

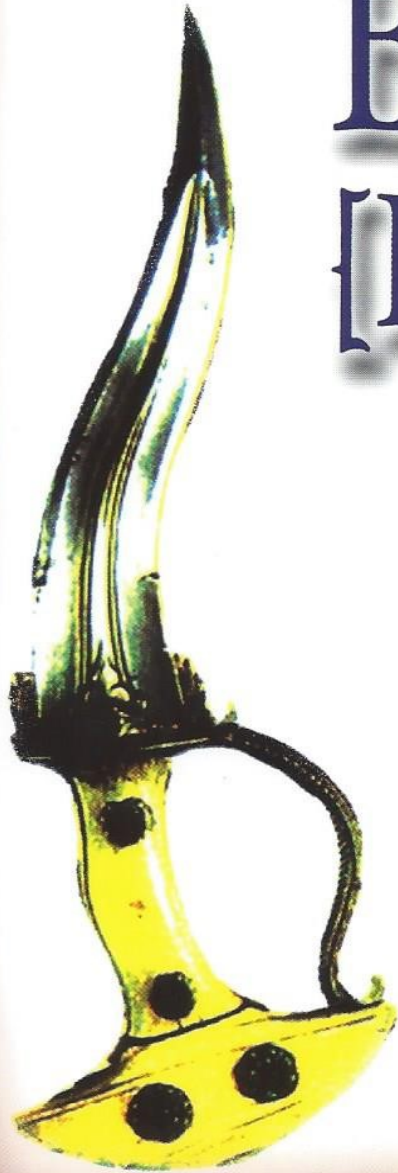
الْبِدْع

Bid'ah [Innovations]

and their evil effects

The Unique Nature Of The Perfection
Found In Islaam And The Grave Danger
Of Innovating Into It...

The Great Scholar Of
The Sunnah & Islaam
Muhammad Ibn Saaleh
Al-Uthaymeen
(died 1421 AH)



THE UNIQUE NATURE
OF THE PERFECTION FOUND
IN THE SHAREE'AH AND THE
DANGER OF INNOVATING INTO IT



by

The Virtuous Shaikh
Muhammad ibn Saalih al-'Uthaymeen
May Allaah pardon him and his parents and all the Muslims

Translated by
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Introduction

All praises belong to Allaah; we praise Him, we seek His assistance and we seek His forgiveness, and to Him do we turn (in repentance). We seek protection in Allaah from the evil of ourselves and from the evil of our actions. Whosoever Allaah guides, none can misguide; and whosoever Allaah misguides, then there is no guide for him. I testify that there is none worthy of worship but Allaah, alone, there being no partner with Him; and I testify that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger, whom Allaah dispatched with guidance and the Religion of Truth, and thus he has conveyed the Message and discharged the duty he was entrusted with, and he has been a sincere advisor to the nation, and he has striven truthfully for the sake of Allaah, up until that which was inevitable over took him, (i.e., his death.)

So he left his nation upon a clear white path¹, its night being like its day, no one strays from it except that he is destroyed. He explained all those matters that his nation needed to know, to the extent that Aboo Dharr (رضي الله عنه) said, "The Prophet (ﷺ) did not leave a single bird in the sky, that would flap its wings, except that he would mention to us some knowledge concerning it."² And one of the *mushriks* said to Salmaan al-Faarsee (رضي الله عنه) "Your Prophet even teaches you concerning excrement (i.e., the manners of relieving oneself). So Salmaan said, "Yes, he (ﷺ)

¹ Reported by Ahmad (4/126), Ibn Maajah (no. 43) and al-Haakim (1/96).

² Reported by Ahmad, 5/152-153.

has forbidden us from facing the *Qiblah* while defecating or urinating, and he has forbidden us from cleaning ourselves with less than three stones, or with the right hand, or with dung balls or bone.”¹

THE QUR‘AAN EXPLAINS ALL MANNER OF THINGS

If you were to look into this Mighty Qur‘aan, then (it would be clear that) Allaah has explained the principles and details of the religion and he has explained *tawheed* by way of all of its different aspects. He has even explained the manners involved at gatherings and when seeking permission to enter places, as He, the Most High, said:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ
ءَامَنُوْا اِذَا قِيْلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوْا فِى الْمَجْلِسِ فَاَفْسَحُوْا يَفْسَحِ
اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ

O you who believe! When it is said to you to make room (for others) in the gathering, then make room. Allaah will give you (ample) room (from His Mercy).²

And He, the Most High, said:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ
ءَامَنُوْا لَا تَدْخُلُوْا بُيُوْتًا غَيْرِ بُيُوْتِكُمْ حَتّٰى تَسْتَأْنِسُوْا
وَتُسَلِّمُوْا عَلٰى اَهْلِهَا ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾

¹ Reported in *Saheeh Muslim*, (Eng. trans. 1, no. 504).

² Soorah al-Mujaadalah (58):11.

فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّىٰ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ
 قِيلَ لَكُمْ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَىٰ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ
 عَلِيمٌ

O you who believe! Do not enter a house other than your own until you ask permission and send the greeting of salaams upon the occupants. That is best for you—perhaps you will bear it in mind. And if you do not find anyone there, then do not enter until you have been given permission. And if you are told to go back, then do so. That is purer for you, and Allaah knows what you do.¹

Even the manners of clothing are dealt with, as Allaah, the Most High, said:

وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي لَا يَرْجُونَ
 نِكَاحًا فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ
 غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَاتٍ بِزِينَةٍ

And concerning those old women who cannot bear children and who do not expect to get married, then there is no sin upon them to show their (outer) clothes ensuring not to expose their ornaments.²

¹ Soorah an-Noor (24):27-28.

² Ibid., ayah 60.

And He, the Most High said:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ
عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلْبَابِهِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ أَدْنَىٰ أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ وَكَانَ
اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

O Prophet! Tell your wives and daughters and the believing women to draw their cloaks (veils) over themselves. That is more appropriate, so that they should be recognised and not molested, and Allaah is Pardoning and Merciful.¹

He also said:

وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ

And they should not strike their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their beauty.²

He also said:

وَلَيْسَ الْبِرُّ
بِأَنْ تَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهَا وَلَكِنَّ الْبِرَّ مِنَ اتَّقَىٰ
وَأْتُوا الْبُيُوتَ مِنْ أَبْوَابِهَا

It is not piety that you should approach your houses from their back (entrances), but piety is that you fear (Allaah). So enter your houses via their doors.³

¹ Soorah al-Ahzaab (33):59.

² Soorah an-Noor (24):31.

³ Soorah al-Baqarah (2):189.

And the like of these *ayaahs* are many, showing that this *Deen* is totally complete, there being no need to add to it, just as it is not permitted to take anything away from it. Hence, Allaah, the Most High, said when describing the Qur'aan:

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بَيِّنًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

And We have revealed to you the Book, as an explanation of everything.¹

So there is nothing which mankind is in need of, in terms of their present and coming lives, except that Allaah has made it clear in His Book, either via a clear text, or symbolically, or an explicit statement or via what can be understood.

O brothers! Indeed there are some people who explain the saying of Allaah, the Most High:

وَمَا
مِّن دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَمٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ
مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ

And there is not a single beast on the earth, nor a bird that flies by its wings, except that they are communities like yours. And We have not neglected anything from the Book. Then you will gathered unto your Lord.²

by saying that His statement:

مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ

¹ Soorah an-Nahl (16):89.

² Soorah al-An'aam (6):38.

And We have not omitted anything from the Book.¹

as meaning that the Book is the Qur'aan. However the truth is that the Book mentioned here is the Preserved Tablet. As for the Qur'aan, then Allaah, the Most High has described it via a clearer rebuttal (of the above view) in His saying:

وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بَيِّنَاتٍ لِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

And We have revealed to you the Book, as an explanation for everything.²

So this statement is clearer and more specific than His saying:

مَا فَرَطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ

And We have not neglected anything from the Book.³

WHAT ABOUT THOSE MATTERS THE QUR'AAN DOES NOT EXPLICITLY DEAL WITH?

Perhaps then someone would say: But where in the Qur'aan do we find that the number of prayers to be performed (each day) is five? (Where do we find) the number of (*rak'ahs* in) each prayer in the Qur'aan? So how can it be correct that we do not find in the Qur'aan an explanation for the number of *rak'aat* in each prayer while at the same time Allaah says, **“And We have revealed to you the Book as an explanation for everything?”** The reply to this is that Allaah, the Most High, has made clear to us in His Book that it is obligatory to take what the Messenger has said and what he (ﷺ) has indicated to us.

¹ Soorah al-An'aam (6):38.

² Soorah an-Nahl (16):89.

³ Soorah al-An'aam (6):38.

(Allaah, the Most high, says):

مَنْ يُطِيعِ الرَّسُولَ فَقَدْ أَطَاعَ اللَّهَ

Whoever obeys the Messenger, has obeyed Allaah.¹

And:

وَمَا آتَاكُمْ الرَّسُولُ فَخُذُوهُ وَمَا نَهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ فَانْتَهُوا

Whatever the Messenger gives you, then take it and whatever he prohibits you, then stay away from it.²

So whatever the *Sunnah* has explained, then indeed the Qur'aan implied it, because the *Sunnah* is one of the two types of revelation which Allaah revealed to His Messenger (ﷺ), and gave him the knowledge of. As Allaah, the Most High, said:

وَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ

And Allaah has revealed to you the Book and the Wisdom.³

Hence as a result of this, whatever comes in the *Sunnah* has come in the Book of Allaah, the Mighty and Glorious.

O brothers! Once that matter has become clear to you, then can it be said that the Prophet (ﷺ) died while leaving something from Allaah's chosen religion unexplained? Never! For the Prophet (ﷺ) made clear all the Religion, be it by what

¹ Soorah an-Nisaa (4):80.

² Soorah al-Hashr (59):7.

³ Soorah an-Nisaa (4):113.

he said, or did, or by his affirmation - be it an initial statement or his response to a question. Or sometimes Allaah would send a Bedouin from the depths of the desert to approach the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) asking about some matter of the Religion that those Companions who would constantly be with the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) would not ask. Hence they would be happy when a Bedouin would ask the Prophet (ﷺ) about certain matters. So this should show you that the Prophet (ﷺ) did not leave anything that the people would be in need of, concerning their worship, dealings, and livelihood, without explaining it. And the Saying of He, the Most High, indicates this:

الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ
عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا

Today I have completed for you your Religion and perfected My Favour upon you, and have chosen Islaam as your Religion.¹

Once that has become firm with you, O Muslim, then know that everyone who innovates a law into the Religion of Allaah – even if it be with a good intention – then this innovation of his is something astray, being viewed as a slander against the Religion of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, and it is considered to be a denial of Allaah’s saying, “**This day I have completed your Religion for you ...**” because this innovator, who has innovated a law into the Religion of Allaah (which is not from the Religion of Allaah), is practically saying the Religion is not perfect and complete as it left behind this law which he innovated in order to get closer to Allaah, the Mighty and Glorious.

¹ Soorah al-Maa’idah (5):3.

WHO ARE THOSE WHO TRULY GLORIFY ALLAAH AND LOVE HIS PROPHET (ﷺ)?

And it is astonishing that a person would innovate something relating to Allaah Himself, the Mighty and Glorious, and to His Names and Attributes, and then says that by doing this, he is glorifying his Lord and is declaring honour for Him and is submitting to the Words of the Most High:

فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَنْدَادًا

So do not set up rivals with Allaah.¹

Indeed you should be amazed at this, that he should innovate this *bid'ah* into Allaah's Religion, attributing it to Allaah Himself, and yet the *Salaf* of this *Ummah* nor the scholars of this *Ummah* were upon it. And then he says that *he* is the one who is declaring honour for Allaah, and is glorifying Him and *he* is the one who is submitting to the Saying of Allaah, the Most High, "So do not set up rivals with Allaah." And if anyone opposes this, then this person is accused of trying to liken (Allaah to His creation) and trying to resemble (Allaah to His creation) or else he is labelled with similarly evil names.

Similarly you should be amazed at a people who innovate into the Religion of Allaah, that which does not belong to it, attributing it to the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ), and hence because of it, they propagate that they are the ones who love and glorify Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ). If anyone does not agree to this innovation of theirs, then such a person is labelled as

¹ Soorah al-Baqarah (2):22.

someone who hates Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ), or is given other similarly evil names used by the innovators for those who do not agree to their *bid'ah* which they have falsely attributed to Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ).

And it is also strange how the likes of these people who say, 'We are the ones who glorify Allaah and His Messenger' and who indeed have innovated into Allaah's Religion and into the Law brought by His Messenger (ﷺ) - (it is strange how they) go ahead and put themselves forward in front of Allaah and His Messenger (ﷺ) (in contradiction to what) Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, has already said:

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا نَقْدِمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ؕ وَأَنْقُوا اللَّهَ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

O you who believe, do not put yourselves forward in front of Allaah and His Messenger and have *Taqwaa* of Allaah. Indeed Allaah is the Hearer and the Knower.¹

O brothers! Indeed I am asking you and imploring you, by Allaah, the Mighty and Glorious, and I want from you that your response be from your innermost hearts and not from your sentiments, let it be in accordance with your religion and not your blind following. What do you say about those who innovate something foreign into Allaah's Religion - regardless of whether they attribute it to Allaah Himself, His Names and Attributes, or whether they attribute it to His Messenger (ﷺ) - and then they claim to be those who glorify Allaah and

¹ Soorah al-Hujuraat (49):1.

His Messenger? Are these the ones who have more of a right to be called the ones who glorify Allaah and His Messenger? Or is it those people who do not deviate one inch from Allaah's Law, and who say, 'We believe in and completely trust whatever comes from His Law and what is reported of it. We hear and obey concerning that which is ordered for us to do and concerning that which we have been prohibited,' and who say concerning what the *sharee'ah* did not bring, 'We refrain (from it) and abandon (it) and it is not for us to put ourselves forward before Allaah and His Messenger and it is not for us to say that something is a part of the Religion of Allaah when it is not from it.' So which of these two groups have more right to be called the ones who love and glorify Allaah and His Messenger?

There can be no doubt that they are those who say, 'We believe in, and completely trust everything that is (authentically) reported to us and we hear and obey that which we are ordered to do,' and who say, 'We renounce and abandon that which we were not ordered to do, and our standing is such that we have no right to make something a part of the Law of Allaah when it is not a part of it and nor will we innovate something foreign into the Religion of Allaah.' There can be no doubt that these are the people who recognise their own (humble) standing and (the Mighty) status of their Creator, and they are the ones who glorify Allaah and His Messenger and truly show love for them. They are not those who innovate anything into the Religion of Allaah, be it in beliefs, sayings or actions.

THE SAYING OF ALLAAH'S MESSENGER (ﷺ), "EVERY BID'AH LEADS ASTRAY"

And you should be amazed at a people who recognise the words of Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ), "*Beware of the newly-invented*

matters, for every such matter is a bid'ah and every bid'ah leads astray, and everything that leads astray is in the Fire,"¹ and they know that his words, "... every bid'ah ..." are complete, comprehensive and universal, being encompassed by the strongest grammatical particle used to make a noun universal and all-encompassing, i.e., *kullu* (which means everything), and (they know that) the one who used this word, may Allaah's *salawaat* and *salaam* be upon him, knew what this word indicated and he was the most eloquent of all (in the Arabic language) and he was the sincerest of the creation towards the creation. Hence he would not use a word unless its meaning was that which he intended. Hence (they know that) when the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "... every Bid'ah leads astray ..." he knew what he was saying and he knew its meaning and this saying of his emanated as a result of complete sincerity and concern for the *Ummah*.

(They know that) when these three characteristics were all present in his words, i.e., complete sincerity and good wishes, complete clarity and eloquence and complete knowledge and understanding - then it is clear that what he said was what he wanted to say in order to convey his desired meaning. So (you should be amazed, that such a people, after recognising all this) think that *bid'ah* can be of three or five categories? Can this be correct? Never! And what some scholars do claim is that there exists the good innovation. But if this is so, then they can only be referring to two cases:

¹ Reported by Aboo Daawood, Tirmidhee and others, no. 2549 in *Saheehul-Jaami'* without, "... every thing that leads astray is in the Fire ...", and *hadeeth* no. 28 in an-Nawawees *Forty Hadeeth*.

- (i) that it is not an innovation but they do consider it to be one, or
- (ii) it is an innovation, and hence it is something evil, but they do not know of its evil.

(And these are the only two possibilities, bearing in mind that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "... every *bid'ah* leads astray ...")

THE SHARP SWORD AGAINST THE PEOPLE OF INNOVATION

So for everything that is used to claim that there exists a good *bid'ah*, then the answer for it is all the above. Thus there can be no room for the People of Innovation to claim that their innovations are good while we have in our hand the sharp sword that Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) gave us - i.e., his saying that "... every innovation leads astray." Indeed, this sharp sword was forged in the steel-works of Prophethood and Messengership. It was not forged in some second rate iron-mill, rather in the steelworks of the Prophet (ﷺ) and he (ﷺ) forged it so eloquently, that anyone who has the likes of this sharp sword in his hand would never be dumb-founded by someone claiming that *bid'ah* is good, for the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) said that, "... every *bid'ah* leads astray."

WHAT ABOUT THE SAYING OF 'UMAR (رضي الله عنه), 'I AM PLEASED WITH THAT BID'AH'?

Now I can sense that there is in your hearts a creeping doubt saying, 'But what about the words of the Chief of the Believers 'Umar bin al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) who succeeded in achieving something good when he ordered Ubayy ibn Ka'b and Tameem ad-Daaree to lead the people in prayer during *Ramadaan*. Hence he left having united the people behind a (single) Imaam, and so said, 'I am happy with this innovation, but the part of the night they used to sleep through is better than the part they use to pray in.'¹

¹ Reported by al-Bukhaaree, (Eng. trans. vol. 3, p. 126, no. 227).

The reply to this is from two angles. Firstly, it is not permitted for anyone to oppose the saying of the Messenger (ﷺ) by preferring the opinion of any other—be it the opinion of Aboo Bakr who is better than anyone else in this *ummah* after its Prophet, or that of 'Umar who is the second best after its Prophet, or 'Uthmaan who is the third best after its Prophet, or 'Alee who is the fourth best after its Prophet or that of anyone else. As Allaah, the Most High, says:

فَلْيَحْذَرِ الَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِ
 أَنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

So let those who oppose his (Muhammad's (ﷺ)) command beware that they will be afflicted with a trial or a painful punishment.¹

Imaam Ahmad (رحمته الله تعالى) said, 'Do you know what the trial mentioned here is? The trial is *shirk* - perhaps when someone opposes the Prophet's saying, some deviation may affect his heart such that he will be destroyed.' And Ibn Abbaas (رضي الله عنه) said, 'Stones are about to be sent down from the sky! I say that, 'Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) said so and so ...' while you reply with what Aboo Bakr and 'Umar said!'

Secondly, we know for certain that 'Umar ibn al-Khattab (رضي الله عنه) was one of the strongest in glorifying the Words of Allaah and His Messenger (ﷺ) and he was famous for halting short of the limits laid down by Allaah, the Most High. To the extent that he was attributed with being a warden and safe-guard of the Speech of Allaah, the Most High.

¹ Soorah an-Noor (24):63.

And what about the story of that woman who opposed him, (assuming it is authentic), when he wanted to limit the dowries, by an unknown amount? Then a woman opposed him using the Saying of Allaah, the Most High:

وَأَتَيْتُهُ إِحْدَاهُنَّ قِنطَارًا

And (even if) you gave one of them a huge amount (of gold).¹

Hence 'Umar abandoned his wish to limit the dowries. However, the authenticity of this story needs to be looked into. But the point is clear—that 'Umar would safeguard the limits laid down by Allaah, the Most High, and would not transgress them. So it would not be befitting for 'Umar (رضي الله عنه), being who he was, to oppose the words of the best of mankind, Muhammad (ﷺ), by saying 'What a pleasing innovation ...' about any *bid'ah*. So can this innovation be that which Allaah's Messenger was referring to when he said that "... every innovation leads astray ...?" No. Rather it can be said with certainty that this innovation about which 'Umar said, 'I am pleased with this innovation ...' falls outside what was intended by Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ) when he said, "... every *bid'ah* leads astray." Thus when 'Umar said, 'I am pleased with this innovation ...' he was referring to the effect – that the people had gathered together behind one Imaam while before that, they were (praying) in separate groups.

And this praying (behind a single Imaam) during *Ramadaan* had its origin from the Messenger (ﷺ), as is proven from that which is reported by al-Bukhaaree and Muslim from 'Aa'ishah,

¹ Soorah an-Nisaa (4):20.

may Allaah be pleased with her, that the Prophet (ﷺ) led the people in prayer for three nights and then hesitated doing so on the fourth night, saying, “Indeed I feared that it would become obligatory upon you, but you would not be able to cope with that.”¹ Thus performing the night prayer in *Ramadaan* as a single *Jamaa’ah* is from the *Sunnah* of the Messenger (ﷺ), and ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) referred to it as a ‘*bid’ah*’ considering the fact that after the Prophet (ﷺ) had left leading the prayer, the people became separated such that one person would be praying alone, and elsewhere two would be praying together, and somewhere else three would be praying in *Jamaa’ah*. So throughout the mosque there were people praying alone and in groups, so ‘Umar, the chief of the Believers, had the idea - and this idea was perfectly correct - to gather the people to pray behind a single *Imaam*. So this action was an innovation in the sense that it was new and different to how the **people** were before, i.e., praying in separate groups. Hence this *bid’ah* was relative and subjective – not original and absolute, being set up by Umar (رضي الله عنه), as this *sunnah* was there during the time of the Messenger (ﷺ). So it indeed was a *Sunnah* (not a *bid’ah*), which had been abandoned since the time of the Messenger (ﷺ), until Umar (رضي الله عنه) revived it.

As a result of all this, it should never be possible for the People of Innovation to use this saying of ‘Umar as a way to condone their *bid’ah*.

¹ Reported by Bukhaaree (Eng. trans. vol. 1, no. 696) and Muslim (Eng. trans. vol. 1, no. 1666).

AHKAAM AL-MAQAASID

Now someone could say: There are a number of innovated things that the Muslims have approved of and acted upon that were not known of during the time of the Prophet (ﷺ). Such as religious schools, compiling books and the like. These innovations have been condoned by the Muslims and they have acted upon them and considered them to be some of the most excellent ideas. So how can you harmonise this - where the Muslims are almost unanimous in considering these things to be good - with that saying of the Leader and Prophet of all the Muslims, the Messenger of the Lord of the Worlds (Muhammad (ﷺ)), where he (ﷺ) said, "... every bid'ah leads astray."?

So in reply, we say that these things in these circumstances are not innovations, rather they are a means towards achieving that which is already from the *sharee'ah*. And these means will differ according to the location and the time, but there are established rules for them. One such rule is that their permissibility depends on the goal, i.e., those means that are used to achieve a prescribed matter are themselves prescribed; those means that are used to achieve something that is not ordained are themselves not ordained; and those means used to achieve the forbidden are themselves forbidden. Even something good maybe evil and forbidden if it necessarily leads to evil. Listen to Allaah, the Mighty and Glorious, when He says:

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ
يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ

Do not insult those whom they call upon, instead of

calling upon Allaah, for they may insult Allaah out of hostility and ignorance.¹

Yet cursing the gods of the *mushriks* is not wrong, rather it is correct and quite proper. However cursing the Lord of all the Worlds is indeed wrong, improper, hostile and a transgression. Therefore, where this praiseworthy insulting of the gods of the *mushriks* is a cause that leads to Allaah being insulted, then it becomes prohibited and forbidden. I have put this forward to show that the means are according to their related goal. Hence regarding schools, writing down knowledge and compiling books, then even though they are innovations, in the sense that they were not found during the time of Prophet (ﷺ), nevertheless they are not goals in themselves, but are means, and the means are according to their goals. So, for example, if someone were to set up a school to teach forbidden matters, then this act of setting up the school would be forbidden. If a person were to set up a school in order to teach knowledge of the *sharee'ah*, then this act would be good and sanctioned by Islaam.

WHAT ABOUT THE SAYING OF THE PROPHET (ﷺ), "WHOEVER ENACTS A GOOD SUNNAH ..."?

What if someone asks: How do you respond to what the Prophet (ﷺ) said i.e., "*Whoever enacts a good sunnah into Islaam, he will get the reward of it and of all those who act upon it up to the Day of Judgement,*" with the verb *Sanna* (i.e., 'enact') meaning *Shara'a* i.e., to introduce or to prescribe?

The reply to this is: Who is the one who said, "*Whoever enacts a good sunnah into Islaam ...?*" He is the same one who also said,

¹ Soorah al-An'aam (6):108.

“... every *bid'ah* leads astray.” It is not possible for a phrase to emanate from someone who is truthful and proven to be truthful, such that it would deny and negate another phrase of his, and it is absolutely impossible for any speech of Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) to be self-contradictory, nor is it possible to refute any particular meaning by claiming it to be contradictory. Whoever thinks that the words of Allaah’s Messenger (ﷺ) are self-contradictory, then let him look again, for indeed this kind of thought emanates from a person possessing thoughts that are either deficient or limited. Indeed it is completely impossible that one would find a contradiction in the words of Allaah, the Most High, or that of His Messenger (ﷺ).

If this is so, then it should be clear that the *hadeeth*, “... every innovation leads astray ...” does not contradict the *hadeeth* “Whoever enacts a good *sunnah* into Islaam ...” for the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “Whoever enacts a good *sunnah* into Islaam ...,” while innovations are not from Islaam. And he (ﷺ) said “... a good *sunnah* ...” while innovation is not good. So he (ﷺ) made a distinction between enacting a *Sunnah* on the one hand and enacting an innovation on the other.

In any case, there is a reply that no one should have a problem with—that the meaning of, “Whoever enacts a *sunnah* ...” is, ‘Whoever revives a *sunnah* that was present and then was lost.’ Therefore it means that a matter has been revived, and thus in this way “... enacting a *sunnah* ...” is relative and secondary just as (in the case of ‘Umar, where his use of) the word *bid'ah* (innovation) was relative and secondary in the sense that it involved the revival of a *sunnah* that had been abandoned.

There is even a second reply that can be given: That is the background of the whole *hadeeth*, for it is a story concerning the tribe that came to see the Prophet (ﷺ) while being in exceptionally difficult circumstances. So the Prophet (ﷺ) urged that donations be given to them, and hence one man from the *Ansaar* came forward with a bag of silver in his hand which was almost too heavy for him to carry. He placed it down before the Messenger (ﷺ). This made the face of the Prophet (ﷺ) glow with joy and happiness and so he said, “Whoever enacts a good *sunnah* into *Islaam* will have the reward of it and the reward of all those who act upon it until the Day of Resurrection.” So we have here that the meaning of “... enacting a *sunnah* ...” means to enact an action in the sense of implementing it and not in the sense of setting up a new thing into the *sharee’ah*. Hence the meaning of his (ﷺ) saying, “Whoever enacts a good *sunnah* into *Islaam* ...” turns out to be, ‘Whoever acts upon a good *sunnah* in the sense of implementing it as opposed to introducing a new thing in the *sharee’ah*,’ for that would be prohibited as he (ﷺ) said, “... every *bid’ah* leads astray.”

THE ACTIONS THAT ARE ACCEPTABLE TO ALLAAH

Know, O brothers, that adherence (to *Islaam*) can only be realised once the action conforms with the *sharee’ah*, and this can only happen when the action fulfils six conditions:

(i) The action must be for the correct reason (*Sabab*). If someone were to worship Allaah, trying to get closer to Him with a reason that is not from the *sharee’ah*, then his worship would be an innovation which is to be thrown back upon his face. An example of this is where some people stay up during the 27th night of the month of *Rajab* on the pretext of thinking that the night is the one when the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ)

ascended (temporarily to the heavens, i.e., *mi'raaj*). So this praying (i.e., *tahajjud*) they do during this night is a worship, but their reason for doing it is *bid'ah* (an innovation). Because they have established this worship as a result of a reason which is false in the eyes of the *sharee'ah*. This condition, that the reason for a worship must conform with the *sharee'ah*, is an important matter because it explains how many innovations are considered to be a part of the *Sunnah*, while in reality they are not.

(II) The action must be done with the correct kind (*jins*) of accessory that is associated with the action. Without doubt a worship must be done with the kind of accessory that is stipulated by the *sharee'ah*. If someone were to worship Allaah without a prescribed type of accessory then his action would not be accepted. For example, a man may sacrifice a horse—his sacrifice is not correct because he has differed from the *sharee'ah* concerning the type of animal he chose to sacrifice. Sacrificing according to the *sharee'ah* can (only) be done with livestock, camels, cattle and sheep.

(III) The amount (*qadr*) of the action done must be correct. If someone wanted to increase the prayer to a greater number of *rak'aats* than that prescribed, then we would say, 'This is a *bid'ah* which is not acceptable (to Allaah) because it involves differing from the *sharee'ah* in terms of the amount of a worship that should be done.' And moreover, if someone were to pray *dhùhr*, for example, doing five *rak'aats* then definitely his prayer will not be correct, and everyone would agree upon this.

(IV) The action must be done in the correct manner (*kayfeeyah*). For instance, a man who is performing *wudoo* may start by washing his feet, then he would wipe his head, then he

would wash his hands and then his face. So we would say, 'His *wudoo* is null and void because the way it was done differed to the manner prescribed by the *sharee'ah*.'

(v) The action must be done at the right time (*zamaan*). For instance a man may perform the *Hajj* sacrifice during the first few days of *Dhul-Hijjah*. His sacrifice will not be accepted as it was performed at a time other than that prescribed by the *sharee'ah*. And I have heard that some people sacrifice sheep during the month of *Ramadaan* as a means of getting closer to Allaah, the Most High. Yet this action is a *bid'ah* being done at the wrong time, because there is no sacrifice that brings people closer to Allaah except the *Udheeyah*, the *Hady* and the '*Aqeeqah* sacrifices. As for doing a sacrifice during *Ramadaan* in particular, thereby hoping to be rewarded in the same way one would be rewarded for doing the sacrifice of '*Eedul-Adhaa*, then this is an innovation. As for sacrificing in order to simply eat some meat, then this (of course) is permitted.

(vi) The action must be done in the correct place (*makaan*). For instance if a man performs *I'tikaaf* in any place that is not a mosque then his *I'tikaaf* would not be correct and that is because *I'tikaaf* can only be done in mosques. And if a woman was to say, 'I want to do *I'tikaaf* in the prayer-room of my house,' then this too would not be correct as the act is being done in a place that the *sharee'ah* has not sanctioned. Another example is if a man wants to perform *tawaaaf* and he finds the circuit too difficult and finds going around it too difficult and so turns to making *tawaaaf* behind the mosque—this *tawaaaf* of his would not be correct because the only place the *tawaaaf* can be made is around the House of Allaah, as Allaah, the Most High, said to His *Khaleel* Ibraheem:

وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِي لِلطَّائِفِينَ

And purify My House for those who make *tawaaf* around it.”¹

Thus an act of worship will only count as a righteous action when two conditions are fulfilled:

FIRSTLY: (it must be done) sincerely (for Allaah alone (*ikhlaas*))

SECONDLY: (it must be done) in accordance with (the *Sunnah*, (*al-mutaaba’ah*))

And an action will only be in accordance with the *Sunnah* when the above mentioned conditions are fulfilled.

SOME SINCERE ADVICE

Indeed I say to those who have been afflicted with innovations while having good intentions and wanting good—if you really desire goodness **then (know) by Allaah that we do not know any way that is better than that of the *Salaf*** (سلفنا الصالح).

My dear brothers! Cling to the *sunnah* of the Messenger (ﷺ) with your molar teeth and proceed along the path of the Righteous *Salaf*—be upon that which they were upon and see if that will harm you in any way.

Indeed I say, and I seek Allaah’s protection from saying that about which I have no knowledge, that you will find most of these people who are always eager to do innovations are, on the contrary, weak and slack when it comes to doing those things that are proven to be a part of the *sharee’ah* and the *sunnah*. Only once they have finished devoting their time to these innovations do they turn to the established *sunnah*, and even then they are weak and slack.

¹ Soorah al-Hajj (22):26.

All of this results from the damaging effects that the innovations have upon their hearts. Indeed the damage innovations inflict upon the hearts is severe and the perils they present to the Religion are immense. For whenever a people innovate a matter into Allaah's Religion, they also end up displacing something similar or greater from the *Sunnah*, as has been said by some of our learned *Salaf*.

Only when we realise that we are mere followers and not our own law-makers, will we gain complete fear, humility and submissiveness. And (only then) will we be able to truly worship the Lord of the Worlds and truly follow the Imaam of all those who fear Allaah—the Leader of the Messengers and the Messenger of the Lord of the Worlds, Muhammad (ﷺ).

Indeed I offer sincere advice to all of my Muslim brothers who condone any aspect of innovations - be it concerning Allaah Himself, His Names and Attributes or be it concerning His Messenger (ﷺ) - that true glorification of Allaah consists of fearing Him and abandoning all innovations. Making yourselves firm upon following the *Deen* and not upon innovating into it; upon sincerely worshipping Allaah alone and not worshipping others; upon the *Sunnah* and not *bid'ah*; upon that which Allaah loves and not that which *Satan* loves. So look to that which gives peace, life and tranquility to your hearts, and allows them to be at ease and act as a shining light for them.

I ask Allaah that He makes us leaders of the rightly-guided and the righteous and that He illuminates our hearts with Faith and knowledge and that He does not make what we have learned a proof against us, and He places us upon the way of the believing

servants, and that He makes us amongst His fearful close allies and His victorious group.

And may Allaah send His *salaah* upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family, true followers and Companions.

OUR DA'WAH

- (1) Judging according to the Noble Qur'aan and the Authentic and Purified *Sunnah* in every affair of life.
- (2) Every issue of '*aqeedah* (creed), '*ibaadah* (worship) or '*manhaj* (methodology) which the Book of Allaah and the *Sunnah* has not provided a text for and upon which the Companions never agreed is falsehood, vain and innovated.
- (3) Affirming what is established in the Book and the authentic *Sunnah* in every issue of the issues of '*aqeedah* and not resorting to *ta'weel* (figurative interpolation) with respect to any of it and not delving into argumentation regarding it in that for which there is no place for the intellect.
- (4) Not arguing with the People of Innovations and Desires, or sitting with them, listening to their words or presenting any of their doubts (to others).
- (5) The Prophetic '*manhaj* which is found in the Qur'aan, the *Saheeh* of Bukhaaree and Muslim and the remaining books of the *Sunnah* and the sayings and actions of the *Salafus-Saalih*, not the various new and pretentious methodolgies.
- (6) Acquainting the Muslims with their true religion and calling them to act in accordance with its teachings and rulings and to adorn themselves with its excellencies and its noble manners, which will guarantee for them the pleasure of Allaah and which will bring into reality both happiness and glory.
- (7) Warning the Muslims from *shirk* in all its different manifestations, and warning them from innovations, all strange and false thoughts and rejected and fabricated *hadeeth*, all of which have mutilated the beauty of Islaam and have prevented the advancement and progress of the Muslims.

(8) Eagerness for bringing about the *Jamaa'ah* of the Muslims and uniting their word upon the truth and in the truth. And the multiplicity of contemporary groups and parties have divided the Muslims and have mutilated the beauty of Islaam.

(9) It is a duty upon every Muslim, *Muwahhid* to restore and offer the rights that the *Sharee'ah* has upon him with respect to the Scholars, the Senior Shaikhs—to respect them, honour them, give them their due recognition and estimation, taking knowledge from them, refraining from attacking them and their intentions. So do not be a helper to the criminals by abandoning the Scholars of the *Sunnah*, and (so) by this action of yours, make people flee from them, from their lectures and gatherings and forsake them, leaving them as booty for the *Du'aat* (callers) of political agitation and incitement or leave them neglected as prey for the various parties and groups.

(10) Getting closer to Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic, by giving obedience to whomever Allaah has placed over our affair and not to rebel against him.

(11) Following the truth, absolutely and unconditionally in both narration (*riwaayah*) and opinion (*ra'i*) without specifying a specific person or group besides the Messenger (ﷺ) as someone to be followed in all circumstances.

(12) We love every Muslim to the extent of what he possesses of obedience, following (of the *Sunnah*) and we hate him to the extent of what he possesses of disobedience and opposition (to the *Sunnah*). And we love the one who aids the *Sunnah* and its people and we hate the one who helps Innovation and its people.

(13) We love the Companions of the Messenger of Allaah (ﷺ) and we detest everyone who speaks ill about them. And when

you see a man speaking bad about a single one of the Companions of Allaah's Messenger (ﷺ), then know that he is a *Zindeeq* (heretic).

(14) We believe that the Qur'aan is the Speech of Allaah, it is not created and we do not declare anyone from the people of the *qiblah* to be a disbeliever on account of a sin that he committed, so long as he does not declare it to be permissible.

(15) We reject those who divide the religion into two categories (i.e.,) trivial and important matters, and we know that this is a destructive call. We reject those who desert the knowledge of the *Sunnah*, acting by it and separating what is authentic from what is inauthentic.

(16) *Tasfiyyah* (purification of the religion in terms of 'aqeedah and 'ibaadah) and *Tarbiyyah* (nurturing and cultivation upon the pure religion) upon the Straight Prophetic Methodology and the guiding understanding of the *Salaf*.

(17) Refuting every opposer (to the *Sunnah*) whether he is a Muslim or other than that, whatever level his slip or mistake might be, regardless of whether his opposition to the truth occurred deliberately or as an error, whatever methodology he may ascribe to, with whatever is possible from the use of evidences, clarification and struggling against him, exposing him and revealing his true condition by the foundations (*Usool*) of Islaam. So that this Noble Religion retains its purity and innocence and so that the people can drink from it, certain of its sweet taste.

(18) Speaking the truth, not fearing the censure of those who blame and rebuke holding on to the *Sunnah* with the molar teeth amidst all the controversies and differences, till the affair of Allaah is established.

