

A Clarification of Doubts Regarding Innovation

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AN INTRODUCTION TO INNOVATION IN THE LANGUAGE

It is a valid form of innovation, it is an invention without a preceding likeness. And from it is the statement of Allaah the Exalted, "Inventor of the Heavens and the Earth" [Sooratul Baqarah 2:117] That is, the Innovator of those two things on other than a preceding likeness. The statement of the Exalted, "Say, I am not a new one from amongst the messengers" [Sooratul Ahqaaf: 9]

That is, 'I am not the first who came with a message from Allaah to the slaves, rather there have preceded before me, many from amongst the messengers.' And it can be said, 'So and so innovated (ibtada'a) an innovation (bid'ah), meaning that he invented a way not having a predecessor for it.

Innovating is divided into two:

A. Innovating in 'aadaat (customs/habits/culture etc.): such as inventing innovations of speech, and this is permissible (mubaah), because the basic principle regarding 'aadaat (customs) is one of permissibility (ibaahah).

B. And innovating in the religion, then this is prohibited because the basic principle regarding it is one of Tawaquf (restriction to authentic texts). He sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said, "*Whoever invents (ahdatha) in this matter of ours what is not from it, then it is rejected.*" [Bukhaaree, Muslim] And in a narration, "*Whoever performs an action not in accordance with our matter, then it is rejected.*" [Saheeh Muslim]

THE INNOVATION IN RELIGION IS OF TWO TYPES:

The First Type: Innovation in statements of belief, such as the sayings of the Jahmiyyah, and the Mu'tazilah, and the Raafidhah, and the generally known misguided sects and their beliefs.

The Second Type: Innovation in the acts of worship; Such as worshipping Allaah with an act of worship which is not legislated. And it has divisions:

The first division: It has no origin (asl) in worship, rather it is a newly invented form of worship having no origin in the law (Shar'); Such as inventing prayer not legislated, or fasts not having a Sharee'ah legislated origin, or days of celebration such as the celebration of birthdays, and other than that.

The second division: What exists from additions in the legislated worship, like if one were to add a fifth raka'ah in the Noon (Dhuhr) prayer, or the afternoon ('Asr) prayer for example.

The third division: What exists in the characteristics of carrying out legislated worship.

To perform it on a manner not legislated; such as carrying out legislated remembrances (Adhkaar singular: Dhikr) in simultaneous and melodious voices, and such as being extreme on oneself in worship to the point of leaving from the Sunnah of the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam.

The fourth division: What exists from specification of a time for legislated worship which was not specified by the law (shar') such as specifying the middle night of Sha'abaa and its day for fasting and prayer. So verily fasting and praying have a basis in the Religion, but specifying them to a time from amongst the times is in need of a proof.

THE RULING ON INNOVATION IN THE RELIGION, WITH ALL OF ITS TYPES:

Every innovation in the religion is forbidden, and a misguidance because of the statement of the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam *"And beware of newly invented matters, for every newly invented thing is an innovation, and every innovation is a misguidance."* [Abu Daawood, and Tirmidhee who said, 'Hasan Saheeh'] And his sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam statement, *"Whoever invents in this affair of ours what is not from it, then it is rejected."* [Agreed Upon] And in a narration, *"Whoever performs an action not in accordance with our affair, then it is rejected."* [Saheeh Muslim] So these two hadeeths show that all newly invented things in the Religion are innovations, and every innovation is a rejected misguidance, [1] and the meaning of that is that innovation in belief and worship is forbidden. However, its prohibition is according to the degree in the type of innovation, and from it is evident disbelief such as circumambulation around the graves in order to get closer to its inhabitants, and offering sacrifices and vows to them and supplicating to their inhabitants, and seeking rescue with them. And such as the extremist statements of the Jahmiyyah and the Mu'tazilah. And from it is what is a means of shirk such as erecting the graves, and praying and supplicating to them. And from it is what is disobedience in creed such as the innovation of the limbs by the Qadariyyah, and the Murji'ah in their statements and belief in opposition to the proofs of the Sharee'ah. And from it is sexual abstinence and fasting established in the sun, and castration with the intention of cutting off all desires [see al I'tisaam of ash-Shaatibee (2/37)]

WARNING:

Whoever divides innovation [in the religion] into good innovation (bid'ah hasanah), and sinful innovation (bid'ah sayyi'ah), then he has committed wrong, and has opposed his sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam statement, *"Every innovation is a misguidance."* because the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam ruled that innovation - all of it - is misguidance, [2] and this says that not all innovation is misguidance, rather there is good innovation. Al Haafidh Ibn Rajab said in his commentary to al Arba'een: 'So his sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam statement, *"Every innovation is misguidance"* is from the all encompassing word, not excluding from it anything. And it is the greatest principle from the principles of the Religion. And it is associated with his sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam statement, *"Whoever invents in this affair of ours, what is not from it, then it is rejected."* So whoever invents things and attributes them to the religion, and it does not have an origin in the religion to return to, then it is misguidance, and the Religion is free from those things. And equal to that are matters of beliefs, or actions, or statements whether hidden, or manifest.' [end] [Jaami'ul 'Uloom Wal Hikam, p. 233] [3]

And there is not a proof for them that there is good innovation, except for the statement of 'Umar radiiiallaahu 'anhu regarding the taraaweeh prayer, "What a good innovation this is!" (ni'imatul bida'atu hadhihi).

And they also say, 'Verily there were things invented, and they were not objected to by the Salaf, like the collection of the Qur'aan into one book, and the writing of the Hadeeth, and recording them.' So the answer to these is that these are matters which have an origin in the law (shar'), so

they are not newly invented. And the statement of 'Umar radiallaahu 'anhu "What a good innovation", he desires the linguistic innovation, and not the religious innovation (al bida'atush Shar'iyah). So whatever has an origin in the law, returns to it. If it is said that it is an innovation, then it is an innovation in language, and not in Islamic Law. So the religious innovation is what does not have an origin for it to return to. So the collecting of the Qur'aan into one book has for it an origin in the law to return to, because the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam had commanded the recording of the Qur'aan, but it was written scattered so the Companions collected it into one book for it's protection. Indeed the Prophet prayed taraaweeh with his Companions radiallaahu 'anhu nightly, and they had preferable fear about it in the appointment [of an Imaam], and the continuing of the Companions (r) in praying in separate groups in the lifetime of the Prophet and after his sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam passing, up until 'Umar Ibnul Khattab united them on one Imaam like how they used to be behind the Prophet (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam), and this is not an innovation in the Religion. And the writing of the Hadeeth also has an origin for it in the Law. Indeed the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam commanded the writing of some hadeeths for some of his Companions radiallaahu 'anhu, so as to study that from it. [4]

And there was warning against writing it on regular paper according to his sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam advice fearing that there would get mixed with the Qur'aan, that which was not from it. So when the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam passed away, this warning was done away with - because the Qur'aan was completed, and vowelized before his sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam passing. So the Muslims recorded the hadeeth after that, preserving it from destruction. And may Allah reward Islaam and the Muslims with good when they preserve the Book of their Lord, and the Sunnah of their Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam from destruction, and the mockery of the scornful. [5]

Footnotes:

[1] Many of the people of innovation say that the word 'kullu' in the hadeeth about innovated matters does not mean everything, al-Haafidh Ibn Rajab al-Hanbalee says in Jaami'ul Uloom Wal Hikam (2/89) in commentary to the part of the hadeeth, "and beware of the newly invented matter."

"His saying, 'and beware of the newly invented matters, and every bid'ah is a misguidance' contains a warning to the ummah from following the newly invented innovations, and he stressed this by saying, 'and every innovation is a misguidance'. And the meaning of bid'ah is everything that is newly invented that has no basis in the sharee'ah that would prove it. As for that which has a basis in the sharee'ah that would prove it then this is not a bid'ah in the sharee'ah even if it be a bid'ah according to the language. And in the saheeh of Muslim from Jaabir radiallaahu 'anhu from the Prophet that he used to say in his sermons, 'the best speech is the Book of Allaah, and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad, and the worst of matters are the newly invented matters and every bid'ah is a misguidance.'. And Imaam Ahmad reports from the report of Ghadeef Ibnul Haarith ash-Shimaalee, 'Abdul Malk Ibn Marwaan sent (someone) to me and he said: Indeed we gather the people for two matters: raising the hands (for supplication) upon the minbar on the day of Jumu'ah and giving exhortations after the fajr and 'asr prayers. So he said: As for these two matters, then they are examples of your innovations in my opinion and I will not accept anything of them from you because the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said, 'A people do not introduce an innovation except that the likes of it is raised from the sunnah (ie. forgotten and neglected) and sticking to the sunnah is better than innovating an innovation.' And something similar is reported from Ibn 'Umar. And as for what has occurred from some of the salaf in their declaring some bid'ahs to be good then this is regards to bid'ah in it's linguistic meaning not it's sharee'ah meaning, and from these is the saying of 'Umar radiallaahu 'anhu when he gathered the people for the standing of Ramadhaan behind one Imaam.[he gives reasons as to why this is so, but these have already been mentioned in other articles, and some of them above, so I will not repeat them]

And from them: the adhaan for jumu'ah that was increased on by 'Uthmaan due to the need of the people, and it is reported from ibn Umar that he said this was a bid'ah. And maybe he meant what his father meant concerning the standing during the month of Ramadhaan. And from them: collecting the mushaf as one book, and the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam used to command that the revelation be written and there is no difference in this between writing separately or as one collection, rather one collection has more benefit [mentioning more examples]

And Abu Nu'aym reports with a chain of narration from Ibraaheem Ibn Junayd who said: I heard ash-Shaafi'ee saying: 'bid'ah is of two types' And he depended upon the saying of 'Umar radiallaahu 'anhu, 'what a good bid'ah this is' and the meaning

of ash-Shaafi'ee (rahimahullaah) is as we have mentioned previously: that the foundation for the blameworthy bid'ah is that which does not have a basis in the sharee'ah that can be referred to - and this is a bid'ah in the convention of the sharee'ah. As for the praiseworthy bid'ah then that is what agrees with the sunnah - meaning that it has a basis in the sunnah that can be referred to, and this is a 'bid'ah' in its linguistic meaning not in its sharee'ah meaning due to its conforming with the sunnah. And another statement has been reported from ash-Shaafi'ee that explains this, and that is: 'newly invented matters are of two types.'"

[2] The alleged statement of Imaam ash-Shaafi'ee is another ploy used by the people of bid'ah to try to legislate their innovations into the complete and perfected Religion of Allaah. Shaykh Saleem al-Hilaalee says, "those who seek to make innovations good and acceptable claim that Imaam ash-Shaafi'ee - may Allaah have mercy upon him - agrees to the concept of 'good innovations' - and they have taken it by what has been attributed to him - may Allaah have mercy upon him - regarding innovation: 'innovated matters are of two classes: that which is innovated and is contrary to the Book, or the Sunnah, or a narration, or ijmaa - then this is an innovation of misguidance, and: those good things which are innovated that do not contradict any of these - then this is a novelty which is not blameworthy. And 'Umar said concerning the night-prayer in Ramadhaan: 'what a good innovation this is' meaning something new not previously present, and if done does not rebut anything which existed before." [Reported by al-Bayhaquee in 'Manaaqibush Shaafi'ee (1/469) from ar-Rabee' Ibn Sulaymaan. I say: its chain of narration contains Muhammad Ibn Moosaa al-Fadl and I do not find a biography for him.]

And it is reported with the wording: "Innovation is of two types: praiseworthy innovation and blameworthy innovation. So whatever agrees with the sunnah is praiseworthy, and whatever contradicts the sunnah is blameworthy." And he used as evidence the saying of 'Umar radiiallaahu 'anhu - about night prayer in Ramadhaan: 'what a good innovation this is' [reported by Abu Nu'aym in 'Hilyatul Awliyaa' (9/113) from Hurmulah Ibn Yahyaa. I say: its chain of narration contains Abdullaah Ibn Muhammad al-Atshee, who is mentioned by al-Khateeb al-Baghdaadee in his 'Taareekh' and by as-Sam'aanee in 'al-Insaab' but they mention no jarh or ta'deel of them]

a) The saying of ash-Shaafi'ee - even if authentic - cannot be used to oppose or particularize the generality of the hadeeth of Allaah's Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, since ash-Shaafi'ee himself - rahimahullaah - is reported by his students to have said that the saying of a solitary companion is not a proof, and it is not obligatory for those after him to follow him [as in 'Takhreej Furoo alaa al-'Usul' of az-Zanjaanee (pg. 179) with the checking of Muhammad Adee as-Saalihi, 'Mu'assatur Risaalah'] And this is what the verifying scholar Ibnul-Qayyim affirmed in his 'Tilaam al-Muwaqqi'een' (4/121-123) So how can the saying of ash-Shaafi'ee be a proof if the saying of a companion is not a proof?!

b) How can ash-Shaafi'ee - may Allaah have mercy upon him - be one of those who agree to 'good innovations' whilst he said the famous saying: 'whosoever declares something good has made it part of the sharee'ah,' and he said in Ar-Risaalah (pg.507), 'declaring things good (istihsaan) is a form of exercising desires' Therefore anyone who wants to explain the words of ash-Shaafi'ee - may Allaah have mercy upon him - then let him do so within the rules and fundamentals of ash-Shaafi'ee - which necessitate understanding his principles - this is something applicable in every branch of knowledge - so he who is ignorant of the terminologies of their specialists will be ignorant of the meaning of their sayings - and will incorrectly explain their meaning, and here is an example to show what we mean:

i) The wording 'agreed upon' with the scholars of hadeeth means that which was reported by Bukhaaree and Muslim, however according to Abu Baraaqaat 'Abdus Salaam Ibn Taymiyyah, the author of 'Muntaqal Akhbaar', it means that which is reported by Ahmad, Bukhaaree and Muslim." [al-Bid'ah' (pp 63-66)] Even if this statement was authentic, its meaning would be that of linguistic bid'ah as was stated by Ibn Rajab, and as we will further clarify in the next note on al-Haafidh Ibn Hajar.

[3] The shaykh, Saalih al-Fawzaan quoted from al-Haafidh Ibn Rajab, so it would be useful to quote the full discussion: al-Haafidh Ibn Rajab said in commentary of the hadeeth, whosoever introduces something in this affair of ours which is not part of it then it must be rejected.' And the hadeeth, 'whosoever does an action which we have not commanded must be rejected.'

"This hadeeth contains a great principle from amongst the principles of Islaam, for just as the hadeeth 'indeed actions are by intentions' is the scale (to judge the action in) its inward form this hadeeth is the scale (to the action in) its outward form. Just as any action that is not done seeking the Face of Allaah the Exalted does not bestow any reward upon the actor, similarly any action that has not been commanded by Allaah and His Messenger is rejected. And everyone that innovates in the religion that which Allaah and His Messenger have not given permission for, then it is nothing in the religion ... And this hadeeth in its wording indicates that every action that has not been commanded by the Legislator is rejected, and its understanding indicates that every action that has been commanded is not rejected. And the meaning of 'his command' here is 'his religion and law' as is the meaning of his saying in the other narration, 'whosoever introduces something in this affair of ours which is not part of it must be rejected.'

Therefore the meaning is that whosoever's action is outside the sharee'ah and not bound by the sharee'ah, is rejected. And his

saying, 'which we have not commanded' indicates it is necessary for the actions of the actors to fall under the rules and regulations of the sharee'ah and that the rules of the Sharee'ah be the judge to command them or forbid them. So whosoever's action falls under the rules and regulations of the sharee'ah, in agreement with them, then his action is accepted, and otherwise it is rejected ...and whosoever seeks to draw close to Allaah with an action that Allaah and His Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam have not appointed as a means of drawing close to Allaah then his action is false and rejected ...

And the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam saw a person standing in the sun, and so he inquired about him and it was said in reply, 'he has taken an oath to stand and not to sit or take shade, and to fast.' So the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam ordered him to sit and seek the shade and to complete his fast. [Bukhaaree] So he sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam did not make his standing and exposure to the sun a means of getting close (to Allaah) such that it would require fulfilling the oath. And it is reported that this event occurred on the day of jumu'ah at time of hearing the khutbah of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam while he was on the minbar. So this man made the oath to stand and not sit or seek the shade for as long as the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam gave his sermon, in glorification/respect of listening to the sermon of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam, and yet the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam did not make this a means of getting close to Allaah that would require fulfillment of his oath. Despite the fact that standing is worship in other places such as prayer and adhaan and offering du'aa on 'Arafah. And exposure to the sun is a means of getting closer to Allaah for the one in ihraam, so this indicates that everything that is a means of getting close to Allaah on a particular occasion is not a means of getting close on every occasion, rather one follows what occurs in the Sharee'ah in its correct place for everything." [it is known in the sharee'ah that an oath which involves disobedience to Allaah does not require fulfillment]

[4] As for the deception of the people of bid'ah in saying that the collection of the ahaadeeth of the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam as an innovation, then this is simply not true.

From Abu Qabeel who said: We were with 'Abdullaah Ibn 'Amr Ibnul 'Aas and he was asked which city will be conquered first Constantinople or Rome? So 'Abdullaah called for a sealed trunk and he said: Take out a book from it. Then 'Abdullaah said: Whilst we were with the Messenger of Allaah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam writing. The Messenger of Allaah sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam was asked: Which city will be conquered first, Constantinople or Rome? So Allaah's Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said: "The city of Heraclius will be conquered first" meaning Constantinople. [Related by Ahmad (2/176), ad-Daarimee (1/126) and al Haakim (3/422)] So this narration shows that some of the Companions did write the hadeeths of the Messenger sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam in his presence.

[5] Ibn Hajar on bid'ah as in 'Fath (13/314+) Kitaabul-I'tisaam, Chapter: Following The Sunan of The Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam. "His saying, 'and the worst of matters are the newly invented matters.', and muhadathaat means the newly invented matters that have no basis in the sharee'ah, and the are called according to the convention of the sharee'ah 'bid'ah', and that which has a basis in the sharee'ah that would prove it then it is not a bid'ah. So bid'ah in the convention of the sharee'ah is blameworthy in contravention to the language, for linguistically every thing that is newly invented, be it blameworthy or praiseworthy, is called bid'ah ...and ash-Shaafi'ee said, 'bid'ah is of two types ...' Reported by Abu Nu'aym via the route of Ibraaheem Ibn Junayd, and there occurs from ash-Shaafi'ee also what is reported by al-Bayhaqee in his 'Manaaqib', 'the newly invented matters are of two types.' end. And some of the scholars divided bid'ah into the five categories of ahkaam and this is clear. And it is established from Ibn Mas'ood that he said, 'indeed you have matured upon the fitrah, but indeed you shall innovate, and things shall be innovated for you, so when you see the innovations then stick to the original guidance' ...And Imaam Ahmad reported with a good sanad from Ghadeef Ibnul-Haarith who said, 'al-Malik Ibn Marwaan sent (someone) to me and he said: indeed we gather the people for two matters: raising the hands (for du'aa) upon the minbar on the day of jumu'ah, and giving exhortations after the fajr and 'asr prayers. So he said: as for these two, then they are examples of your innovations in my opinion and I will not accept anything of them from you because the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam said, 'a people do not introduce an innovation except that a sunnah the likes of it is raised (i.e. forgotten and neglected)' and sticking to the sunnah is better than introducing a bid'ah' so if this was the answer of this sahaabee concerning a matter that has a basis in the religion, then what do you think the case would be concerning a matter that has no basis in the religion? And how about when it includes things that contradict the sunnah? ... and this matter (of giving exhortations) was present during the time of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam but it was not done constantly like the jumu'ah khutbah rather it was done as the need dictated. And as for his saying in the hadeeth of al-Irbaadh, 'indeed every bid'ah is a misguidance' after saying, 'and beware of the newly invented matters' proves that newly invented matters are called bid'ah. And his saying, 'and indeed every bid'ah is misguidance' is a complete sharee'ah principle both in wording and understanding. As for in wording then it is as if it is said, 'the ruling of such and such is that it is a bid'ah and every bid'ah is a misguidance' and so it would not be from the sharee'ah because the sharee'ah, in its totality, is guidance ...and the meaning of his words 'every bid'ah is a misguidance' is that which has been introduced that has no evidence in either a specific or general wayIbn 'Abdis Salaam said at the end of 'al-Qawaa'id': bid'ah is of five classifications.[mentioning the five and some examples of them]" [End of Ibn Hajar's words]

There are some points to be recognized here:

1. Ibn Hajars quoting from Imaam ash-Shaafi'ee after making clear that in the language bid'ah is of two types but in the Sharee'ah it is only one.

2. Indicating that he understands the statement 'praiseworthy bid'ah' in the linguistic sense as did Ibn Rajab.

3. His quoting Ibn 'Abdis Salaam in his classifying bid'ah into 5 categories but he himself saying, 'and the meaning of his words 'every bid'ah is a misguidance' is that which has been introduced that has no evidence in either a specific or general way' and other similar statements.

And Verily Allaah the Exalted Knows Best