Raa`iq, page 21, vol. 2]. It is stated in *Raddul Mukhtaar* on page 642, vol. 1:

“If a ruling (regarding an certain act) is suspended between it being a Sunnat or Bid`ah, then it is preferable to leave out a Sunnat than to perpetrate a Bid`ah.”

From this principle the ruling of all those actions wherein there appears a doubt between it being a Sunnat or Bid`ah is established. Some people aver an action to be a Sunnat and others say it is a Bid`ah.

If you study carefully the notes that I have outlined regarding Sunnat and Bid`ah and understand them, then you will never be faced with a dilemma regarding establishing who are the Ahle Sunnat.

A Few Examples of Bid`ah

In conclusion, I would like to list a few things which many of the Ulama of the Ahlus Sunnat Wal Jama`at have branded as Bid`ah. All Muslims of the Ahlus Sunnat Wal Jamaat must necessarily abstain from such acts:

To have all sorts of functions and festivities at the gravesites. To solidify the graves. To construct domes at the graves. To drape sheets (*Chadars*) over the graves. To prostrate at the graves. To make Tawaaf there. To stand there as though you are in Salaat. To kiss the graves and tombs. To stroke them. To make *Nazar* (vows) and *Niyaaz* there. To place flowers there. To have *Urs* for the pious. To place things on their graves. To have *Qawaali* (music and songs). To call people and have all sorts of festivities there. To make *vows* on the name of buzrugs. To make sacrifices on their names. To make dua of them. To light lamps at their graves. To celebrate *Eid Meelad* on the 12th Rabiul Awwal. To light lamps on this occasion. To listen to fabricated narrations on the occasion of *Meelad*. To recite incorrect

and inappropriate poems. To make images of the blessed grave of Nabi (ﷺ), to make images and models of the Kaabatullaah. To kiss the thumbs when Athaan and Iqaamat are being recited. To shake vigorously whilst making Thikr, such that it disturbs those performing Salaat. To regard the standing up before the Mukabbir says “*Qad Qaamatis Salaat*” in the Iqaamat as being bad. To shake hands after Salaat. To recite Durood and Salaam before the Athaan. To celebrate *Gyaarwi Shareef*. To make *Khatam* over food. To celebrate *Teejaa, Nawaah, Daswah, Beeswah, and Chaaliswah*, etc. To invent special and specific ways and methods for making *Isaal-e- Thawaab*, and to rigidly adhere to them. To have *Maatam (mourn the death of Sayyiduna Husain)* in Muharram. To take out *Ta`ziyah (a Shia custom in which the martyrdom of Sayyiduna Husain is re-enacted)*. To take remuneration for reciting the Qur`aan Shareef. To give Athaan at the graveside. To place grain on the graves, etc., etc.

The claim of some that speaking against Bid`ah is a means of causing controversy

Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (رحمۃ اللہ علیہ) narrates, “Once in a wa`z (lecture) I spoke on the subject of innovated customs and practices. After the lecture, one gentleman said to me: “Molvies should not talk on such topics because it breeds controversy; differences arise among Muslims, resulting in the formation of sects.” I said to him: Our lecturing is dependent on your actions. We shall continue to speak in the light of the actions and conditions of the people. If people refrain from innovations, we too, shall desist from speaking on these topics. The charge of creating differences, controversy and sects thus rebounds on those who indulge in innovations, not on us. If people refrain from such deeds, we shall refrain from such topics. The

Shari`ah does not command such customs and deeds which have wrought great evil in the Ummah. It is therefore imperative to abstain from these innovations. (Ashraful jawaab)

QUESTIONS

- 1) What is Sunnah?
- 2) What is Bid'ah?
- 3) Briefly mention five principles which will help one in understanding Bid'ah?
- 4) Why is Bid'ah so evil? Mention 2 reasons. If it is so evil, why would Muslims initiate Bid'ah? Mention all the reasons given by the author.
- 5) Mention all the above-mentioned principles which will help one to differentiate between Sunnah and Bid'ah? Mention one example for every principle.
- 6) Mention ten actions which are Bid'ah.

Sources

Some of the primary sources which were consulted when preparing these notes were:

- The Qur'an
- Tafsir Ibn Kathir, Ruhul Ma'ani, Ad-Durrul Manthoor and other books of Tafsir
- The Sihaah Sittah, Majma'uz Zawaa'id, Jaamiul Usool, Jam'ul Jawaami' and other books of Hadith
- Ikhtilaaf-e-Ummat aur Siraat Mustaqeem – Moulana Muhammad Yusuf Ludhyanwi
- Ashraful Jawaab – Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi
- Islaahur Rusoom - Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi
- Fataawa Raheemiyyah – Mf. Abdur-Raheem Lajpuri