

Explanation of the Hadeeth "Whoever introduced into our matter..."

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On the authority of the Mother of the Faithful, Umm Abdullah, 'Aaishah, who said that the Messenger of Allah, Salla Allahu Alayhi Wasallam, said, what translated means,

"Whoever introduces into our matter (religion) that which is not a part of it, will have it (his innovation) rejected."

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In another narration for this Hadith, the Messenger of Allah, Salla Allahu Alayhi Wasallam, said, what translated means,

"Whoever commits an act which is not a part of our matter (religion), will have it (his act) rejected."

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The Status of this Hadith

Ibn Hajar said, "This Hadith is considered one of the basis of Islam and a pillar of the

religion." An-Nawawi said, "This Hadith deserves to be preserved, publicly announced and (firmly) implemented in rejecting the impermissible."

At-Turaqi said, "This is a Hadith that deserves to be called 'one half of the proofs of the religion.' This is because the proof (evidence, Text, etc.) is used to confirm or reject a rule, and this Hadith is a tremendous tool to confirm or reject all religious rulings."

In addition, ibn Rajab said "This Hadith is one of the major basis of Islam, just like the Hadith 'Actions are only considered according to the intentions...', which is the scale with which the actions, in both their hidden and apparent aspects, are weighed."

A Warning Against Innovating in the Religion

The Prophet said, "Whoever introduces into our matter that which is not a part of it, will have it rejected." This indicates that whoever follows his desire and "invents" or "adds" to the religion of Allah what is not a part of the religion, or what is not in conformity with the general rules and basis of the religion, then this innovation is rejected and will not benefit its originator in his religion or life. This is a Hadith that lays down the firm foundation for this great rule of our religion, that is, all innovations in the religion are rejected, and is supported by many Texts in the Quran and the Sunnah, that which will take considerable space and

time if we attempt to list them all.

Innovating in Acts of Worship

Acts of worship are all prohibited, except those which Allah and His Messenger have legislated. Therefore, the Muslim is obliged to avoid all the acts of worship which Allah or His Messenger have not legislated. In the light of this rule that the scholars have agreed with, whoever performs an act of worship must produce the evidence to its validity, from the Quran and/or the Sunnah, when required to do so. The following points must be noted here:

1 -- An act that is a part of an act of worship may not be accepted outside that act of worship. Examples to this are, uncovering the head during I'hram and during Hajj, or standing up for prayer or to perform Athan (the call to prayer) (these are all accepted parts of prescribed acts of worship: Hajj and prayer). If one vows to keep standing, or vows to uncover his head in other than the cases when these acts are sanctioned by the religion, then he will have fallen into Bid'ah (innovation in the religion) that the religion has prohibited. Therefore, this innovation or addition will be rejected of him. The Prophet once saw a man standing in the sun and asked about the reason behind his action. He was told, "He vowed to stand and avoid sitting, to avoid the shade and to fast."

The Prophet ordered that man to sit down, seek the shade and to continue his fast. The Prophet did not accept this man's vow to stand and avoid the shade, but he ordered him to continue his fast, because fasting was the only part of his vow that is legislated.

2 -- All acts of worship that are not legislated by Allah and His Messenger, are prohibited in the religion and are thus rejected. This includes using, as a means of approach to Allah, listening to music, dancing, or other acts of deviation and innovation which Allah did not authorize or legislate and which are popular in the Muslim world today. These acts have even become a part of the religion to some people and they grow and become old while nursing these acts and habits. All these acts are firmly rejected and Allah will never accept them. Furthermore, Allah will not guide one to truly repent from his sins unless he abandons the Bid'ah he innovated. The Prophet said, what translated means, "Allah has withheld repentance from every person who commits a Bid'ah until he abandons his Bid 'ah." [Sahih At-Targhib]. Also, those who innovate (in the religion) are included in the Ayah, "Or have they partners with Allah (false gods) who have instituted for them a religion which Allah has not allowed?" [42:21].

3 -- Adding to an authorized act of worship is firmly rejected. As for the acceptance of the original deed (and not the addition which is always rejected), it depends on the type of action. Sometimes, the entire act of worship will be rejected, such as when one adds one more Rak'ah (kneeling prayer) in the compulsory prayers. Sometimes, the addition does not invalidate the entire act of worship, such as when one performs Wudhu (washing up for prayer) and repeats its actions four times each (while one should repeat them only once, twice or three times).

Therefore, this Hadith should not be used to invalidate the entire act of legal worship that one adds to. One should study these acts of worship and their additions, investigate the addition's validity and follow the sayings of the scholars, so as not to invalidate entire acts of worship, which were altered by some additions, without knowledge or authority.

4 -- Deleting a part or parts of an accepted act of worship. Some people may perform an accepted act of worship for the sake of Allah, yet, they delete a part or parts of this act. If

this happens, then we must study the deleted part of this act of worship. If the unfulfilled we must is required in the act of worship, such as performing Wudhu for prayer which is a requirement of the prayer itself, then we can rule that the entire act of worship is rejected. Also, whoever deletes a cornerstone of an act of worship, such as deleting one Rak'ah from the prayer, will have his entire act of worship rejected altogether.

We must note here that we cannot rule that deleting an inessential part of an act of worship will have the entire act rejected. Rather, we can only state that the act will be incomplete. An example to this is when one abandons the prayer in Jama'ah (congregation). His prayer will be accepted of him, but he will gain a sin for abandoning the prayer in Jama'ah, according to those who consider praying in Jama'ah an obligation on men.

Innovations in Dealings

All dealings are permissible, unless the religion specifies otherwise. Therefore, those who claim that a type of dealing is impermissible, will have to produce their evidence to support their claim. There are several types of innovations in dealings:

1 -- Those types of dealings that are meant to be in lieu of contracts, rules, laws or dealings legislated in the Shari'ah. Such types of contracts are impermissible and will not bring any benefit to the parties involved. The following Hadith supports this rule:

Abu Hurayrah and Zayd ibn Khalid narrated that a man came to the Messenger of Allah and said, "O Messenger of Allah! I ask you by Allah to rule for me with the Book of Allah." His opponent, who was more knowledgeable than him, said, "Yes! Judge between us with the Book of Allah and permit me to speak first." The Messenger of Allah said, "Speak." He said, "My son was working for this man and he committed fornication with his wife. Since I was told that my son will have to be stoned to death, I paid a hundred sheep and ewe as a ransom for him. Then, I asked people of knowledge and they told me that my son will only have to be flogged a hundred times and banished for a year (because he was not married), and that this man's wife will have to be stoned to death." The Messenger of Allah said, "By Whose my soul is in His Hand! I will judge between you with the Book of Allah. The ewe and the sheep will be returned to you, your son will have to be flogged a hundred times and banished for a year. And O Unays (a man from the tribe of Aslam), go to this man's wife and stone her if she confesses." He went to her and she confessed and then the Messenger of Allah ordered that she be stoned. [Muslim, and Al-Bukhari whose narration is similar in meaning to this Hadith]. (In this Hadith, the Messenger only applied Islamic law, and rejected the offer of the father, because it was in lieu of an Islamic law).

2 -- Impermissible dealings or contracts:

a -- When one of the parties to a contract is not allowed to be a party. This includes marriage contracts to those who are not permitted for one in marriage, because of ties of relations (such as the sister or the aunt), ties initiated by marriage (such as the step daughter) and to combine (the wife and her sister or her aunt in marriage to the same man). This type of contracts is impermissible, because they entail transgressing against the rules set by Allah Who prohibited marrying Al-Ma'harim (those whom one cannot marry), such as certain degrees of relative initiated by marriage and by suckling and to combine (the omen and her sister or her aunt in marriage to the same man).

b -- When a condition of a contract is ignored, even if both parties to the contract agree to ignore it. This includes marriage to a woman still in her Iddah (prescribed time before a

divorced woman or widow can remarry) and marrying a woman without a Wali (agent, such as her father or brother, etc.). This type of contracts is also valid. It was reported that the Prophet separated between a man and woman who got married during the woman's Iddah, although he made her pregnant (after his marriage to her).

c -- Contracts that contain what Allah has prohibited, such as business transactions that entail selling liquor, dead animals (not slaughtered according to Islamic Law), pigs, idols, usury and other types of impermissible goods. All these contracts are invalid and ejected. The Prophet ordered that a man who has exchanged one Saa` (four handfuls) of dates for two, to return the extra Saa'.

3 -- Contracts that entail injustice for one of the parties or signatories An example to this is when a woman is married by her Wali without her permission. This contract is only valid when the woman agrees to it, and if she does not agree, then the marriage contract will be invalid. The Prophet invalidated the marriage of a Thayyib woman (who married before, not a virgin) and who was married without her permission.

Also, the Prophet gave a woman, who was a virgin at the time of her marriage, the choice to uphold or dissolve her marriage that was conducted without her consent. Also, this type of dealings includes the case when one gives a charity out of someone else's money. This dealing is only valid if the owner agrees to it, as the scholars have stated.

A Summary

The Muslim is always encouraged to be patient and to avoid rushing to conclusions, rendering some types of actions rejected and invalid and using this Hadith as evidence. First, one must be knowledgeable in the sayings of the scholars and the general rules and guidelines of the religion with regards to these dealings or actions before reaching the conclusion that an action or a contract is invalid.

Benefits from the Hadith

1 -- Prohibiting an act or a contract indicates that it is invalid. An-Nawawi said, "This Hadith supports what some scholars of Usul (general rules and guidelines of the religion) have ruled, 'The prohibition (of an act or a contract) indicates both its invalidity and rejection.' Those who took the opinion that this (disallowing an act or a contract) does not entail invalidity, claim that this Hadith is only one Text and is not sufficient to prove such an important rule. This is an invalid answer, indeed." Further, Ibn Hajar said, "This Hadith indicates that the prohibition also indicates the invalidity (of the prohibited actions and dealings)."

2 -- Islam is a complete religion and has no shortcomings.