

## Good Innovations

by [Shaikh Saalih al-Fawzaan](#)

Translator: Maaz Qureshi (May Allaah Humilate Him)

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

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 sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam statement, *"Every innovation is a misguidance"*, [1] because the Messenger sallaahu '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 sallaahu '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 sallaahu '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 radiallaahu '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'iyyah). 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 Islaamic 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 sallaahu '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 'anhum nightly, and they had preferable fear about it in the appointment [of an Imaam], and the continuing of the Companions radiallaahu 'anhum in praying in separate groups in the lifetime of the Prophet and after his sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam passing, up until 'Umar Ibnul Khattaab united them on one Imaam like how they used to be behind the Prophet sallaahu '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 sallaahu '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 sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam advice fearing that there would get mixed with the Qur`aan, that which was not from

it. So when the Prophet *sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* passed away, this warning was done away with - because the Qur`aan was completed, and vowelized before his *sallaahu '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 *sallaahu '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 share'ah that would prove it. As for that which has a basis in the share'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 Jabir (radiyallahu '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 *sallaahu '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 radiyallahu '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 *sallaahu '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 radiyallahu '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 it's linguistic meaning not in it's sharee'ah meaning due to it's 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.'" [end] So every innovation is a misguidance, contrary to what some may have you believe.

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.

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) it's inward form this hadeeth is the scale (to the action in) it's 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 it's wording indicates that every action that has not been commanded by the Legislator is rejected, and it's 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 Messengers *sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* have not appointed as a means of drawing close to Allaah then his action is false and rejected... And the Messenger *sallaahu '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 *sallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam* ordered him to sit and seek the shade and to complete his fast. [Bukhaaree] So he *sallaahu '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 sallallahu '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 (sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam) gave his sermon, in glorification/respect of listening to the sermon of the Prophet sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam, and yet the Messenger sallallahu '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 sallallahu '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 sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam writing. The Messenger of Allaah sallallahu 'alayhi wa sallam was asked: Which city will be conquered first, constantinople or Rome? So Allaah's Messenger (sallallahu '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 sallallahu '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 sallallahu '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 sallallahu '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 sallallahu '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 way...Ibn '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.