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WHAT IS BID'AH
IN ISLAM

by Hakeemul Ummat Mufti Ahmad Yaar Khan t

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

7

1.1 The word Bid'ah as mentioned in the Holy Quran

1.2 The two types of Bid'ah

1.2.1 Bid'ah I'tiqadi (Innovation in Belief)

1.2.2 Bid'ah Amali (Innovation in Action):

A. Bid'ah Hasana and

B. Bid'ah Sai'yya

CHAPTER TWO

13

2.1 Types of Bid'ah and their status in the Shari'ah

2.2 Definition of the Categories of Bid'ah and their

Characteristics

A. Bid'ah Ja'iz

B. Bid'ah Mustahab

C. Bid'ah Wajib

D. Bid'ah Makruh

E. Bid'ah Haraam

2.3 Bid'ah in our daily religious activities

2.4 Expostulations on the definition and categorisation of Bid'ah - The definition of Bid'ah Amali (innovated action)

CHAPTER THREE

19

3.1 Two objections raised on the definition of Bid'ah

3.1.1 First Objection

3.1.2 Second Objection

3.2 Conclusion

"UMDATUL AL-SALIK" - RELIANCE OF THE TRAVELLER 28

IMAM AHMED RAZA ACADEMY

30

FOREWORD

It is indeed very distressing and disappointing to see within our society certain groups of "scholars" who are continuously slandering true and sincere Muslims by labelling them as "Bid'atis", "grave-worshippers", proponents of Shirk and other derogatory terms that do not befit true Muslims. These true and sincere Muslims belonging to the Ahle Sunnah School of Thought have been practising certain aspects of the Deen over a long period, many of which could be traced to earlier sources in Islamic history and culture and which were never in dispute.

Today, the term "Bid'ah" has been attached to these very actions. The frequency with which this term has been used and is used creates uncertainty in the minds of individuals who are not informed of the reality.

There exists, therefore, a dire need to explain in simple terms what “Bid’ah” means and what acts constitute Bid’ah and what acts do not. This book, the origin of which was in Urdu, and written by a great Islamic scholar or Aalim, *Hakeemul Ummat, Mufti Ahmed Yaar Khan t*, purports to explain in great detail the concept of Bid’ah and thus clear the minds of Muslims.

There are two types of Bid’ah:

1. Bid’ah Hasana (appreciable innovation) and
2. Bid’ah Sai’yya (offensive innovation).

These two Bid’ahs are called Bid’ah Amali (innovation in action). Bid’ah I’tiqadi (innovation in belief) is also explained in detail. This book serves the need to differentiate between the various types of Bid’ah – those that are acceptable and those that are not.

Many of the objections posed by the opposition have also been answered with great authenticity. It is highly recommended to read this book and understand the contents of this book to avoid a feeling of uncertainty about the behaviours and some practices of the Muslims.

May Allah Y, Most Merciful, grant the author of the book the highest stages of Jannatul Firdous. May Allah Y Guide us on the Straight Path and save us from the mischievousness of the misguided and save us from His Wrath and displeasure. Insha-Allah, Aameen.

Sayed Mohammed Habeeb Chisti

(Educationist and former Lecturer)

11 Rajab 1422 A.H.

29 September 2001

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 THE WORD BID'AH AS MENTIONED IN THE HOLY QURAN

The literary meaning of “Bid’ah” (in the dictionary) is “innovation; novelty.” In the following lines we see where in the Holy Quran this word has been used, and the meaning with which it is associated:

Says Almighty Allah Y in the Holy Quran:

“Say I am no Bringer of New Fangled Doctrine among

the Apostles.” (al-Ahqauf: 9)

and He Y says:

“The Originator of the Heavens and the Earth.” (al-Baqarah: 117)

and He Y says:

“But monasticism (which) they invented - We ordained it not for them.” (al-Hadid: 27)

In these Ayahs from the Holy Quran the word Bid’ah has been used in its literary meaning. Its definition in the technical language of the Sharee’ah is different. In the Holy Quran it has been used to mean “to invent” and “to create a new thing”, whereas its technical meaning is as written in the book **Mirqat** (under Babul Itisaam bil Kitaab was-Sunnah) - *“that belief or action which was not in practice during the blessed age of Rasoolullah ﷺ but was introduced after him.”* From this we see that Bid’ah is of two kinds:-

A. Bid’ah I’tiqadi (innovation in belief)

B. Bid’ah Amali (innovation in action)

1.2 THE TWO TYPES OF BID’AH

Now let us see the difference between Bid'ah I'tiqaadi and Bid'ah Amali.

1.2.1 BID'AH I'TIQAADI (INNOVATION IN BELIEF)

Is that new belief (which is in contradiction with the Holy Quran and Sunnah) which found its way into Islam after the blessed age of the Prophet r. Christianity, Judaism, Zoroasterism and Polytheism are not Bid'ah I'tiqaadi as these beliefs were in practice before and during the blessed time and also because they do not claim themselves to be Muslims whereas the Jabriyya, Qadriyya, Batiniyya, Bahaaism, Qadyanism, etc. are Bid'ah I'tiqaadi (innovations in belief) because they come into being after the blessed age and also claim themselves to be Muslims. (See **Endbliss Bliss**, Vol. 2, Waqf Iklah Publications, for a brief history of some of these sects).

BID'AH-E-HASANA: and its evidence from the Holy Quran.

Allah Ta'ala Y says in the Holy Quran:

“And We placed compassion and mercy in the hearts of those who followed him (Jesus), but Monasticism they invented - We ordained it not for them - only seeking Allah's pleasure, and they observed it not with right observance.” (al-Hadid: 27)

and then He Y says:

“So We gave those of them who believe their rewards.” (al-Hadid: 27)

From this we see that the believers of Hadrat Isa u invented Bid'ah Hasana, i.e. Monasticism, and Allah Ta'ala Y raises them and also promises them reward. But those who did not foster it (Monasticism) with right observance were reproved:

“And they observed it not with right observance.” (al-Hadid: 27)

Note that those who invented this Bid'ah are not reprimanded but those who did not observe it rightly were reprimanded. This proves that Bid'ah-e-Hasana is a good thing and has an incentive for reward.

The first Hadith of **Miskhaat-ul-Masabih** under Babul-Itisaam is "*Whosoever introduces a new belief in our religion which contradicts with it is rejected.*" We have translated the word "Ma" in the Hadith as "belief" because another name for religion is belief, and not as actions as actions are subsidiary and take the secondary place. Let's take an example: A person who does not pray the daily Salaah will be sinful but not as a disbeliever (Kaafir), while a person whose beliefs are in contradiction with the beliefs of the *Ahle Sunnah Wal Jamaat* will either be of the misguided (astray) ones or a disbeliever. This shows that were the word Bid'ah is mentioned it means innovation in belief and not action.

The same book **Miskhat** under Kitab-ul Imaan says that when Hadrat Abdullah bin Umar t was told that some person had given him Salaams, he said, "*I have had news that he (the person who has given Salaams) has become a Bid'ahi, if it is so then don't return him my Salaams.*" How did he become a Bid'ahi? It is said that he had become a Qadriyya[1]. Such a person is called a Bid'ahi.

Durr-e-Mukhtar (Babul-Imaamat) says, "*It is Makruh to pray behind an Imam who is a Bid'ati. Bid'ah is that belief (Itiqaad) which contradicts that which has been conveyed to us from Rasoolullah r.*"

This shows that new fangled beliefs are Bid'ahs and wherever the Hadiths have mentioned about punishments for Bid'atis these punishments are meant for those who practice Bid'ah in beliefs, i.e. those beliefs which are in contradiction with *Ahle Sunnah Wal Jamaat*. A Hadith says, "*He who exalts those people who commit Bid'ahs has helped in demolishing Islam.*"

Fatawa Rashidiyya (considered as authentic by scholars of Deoband) writes in its first volume (page 90) under Kitabul Bid'ah: "*Such threats of punishments for Bid'ahs are meant for those who*

have innovated a belief (Aqeedah) which contradicts with that of the Ahle Sunnah Wal Jamaat, for example, the Rawafidh, the Khawarij, the Mu'tazila, etc."

1.2.2 BID'AH AMALI (INNOVATION IN ACTION)

Is that action which came into practice after the blessed period of Rasoolullah r be it secular or religious, in the eye of the Sahaaba-Kiraam t or after it. **Mirqat** Babul-I'tisaam says, "*In the Sharee'ah, Bid'ah is that innovation which was not there in the blessed age of Rasoolullah r.*" The book, **Ashi'atul Lam'at** under the same chapter says, "*Bid'ah is that which came into being after the blessed period of Rasoolullah r.*"

So from the above definitions of Bid'ah we see that a Bid'ah Amali (innovated action) can be religious or secular but it has to be after the blessed period of the Holy Prophet r and i.e. even that action which was introduced into Islam in the age of the respected Sahaba t will be considered a Bid'ah.

NOTE: If the innovation was brought into practice in the age of the Sahaba t then we should not call it Bid'ah but Sunnah of the Sahaba t as it is respectful to call it so, though it is Bid'ah-e-Hasana. Because the word Bid'ah is mostly understood to mean Bid'ah-e-Sai'yya (vile innovation).

Hadrat Umar t in the time of his Caliphate, called the people to perform Tarawih prayers in congregation (Jamaat), whereas it used to be prayed individually in the time of the Holy Prophet r and commented on seeing the Jamaat, "*This is a very nice Bid'ah.*"

Bid'ah Amali (innovated action) is classified in two:-

A. Bid'ah-e-Hasana (praiseworthy innovation)

B. Bid'ah-e-Sai'yya (offensive innovation)

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A. BID'AH-E-HASANA

Is that action which does not contradict with the Holy Quran and the Sunnah and was brought into practice after the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ for example, to construct religious institutions, to print the Holy Quran in the press, to hold gatherings of Meelad, to eat nice food and to put on attractive clothes, etc. Bid'ah-e-Hasana is not only permissible (Ja'iz) but at times it can be appreciable (Mustahab) and even essential (Wajib) as you will see later on.

B. BID'AH-E-SAI'YYA

Is that action which was not in practice in the blessed age of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and which contradicts with the Holy Quran and the Sunnah, for example, to say the Khutba of Eid or Jum'ah in a language other than Arabic, etc.

Bid'ah-e-Sai'yya can be Makruh Tanzhi or Makruh Tahrimi or even Haraam.

The first volume of **Ashi'atul Lam'aat** (Babul Itisaam) says about Bid'ah Hasana and Sai'yya under the Hadith: "*Every Bid'ah is a delusion (misleading),*" that any Bid'ah which is in accordance with the principles, the canons of Islamic Law and the Sunnah and has been deduced analogically from the Quran or Sunnah (through Qiyas) is Bid'ah-e-Hasana and that which is in contrast to the above definition is Bid'ah-e-Sai'yya.

A Hadith in **Miskhat** under Babul-Ilm says: "*He who sets a good precedent in Islam, there is reward for him for this (act of goodness) and a reward for him also who acts according to it subsequently, without any deduction from their rewards and he who sets in Islam an evil precedent there is upon him the burden of that, and the burden of him also who acts upon it subsequently, without any deduction from their burdens.*" From this Hadith we see that to introduce a nice way in Islam which is in accordance with the Holy Quran and Sunnah will induce rewards and to do vice versa will provoke punishment.

In the preface of the book, **Shaami**, under Faza'il Imam Abu Hanifa t, it says: The scholars say these Ahaadith are the canons of Islam and that is whoever introduces a bad way in Islam, he will get the burden of the sins of all those who act upon it and whoever introduces a nice way he will get reward of all those who act upon it till the Day of Judgement.

An offensive Bid'ah is that which contradicts with the Sunnah. **Mishkaat** Babul I'tisaam says: *"Whoever introduces something in our religions which is not of it (i.e. not in accordance with it) is rejected."* The book **Ashi'atul Lam'aat** under the commentary of the same Hadith says, *"It means that thing which is not in accordance with Islam or which will alternate the religion."* A Hadith in **Miskhat** Babul I'tisaam in the third chapter says, *"No people introduce a Bid'ah but a Sunnah of its kind is erased from them, so to hold on to Sunnah is better than introducing a Bid'ah."* Under the commentary of this Hadith, the book **Ashi'atul Lam'aat** says, *"So if by introducing a Bid'ah a Sunnah is removed from among the people, then surely holding fast to the Sunnah will lead to the annihilation of every Bid'ah."*

NOTE: By this Hadith and its commentary we come to know that an offensive Bid'ah is that which will annihilate a Sunnah. For example, it is Sunnah to say the Friday or Eid Khutba in Arabic, but if someone says that it in some other language then it is Bid'ah-e-Sai'yya because he has obliterated the Sunnah of saying it in Arabic. So to hold gatherings of Meelad Shareef wherein the Holy Prophet r is praised is not Bid'ah because no Sunnah has been erased because of it. Likewise you may compare other things like Fateha, Khatam Shareef, Esaale-Thawaab, etc. with this principle and see for yourself if they are Bid'ahs or not. The difference between an offensive Bid'ah and appreciable Bid'ah should be well understood because this is where many get confused.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 TYPES OF BID'AH AND THEIR STATUS IN THE SHARI'AH

We have seen that Bid'ah is of two kinds, viz. Bid'ah Hasana (appreciable innovation) and Bid'ah Sai'yya (offensive innovation).

Bid'ah Hasana is divided into three categories:

- (A) Bid'ah Ja'iz (permissible)
- (B) Bid'ah Mustahab (appreciable)
- (C) Bid'ah Wajib (essential)

Bid'ah Sai'yya is categorised in two:

- (A) Bid'ah Makruh (abominable)
- (B) Bid'ah Haraam (prohibited)

In substantiation, we present the words of the book **Mirqat** Babul I'tisaam bil Kitaab was Sunnah: Bid'ah is either Waajib, for example to learn Nahv (Arabic syntax) and to gather the principles of Fiqh, etc. or it is Haraam for example, the introduction of new beliefs like the Sects Jabriyya, Qadriyya, etc. or it is Mustahab for example, to construct religious institutions and every good thing which was not there in the first era of the Islamic century or to make congregation in the Taraweeh prayers, etc. or it is Makruh for example, to vie in the decoration of mosques (with the intention of ostentatious pomp and pride) or it is Ja'iz for example, to shake hands after the (Fajr) prayers or to partake of nice food and drink, etc.

The book **Shaami** (Vol. 1) Kitaabus Salaat, Babul Imamat says: *"It is Makruh to perform Salaah behind an Imam who perpetrates a Bid'ah which is Haraam, but otherwise Bid'ah is sometimes Waajib, for example, to furnish proof in defence of Islam (against stray Sects) and to learn the*

knowledge of Nahv (Syntax), and it is sometimes Mustahab, for example, to construct caravanserais and madressas and all those favourable things which were not there in the first era, and sometimes it is Makruh for example to vie in the decoration of mosques with a sense of pride and sometimes it is Mubah (Ja'iz), for example, to partake in nice food and drink and wear nice clothes." The book **Jaame'us-Sagheer** says the same thing.

It is now clearly understood that Bid'ahs is of five categories and every Bid'ah is not Haraam.

2.2 DEFINITION OF THE CATEGORIES OF BID'AH AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

We have seen that a Bid'ah, which does not contradict with the Holy Quran and Sunnah, is Bid'ah Hasana and that which contradicts with the Holy Quran and Sunnah or leads to an annihilation of a Sunnah is Bid'ah Sai'yya.

Bid'ah is divided into five categories and the characteristic of each is given below.

A. BID'AH JA'IZ: is that action which the Sharee'ah prohibited and which is done without expecting any reward or punishment for it. For example, partaking in a variety of delicious dishes or wearing nice and attractive clothing, etc.

B. BID'AH MUSTAHAB: is that act which is done with an anticipation for earning reward, for example to pray the Meelad-un-Nabi r or to pray Fatiha for the souls of deceased Muslims, etc. If is done with the intention of gaining rewards, he will gain reward for it, and if one does not do it, he will not be reprimanded for omitting it.

Mirqat Bab-ul Itisaam says, "*Hadrat Abdullah ibn-e Mas'ood t has narrated from the Holy Prophet r that, 'What the Muslims consider as good then it is also considered as good by Allah.'* Another Hadith which is Marfu' says, '*My Ummah will not agree upon a thing which is*

misleading." In the first pages of **Miskhat** there is a Hadith, "*Verily actions depend upon intentions and a man will get whatever he intends for.*"

The book of Fiqh **Darr-e-Mukhtaar** (Vol.1) under the chapter of Mustahabs of Ablutions says, "*A Mustahab action is that action which the Holy Prophet ﷺ at times did and at times omitted and also that which the Muslims preceding us thought to be good.*"

The book **Shaami** (Vol. 5) under the Chapter of Qurbani says, "*Verily good intentions change habits into worship.*" It is also written similarly in the book **Mirqat** under the Chapter of Intentions.

From these Hadiths and quotations from different books of Fiqh we come to know that whatever permissible action done with an intention of anticipating rewards or that which the Muslims consider as reward earning is also considered as rewarding in the Judgement of Allah ﷻ. Muslims are witnesses of Allah ﷻ and whatever they witness to be good is good and whatever they witness to be evil is evil.

C. BID'AH WAJIB: is that new action which has not been prohibited in the Shari'ah but to omit it will lead to critical complications in the religion. For example, to put the expressions (Iraab) in the Holy Quran such as Fatha (Zabar), Kasra (Zer) and Dhumma (Pesh), to construct madressas for teaching the Holy Quran and Hadith and to learn and teach the knowledge of nahv (Arabic syntax), etc. are all Bid'ah Wajib. Let's take an example of the complication, which the Muslims will face if one of these things was to be omitted. Supposing the expressions of the Holy Quran were to be erased, then millions of Muslims who are not familiar with the Arabic syntax (Nahv - the learning of which is also Bid'ah Wajib) will not be able to read the Holy Book correctly and will be sinful for reading it incorrectly.

D. BID'AH MAKRUH : Is that innovation the performing of which will lead to the annihilation of a Sunnah. If a Ghaiyr Mu'akkidah Sunnah is annihilated then it is Makruh Tanzihi and if a

Mu'akkidah Sunnah is annihilated then it is Makruh Tahrimi. For example, to pray the Eid Khutba in a language other than Arabic, etc. is Bid'ah Makruh Tahrimi.

E. BID'AH HARAAM: Is that innovation which will lead to the annihilation of a Wajib. For example, the introductions of beliefs which are in contradiction with the Kitaab and Sunnah, such as Qadriyya who believe, that man has got all the power to do whatever he wishes, and Jabriyya, who believe that man has got no power at all and all actions are done under compulsion, whereas the belief of the *Ahle Sunnah Wal Jamaat* is that man has been given option in some things and is under compulsion in some. So to believe as the Qadriyya or the Jabriyya will lead to the annihilation of a Wajib, which is Haraam. Many sects have been introduced into Islam after the Holy Prophet r. Rasoolullah r said: *"My Ummah will be divided into seventy three Sects and all will be in Hell except one. That upon which I and my Sahaba are."*

2.3 BID'AHS IN OUR DAILY RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

We will now see that no worship in Islam is void of Bid'ah-e-Hasana.

IMAAN: Every Muslim child is taught Imaan-e-Mujmal and Imaan-e-Mufassal whereas no such categories or names for Imaan were in practice in the age of the Holy Prophet r or the three blessed generations [2] after him.

KALIMAH: Every Muslim memorises six Kalimahs. These six Kalimahs, their enumeration and their sequence that, this is the first Kalimah, this the second, etc. are all Bid'ahs which were not there in the commencing period of Islam.

QURAN: To divide the Holy Quran into thirty Paras (sections) and to divide the Paras into Rukus, to put the Iraab (expressions such as Zabbar, Zer, Pesh) in the Holy Quran and to have the Holy Book printed by offset in the press are Bid'ahs which could not be traced in the commencing era of Islam.

HADITH: To collect the Hadith in book form and state the chain or narrators and to characterise the Hadiths by saying this is Sahih, this is Hassan or Da'if, Mu'addaal or Mudallas, etc. and to establish the commands with the help of Hadith such as Makruh, Mustahab, etc. are all appreciable Bid'ahs which were not in practice in the blessed age of Rasoolullah.

PRINCIPLES OF HADITH (USUL-E-HADITH): This whole branch of knowledge along with its rules is itself Bid'ah Hasana.

FIQH: Nowadays all the matters in our daily life depend upon this knowledge because it contains the rules and commands for everything, which may come across our lives, but this field of knowledge, also is Bid'ah Hasana.

USUL FIQH AND I'LM-E-KALAAM: These two branches of knowledge too, along with their principles and injunctions are all Bid'ah Hasana.

SALAAT: It is Bid'ah-e-Hasana to intend for praying Salaah by proclaiming the intention loudly or to pray the 20 Rakaah Taraweeh prayer in congregation during the Holy Month of Ramadaan.

FASTING: At the time of breaking fast (Iftaar) to say the Dua: *"O Allah, for Thee have I Fasted and in Thee I believe and upon Thee I trust and with the food given by Thee I open my fast"* and to intend for fasting by saying this Dua audibly at the time of Sehri: *"O Allah, I intend to fast for Thy sake tomorrow"* are all Bid'ah Hasana.

ZAKAAT: To give Zakaat with the currency which is currently used such as coins and paper notes is Bid'ah because these were not in vogue in the commencing centuries of Islam.

HAJJ: To perform Hajj by travelling in aeroplanes, ships, cars, lorries, buses and to go to the field of Arafaat by car or bus are all Bid'ahs because such conveyances had not been invented in that age.

When Bid'ah has been introduced in such things as Imaan and Kalimah then how will we succeed in abstaining from it? So we will have to agree that all Bid'ahs are not Haraam and only those Bid'ahs are Haraam, which contradict the Kitaab and Sunnah.

BID'AH IN WORDLY AFFAIRS: Now days we see around us such new inventions that could not be found in the first three centuries of Islam and we got so much accustomed to them that life would be very difficult without them. Everyone is compelled to use these things such as trains, cars, aeroplanes, watches, electricity, and hundreds of other things, without which we cannot imagine how life would be. But all these things are Bid'ahs and cannot be traced back to the blessed age of Rasoolullah r or the Sahaba t.

2.4 EXPOSTULATIONS ON THE DEFINITION AND CATEGORISATION OF BID'AH - THE DEFINITION OF BID'AH AMALI (INNOVATED ACTION)

Is that action which came into practice after the blessed age of Rasoolullah r be it in the religious field or secular. If it was innovated in the age of the respected Sahaba t even then it will be considered to be a Bid'ah. We will not call that action innovated in the time of the respected Sahaba t a Bid'ah, but in the terminology of the Shari'ah it is called Sunnah of the Sahaba t. Because mostly the Bid'ah is used to mean Bid'ah Sai'yaa (vile innovation) and it is not respectful to assign such a word towards the respected Sahaba t.

This is the definition of Bid'ah.

There are two well-known objections regarding this definition and we will answer them one by one.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 TWO OBJECTIONS RAISED ON THE DEFINITION OF BID'AH

3.1.1 FIRST OBJECTION

Bid'ah is that innovation in religious matters which was brought into practice after the blessed age of Rasoolullah r and if any novelty is introduced in worldly matters it will not be called a Bid'ah. So Meelad and Fateha are Bid'ahs (because they are considered as religious activities) and things such as telegrams, telephones and other inventions will not be called Bid'ahs because they have nothing to do with religion. The Hadith says, "*Whosoever innovates a new thing in our religion is rejected.*" The word "in our religion" in the Hadith proves that any new thing, which is introduced in religion, will be Bid'ah and not that which is secular. And Bid'ah in religious matters is Haraam, and lastly, there is nothing like Bid'ah-e-Hasana because the Hadith says that all types of innovations are rejected.

ANSWER TO FIRST OBJECTION

Bid'ah is not confined to matters concerning religion only because the Sahih Hadiths and the sayings of the Ulama, Fuqaaha and Muhadditheen are against this. A Bid'ah is that innovation, which came into practice after the blessed age of the Prophet r, be it worldly or religious. A Hadith in the book **Miskhat** (Babul I'tisaam) says, "*Every new thing is a Bid'ah.*" There is no restriction of Bid'ah being religious or worldly and we have also quoted the statements from the books **Ashi'atul Lam'aat** and **Mirqaat** in the preceding pages, which say that Bid'ah is not restricted to religious matters only.

The chapter, "Types of Bid'ah and their Status in Shari'ah," in this book, we have quoted from the books **Mirqaat** and **Shaami** that to partake of good food and drink and to wear nice clothes in Bid'ah Ja'iz. These are worldly affairs but they have been mentioned as Bid'ahs, which are permissible (Ja'iz), therefore this restriction of Bid'ah to matters religious only is wrong and baseless.

Let us, for a moment, suppose that Bid'ah is restricted to religious matters only. Now what can be called a religious matter? The answer will be that thing which induces Thawaab (Reward). Mustahab, Nafil, Wajib, Fardh, etc. are all religious affairs, which are done to gain reward and any worldly action done with a good intention, will surely induce reward. It is said in a Hadith that *"to meet a Muslim brother with a cheerful face is equal to giving Sadaqa (charity) in Allah's way."* Likewise, it is rewarding to foster one's children with a good intention. A Hadith says, *"Even that morsel of food you put in your wife's mouth is rewarding."* Therefore, a Muslim's every action, be it religious or secular is rewarding because it is done with the intention of pleasing Allah Y.

We will now list a few things which were not during the blessed age of Rasoolullah r but were innovated afterwards and made part and parcel of religion.

- a) Construction of Madressas.
- b) Dividing the Quran into thirty parts.
- c) Marking the expressions on the Holy Quran, viz. Fatha, Kasra, Dhamma (Zabbar, Zer, Pesh).
- d) Printing the Holy Book and other religious books in the press.
- e) The compilation of I'lm-e-Hadith and Fiqh.
- f) To put down the Holy verses of the Quran in paper form, etc.

All the above-mentioned things are Bid'ahs which were not in the blessed age of Rasoolullah r but are considered religious. Those who say that Meelad and Fateha are Bid'ahs because those religious affairs which were innovated after the blessed age of the Holy Prophet r should have a look at the

above list and show us which of these two things are not included in the religion and which was there in the blessed age?

The Hadith: *"Whosoever invents a new thing in our religion is rejected"* which you have presented in your objection means that whoever innovates a new belief or whoever innovates a new action which is in contradiction with the Kitaab and Sunnah will be rejected.

In the last part of the objection, you say that all Bid'ahs are Haraam and there is nothing like Bidat'-e-Hasana. Such a statement contradicts with the Hadith, which says that: *"Whoever sets a good precedent in Islam will be rewarded and whoever sets a bad precedent in Islam will be punished."*

We have also quoted from the books **Shaami** and **Mirqaat** that Bid'ah is of five categories, viz. Ja'iz, Wajib, Mustahab, Makruh and Haraam. According to your statement, we will have to omit many things which are known to be part and parcel of religion but were innovated after the blessed age of Rasoolullah r such as the Masaa'ils of Fiqh, the four Madhabs, viz. Hanafi, Shafi, Maliki, Hanbali; the Tariqas, viz. Nashbandiyya, Qaderiyya, Chistiyya, Shuhruwardiyya, Alwiyya, etc.; the denominations of the Sufiyya-Ikraam; the categorisation of the six Kalimahs, Imaan-e-Mujmal, Imaan-e-Mufassal; the division of the Holy Quran into 30 parts; the compilation of the knowledge of Hadith and the categorisation of Hadiths, i.e. Sahih, Da'if, Hassan, Mu'addal, etc.; the construction of madressa and arrangement of their syllabuses; and to set a course for achieving the degree of Aalim and Qari and to present certificates on the completion of the course to the respective students, etc. will all be Haraam according to your statement that all Bid'ahs are Haraam and there is nothing like Bid'ah-e-Hasana.

In fact, there is no act of Sharee'ah or Tareeqah which is void of Bid'ah. Then how much will you try to avoid such a Haraam (as you say) when it is surrounding your whole religious activity? So you will have to take back your word and agree that all Bid'ahs are not Haraam but only those, which contradict with the Kitaab and Sunnah.

3.1.2 SECOND OBJECTION

(i) Those things which are innovated in the time of the Sahaba, the Tabe'een and Tabe Tabe'een are not Bid'ahs but they are Sunnahs. A Hadith in the book **Mishkaat** (Babul Itisaam) says, "*It is necessary upon you to cling on to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs.*" In this Hadith the actions of the four Rightly-Guided Caliphs have been mentioned as Sunnah and we have been commanded to follow them, so their actions cannot be called a Bid'ah but they are Sunnah.

(ii) The book **Mishkaat** (Babul Faz'ailus Sahaba) has the Hadith which says, "*The best of my Ummah is my generation, then those next to them, then those next to them, then there would come a people whose evidence will precede their oaths and their oaths will precede their evidence.*" (i.e. they will not be trustworthy). From this we see that the best three generations are those of the Sahaba, then the Tabe'een and then the Tabe Tabe'een. So whatever was innovated in these three generations is Sunnah and whatever was innovated after them is Bid'ah.

(iii) "*My Ummah will be divided into seventy-three groups, all of them will be in Hell, except one.*" The respected Sahaba enquired of the group which group will be in Paradise, the reply came, "*That upon which I and my Sahaba are.*" From this we see that to follow the respected Sahaba will lead to salvation and that is why their innovations are not Bid'ahs but Sunnahs.

(iv) The book **Mishkaat** (Babul Fazailus Sahaba) has the Hadith, which says, "*My Sahaba are like stars whomsoever you follow you will be rightly guided.*" Even from this we see that to follow the respected Sahaba will lead one to the right guidance, thus the actions innovated in their age will not be called Bid'ahs but Sunnahs because a Bid'ah is deluding and misleading and the respected Sahaba are the most rightly guided and have been protected from delusion.

ANSWER TO SECOND OBJECTION

Even this objection is baseless. We defined Bid'ah as quoting from the books **Mirqaat** and **Ashi'atul Lam'aat** that it is that innovation which came after the blessed age of the Prophet r and not in the age of the Sahaba t or the Tabe'een t.

Secondly, in the book **Mishkaat**, Babul Qiyam Shahr-Ramadaan, it is written that Hadrat Umar t ordered for the congregation in Taraweeh prayers during his Caliphate and on seeing the congregation remarked, *"This is a very nice Bid'ah."* Hadrat Umar t called his own action a nice Bid'ah.

Thirdly, to pray the Taraweeh prayers individually is Sunnah and to form a regular congregation in these prayers is Bid'ah-e-Hasana as we have quoted in the preceding pages from the book **Mirqaat** under the chapter of Bid'ah.

Fourthly, the second volume of **Bukhari Shareef** (Kitabul Faza'il-ul-Quran; Bab Jam'ul Quran) says that when Hadrat Abu Bakr t ordered Hadrat Zaid bin Thabit t to collect the verses of the Holy Quran and compile them in a book form, he replied, *"How will you do such a thing which the Holy Prophet r did not do?"* Hadrat Abu Bakr t said, *"By Allah this is a good project."* Hadrat Zaid's t conversation shows that he thought the compilation of the Holy Quran was a Bid'ah but Hadrat Abu Bakr's t reply was that though to compile the Holy Quran is a Bid'ah, but it is a nice Bid'ah shows that the innovations of the Sahaba t are Bid'ah Hasana.

(i) In the objection, this Hadith is quoted, *"It is necessary upon you to cling to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs."* The acts and the statements of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs t have been mentioned as Sunnah in this Hadith. But "Sunnah" here means "tariqa (mode, manner)", likewise the Hadith which says, *"Whosoever sets a good Sunnah in Islam will be rewarded for it ..."* shows that "Sunnah" means "a mode." Even the Holy Quran says:

***"This is Allah's method which hath ever taken
course for His bondsmen."*** (al-Mo'min: 85)

and

***“(Such was Qur) method in the case of those whom
We sent before thee (to mankind), and thou will not
find for Our method aught of power to change.” (Bani Isra’eel: 77)***

The Sunnah of Allah Y here means the method of Allah Y likewise the Sunnah of Ambiya u means the method and mode of the Ambiya u.

Under the same Hadith, *"It is necessary upon you to cling to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Khulafa-e-Rashideen."* The book **Ashi'atul Lam'aat** says: *"The Sunnah of the Four Rightly-Guided Caliphs is actually the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet r, but because it was not common in the Holy Prophet's r time and came to be known in the time of the Khulafa-e-Rashideen, it is called the Sunnah of the Khulafa-e-Rashideen."*

So, the Sunnah of the Khulafa-e-Rashideen t is that which is actually the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet r but was not widespread in his blessed time and the Khulafa-e-Rashideen t were the ones to circulate it and make it known so it is was called the Sunnah of the Khulafa-e-Rashideen t.

Fifthly, the Muhaditheen and the Fuqaha have said that the works of the Khulafa-e-Rashideen t are appended to the Sunnah, i.e. they are not Sunnah but are contiguous to the Sunnah. Had the deeds of the Khulafa-e-Rashideen t been Sunnah, the Scholars would not have mentioned the word "contiguous to Sunnah."

In the beginning of the book **Noor-ul-Anwar**, it is written that: *"The actions and statements of the Sahaba in matters related to reason are based upon analogy and in matters not related to reason that are based on Sunnah."* So we see that every act of the Sahaba t is not a Sunnah but some acts have been deducted through analogy also.

But it is seemliness and a show of respect to refer to those which have been innovated in the time of the Sahaba t a Sunnah of the Sahaba t and not Bid'ah of the Sahaba t because the word Bid'ah is mostly used to mean Bid'ah Sai'yya (vile innovation).

The book **Ashi'atul Lam'aat** says regarding this: *"Every command and deed of the Khulafa-e-Rashideen, even that based on analogy (Qiyas) and Ijtihad is in accordance with the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the word Bid'ah should not be used for them."*

(ii) The Hadith, *"The best of my Ummah is my generation then those next to them, then those next to them ..."* shows that in these three generations more good deeds will be committed and the people will be more righteous than the generation to follow. It doesn't mean that any innovation invented in this age will become a Sunnah! Secondly, there is no mention of Sunnah in this Hadith.

If it is as you say, then the misguided sects such as the Jabriyya and the Qadriyya were innovated in this period and even the martyrdom of Hadrat Imam Hussain ؑ and the oppressions of Hejaz occurred in this period, then would you say (Allah forbid!) that all these acts are Sunnah?

(iii) & (iv) The Hadith, *"My Ummah will be divided into seventy-three sects ..."* and the Hadith, *"My Sahaba are like stars, whomsoever you follow you will be guided,"* shows that by following the respected Sahaba ؓ one is rightly guided and to disagree with them leads one astray. And this is what every Muslim believes. But even these Hadith do not prove that every deed of the respected Sahaba ؓ is a Sunnah of the Sharee'ah. It could be Bid'ah Hasana. And those Bid'ah Hasana innovated by the blessed Sahaba ؓ should be followed by every Muslim. A Hadith in the book **Mishkaat** Babul Itisaam says, *"Adhere to the Sawaad-e-Azam (great majority). Whoever isolates from it, isolates himself to Hell,"* and also *"that thing which the Muslims see as good is considered good by Allah Ta'ala also,"* and also *"whoever drifts a span away from the majority will have lifted the rope of Islam from his neck."* Allah ﷻ says in the Holy Quran:

"And followeth other than the Believer's way, we appoint for him that unto which he himself hath turned and expose him unto Hell - a hapless journey's end." (al-Nisaa: 115)

From these Ayats and Hadiths we see that it is the duty of every Muslim to stick to the path followed by the majority of the Muslim mass (Sawaad-e-Azam) and whoever drifts away from it will have drifted himself towards Hell.

But it is not necessary that every new thing innovated by the Muslims is a Sunnah. It will be a Bid'ah - Bid'ah Hasana (sound innovation).

Just as the innovations of the Sahaba t are called Sunnah-e-Sahaba t, likewise the innovations of the Salaf-e-Saliheen should be called Sunnah of the Salaf (approved mode of the Salaf).

3.2 CONCLUSION

Those people who say that every Bid'ah is Haraam should understand the meaning of this universally accepted principle that the origin of everything is Mubah (permissible), i.e. everything is permissible unless a Hukm (command) has come in it's prohibition which will make it Haraam. Every novelty is not prohibited on the grounds that it is something new but the prohibition comes if the novelty is in contradiction with the Holy Quran or the Sunnah.

The Ayahs of the Holy Quran along with Hadith and the statements of the Fuqaha (Jurisprudents) have approved of this principle. The Holy Quran says:

"O you who believe, ask not of the things which if disclosed to you may annoy you, and if you ask them while the Quran is being revealed, they will be disclosed to you, Allah has pardoned that, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing." (al-Maidah:101)

From this blessed Ayah we see that all those things about which no command or prohibition has come have been pardoned. That is why the Holy Quran says regarding those women with whom Nikah is prohibited:

"Lawful unto thee are all beyond those mentioned."

and it says,

**"While he has surely mentioned to you
in detail what he**

has forbidden you."

We see that all things in general are permissible except those, which have been forbidden in the Holy Quran and Hadith.

A Hadith in **Mishkaat**, Babul Adabu-Ta'aam, says, *"Permitted is that which Allah Y has made permissible in His Book, and prohibited is that which Allah Y has prohibited in His Book and that about which nothing has been mentioned is pardoned."* From this Hadith we see that things are of three categories. Firstly, that which is permissible and its permissibility has been established from the Holy Quran. Secondly, that which is impermissible and its impermissibility is established in the Holy Quran. Thirdly, that about which the Holy Quran is silent and these are pardoned.

The book **Shaami** (Vol. 1, Kitabut-Taharat under the definition of Sunnah) says: *"According to the Hanafis and the Shafi'is this is the accepted principle that the origin of every action is permissible."* Even in the books of Tafseer such as **Khazin**, **Ruhool Bayan** and **Khaza'inul Irfaan** it is written the same that the origin of everything is permissible unless it has been made impermissible by the Holy Quran.

Some people ask this question - *"Show us where it is written that Meelad Shareef is permissible or that the Holy Prophet ever performed the Meelad or the respected Sahaba t or the Tab'e'en t performed it?"* This question is deceiving and misleading. It is upon those who say that Meelad is Haraam to show us which Ayah or Hadith has prohibited Meelad and to bring us the evidence, which supports their words.

How can they say something to be Haraam and that too, Meelad Shareef wherein the praises of the Beloved Prophet rare sung and his blessed biography and actions are mentioned to freshen the minds

and give calmness to the soul when Allah Y has not made it Haraam nor has any Hadith come in it's prohibition?

The Holy Quran's silence on this subject and the Hadith not having anything against it indicate that Meelad Shareef is permissible.

Allah Y says in the Holy Quran:

"Say: I find not which is revealed unto me aught prohibited to an eater that he eat thereof, except it be carrion or blood poured forth or swineflesh - for that verily is foul."(al-An'am:145)

and He Y says:

"Say: Who has forbidden the adornment of Allah Y which he has brought forth for his bondmen and the things clean and pure (which he has provided) for sustenance?"(al-A'raf:32)

This proves that not to get any indication towards a thing's impermissibility is enough as evidence for it to be permissible.

“UMDATUL AL-SALIK” - RELIANCE OF THE TRAVELLER - BY AHMAD IBN NAQIB AL-MISRI (SECTION W29.0)

In light of the Prophetic Hadith: "**... Beware of matters newly begun, for every matter newly begun is innovation, every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in hell.**"

The discussion centres around three points:-

1. Scholars say that the above Hadith does not refer to all the new things without restrictions, but only to those, which nothing in Sacred Law attests to the validity of. The use of the word **every** in the Hadith does not indicate an absolute generalization, for there are many examples of similar generalizations in the Quran and Sunna that are not application without restriction, but rather are qualified by restrictions found in other primary textual evidence.

2. The Sunnah and the way of the Prophet ﷺ was to accept new acts initiated in Islam that were of the good and did not conflict with established principles of Sacred Law, and to reject things that were otherwise.

3. New matters in Islam may not be rejected merely because they did not exist in the first century, but must be evaluated and judged according to the comprehensive methodology of Sacred Law, by virtue of which it is and remains the final and universal moral code of all peoples until the end of time.

And in Section w29.3 of the above book explains the Hadith:-

The Prophet ﷺ said, " ... **Beware of matters newly begun, for every innovation is misguidance.**"

Beware of matters newly begun

meaning, "Distance yourselves and be wary of matters newly innovated that did not previously exist," i.e. things invented in Islam that contravene the Sacred Law,

for every innovation is misguidance

meaning that every innovation is the opposite of the truth, i.e. falsehood, a

Hadith that has been related elsewhere as:

for every matter newly begun is innovation, every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in hell.

meaning that everyone who is misguided, whether through himself or by following another, is in Hell, the Hadith referring to matters that are not good innovations with a basis in Sacred Law.

IMAM AHMED RAZA ACADEMY
Promoting the cause of the Ahle Sunnah

The *Imam Ahmed Raza Academy* is an organisation that was established on the 5th of July 1986 (1406 A.H.) in South Africa with the sole purpose of serving

the *Muslim* community and to provide some form of academic and spiritual direction to the Muslims.

The organisation has been named after the great *Muslim* scholar and Saint, *Imam Ahmed Raza Khan Bareilvi* t, who lived in India between 1856 and 1921, and was popularly known as "*Ala' Hadrat*" in the Islamic world. *Ala' Hadrat Imam Ahmed Raza Al-Qaadiri* t achieved the status of a versatile scholar and obtained a high distinction in over 50 branches of learning. On his visit to Makkatul Mukarramah and Madinatul Munawwarah, *Imam Ahmed Raza Al-Qaadiri* t was treated with great dignity and was conferred the title of "*Imam-e-Ahle-Sunnah*" by eminent *Ulema*. He was also hailed as the *Mujaddid* or Revivalist of the Century. He acted as a shield against those who wanted to assault the principles of the *Ahle Sunnah Wa Jamaah*.

As a devout Sufi, *Ala' Hadrat Imam Ahmed Raza* t was awarded the *Ijaazah* and *Khilafat* (Certificate of Spiritual Successorship) in the *Qaaderiya Silsila* (Order), as well as in 13 other branches of *Sufism*. As an author, *Imam Ahmed Raza Khan Al-Qaadiri* t has left to his credit more than a 1 000 books on 50 different subjects ranging from *Tafseer*, Logic, Grammar, Literature, Islamic Jurisprudence, Education, Sociology, Astronomy, Mathematics, Physics, History, Science of History, Engineering, Biographies, Philosophy, Mysticism to Persian, *Arabic*, *Urdu* and *Hindi* Literature.

The key aim of the *Imam Ahmed Raza Academy* is to promote and propagate the teachings of the *Ahle Sunnah Wa Jamaah*. In order to achieve this key objective we have dedicated ourselves to translate, compile, publish and distribute useful Islamic literature, books, magazines, brochures, periodicals, newsletters, pamphlets, etc. with special reference to the teachings of *Ala' Hadrat Imam Ahmed Raza Al-Qaadiri* t and his Successors t in this age of immorality and emergence of corrupted Sects claiming to be the beacons of salvation, it is our responsibility to save our society from such wickedness and adopt the correct perspective of Islam based on the teachings of the *Ahle Sunnah*. A vital ingredient in this work is the publication of *Sunni* literature in English – to which we have committed ourselves.

We are presently offering a variety of services to the community on a daily basis, from being a centre for imparting Islamic education for our children - to issuing *Fatawa* (Legal Islamic Decrees). At the same time, in the last few years, we have also developed as an organisation laying emphasis on the publication of *Sunni* literature for the community and have thus far to our credit a regular newsletter – “*Raza*” and numerous titles of authentic *Sunni* books, and we will, *Insha-Allah*, be adding more titles each year. We have already designed a set of *madressa* textbooks that are being implemented locally and, we are proud to add that these textbooks have gained international repute. We have also developed a web site (www.raza.co.za) which is highly information based and is continually being updated.

We need your help not only to retain but promote our *Ahle Sunnah Aqaa'id* at a time when we are surrounded and bombarded by non-*Sunni* publications, which have corrupted our *Aqeeda* and have made deep inroads in the minds of the youth. All such activities in *Islam* that helps in promoting *Islam* constitute an act of *Jihad* for which there will be an enormous reward. The celebrated Saint, *Hadrat Sheikh Sirri Saqti* t said, “***That person can never become perfect until he does not give preference to Deen over his personal desires.***”

The *Imam Ahmed Raza Academy* is an organisation that relies solely on the assistance and *Wasila* of *Sayyiduna Rasoolullah* r and the *Fuyooz* and *Barakaat* of the *Awliya Allah*, and the support of our well-wishers. Our vision for the future and our dedication to the mission of *Al'a Hadrat Imam Ahmed Raza Al-Qaadiri* t has a significant contribution to be made locally and in the world - a world in which, we pray, that *Sunni Islam* dominates. *Insha-Allah!*
General Secretary

[1] Qadriyya is that Sect which believes that man has got full power to do whatever he wishes and that he himself creates his actions. They also disbelieve in destiny. While the Ahle Sunnah Wal Jamaat believes that man opts (intends) for a thing and Allah Y creates it. The Creator of everything, including man's actions, is Allah Y.

[2] By the three blessed generations we mean the ages of the Sahaba, the Tabe'een and the Tab'e Tabe'een.