

BID'AH - Innovation in Islam

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Wa sharrul Umoori Muhdathaatuhaa, Wa kulla Bid'atin dhailah, wa kulla dhalatin fin-naar" Al-Hadith (Sahih Muslim). Translation of the above hadith: Every innovation is a misguidance and every misguidance goes to Hell fire.

IMAM SHAFI'I EXPLANATION OF THE ABOVE HADITH:

Kullu bida'tin daijala: "Every innovation is a misguidance"? Doesn't the term "every" include all innovations?" Such an objection stems from the misinterpretation of the term kull ("every") in the hadith to be all-encompassing without exception, whereas in Arabic it may mean "Nearly all" or "the vast majority." This is how al-Shafi'i understood it or else he would have never allowed for any innovation whatsoever to be considered good, and he is considered a hujja or "Proof," that is, reference without peer for questions regarding the Arabic language. The stylistic figure of meaning the part by the whole, or nechdoche in English is in Arabic: 'abbara 'an al-kathratf bi at-kulliyya. This is illustrated by the use of kull in the following verse 46:25 of the Quran in a selective or partial sense not a universal sense:

"Destroying all things by commandment of its Lord. And morning found them so that naught could be seen save their dwellings". Thus the dwellings were not destroyed although "all" things had been destroyed. "All" here means specifically the lives of the unbelievers of 'Ad and their properties except their houses.

ARE THERE GOOD OR BAD INNOVATIONS IN ISLAM?

Prophetic saying as stated in Sahih Muslim is known even to common Muslims, let alone scholars: "He who inaugurates a good practice (sanna fil-islam sunnatun hasana) in Islam earns the reward of it, and of all who perform it after him, without diminishing their own rewards in the least. "Tirmizi, pg-92.

Imam Nawawi said: In Sahih Muslim (6-21),

"The Prophet's saying 'every innovation' is a general-particular and it is a reference to most innovations. The linguists say, 'Innovation is any act done without a previous pattern, and it is of five different kinds.'" Imam Nawawi also said in Tahzeeb al Asma'wal Sifaat, "Innovation in religious law is to originate anything which did not exist during the time of the Prophet, and it is divided into good and bad." He also said, "al-muhdathat (pi. for muhdatha) is to originate something that has no roots in religious law. In the tradition of religious law it is called innovation, and if it has an origin within the religious law, then it is not innovation. Innovation in religious law is disagreeable, unlike in the language where everything that has been originated without a previous pattern is called innovation regardless of whether it is good or bad."

Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar Al Asqalani,

the commentator on al-Bukhari, said, "Anything that did not exist during the Prophet's time is called innovation, but some are good while others are not."

Abu Na'eem, narrated from Ibrahim al-Junaid, said,

"I heard Ash-Shafi'i saying, 'Innovation is of two types: praiseworthy innovation and blameworthy innovation, and anything that disagrees with the Sunnah is blameworthy.'"

Imam al Bayhaqi narrated in Manaqib Ash-Shafi'i that he said,

"Innovations are of two types: that which contradicts the Quran, the Sunnah, or unanimous agreement of the Muslims is an innovation of deception, while a good innovation does not contradict any of these things."

IN CONCLUSION:

Clearly we can see from the opinions of the righteous scholars, that to define innovations in worship as wholly negative without exception is ignorant. For these pious knowers, among them, Imam Shafi'i and Imam Nawawi, declared that innovations could be divided into good and bad, based on their compliance with, or deviance from religious law. Can the latter day scholars of Islam (who came after 1100 years) claim that they understand the Quran and Hadith better than the Sahaba and the Salaf-Us-Saliheen? If 'every'innovation is a misguidance then the following too are all innovations which originated two centuries or more after Sahaba RA: Reading eight raka in Tarawih; Translations of Quran; Writing Tafseers; collection and classification of Ahaadith; Principles of Jurisprudence; The four schools of Fiqh, Stoned and carpeted Mosques, use of loud speakers in mosques etc.

Therefore anything that does not have roots originating to the Quran and Sunnah is considered a bad innovation. But the following practices, such as recitation of the Quran in gatherings; Recital of Darud-Sharif (Salaat-o-Salaam) in gatherings and Mawlid (commemorating the birth and Seerah of the Holy Prophet Muhammed (Peace be Upon Him) has clear and authenticated roots to the Quran and Sunnah. Where in Quran and Hadith all these gatherings are declared as haram or prohibited? Proof of such acts is indicated as follows:

On Mawlid: "Abi Qatadat said that the Prophet was asked about fasting on Monday and he said 'That was the day I was born.'" This hadith is a clear evidence of the importance of the commemoration of the Prophet's birthday through worship. Al-Hafiz ibn Rajab al-Hanbali, in his book Lataif al-maarif (p. 98), in explaining this hadith of Muslim said, "it is good to fast on the days that Allah honored and favoured his servants."

It is incumbent not only on Muslims but on all human beings to rejoice in his advent, the day of his birth. As al-Hafiz ibn Rajab al-Hanbali said, "The best favour that Allah has granted this nation is the birth of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) when he was sent to humanity. " We did not send you except as a mercy to the whole Universe' (AlAnbiya'107. So we review and recall Allah's favour of sending the Prophet by fasting on that day". 'Of the favour and mercy of Allah let them rejoice" (Yunus, 58).

Below is a divine order for all the believers to send Salutations on Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon HIM). Allah has said in the Quran- Allah and His angels sends blessings on the Prophet (Peace be upon HIM)"-. O'you believes! u too send aiutation on beloved Prophet (Peace be upon HIM)" (33:56)

What does the Quran say about Dhiker in gatherings'?

"Those men and women who engage much in Allah's praise. For them has Allah prepared forgiveness and a great reward." (33:35)

"Those who remember their Lord standing, and sitting, and lying on their sides" (3:191)

"Men whom neither traffic nor merchandise can divert from Remembrance of Allah nor from regular Salaat, nor from regular practice of Zakaat. (24:37)

"Those who believe, and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah! Aye! it is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort;" (13: 28)

What do the Hadith say about Dhiker in gatherings?

Hadith Qudsi: "Those that remember Me in their heart, I remember them in My heart; and those that remember Me in a gathering, I remember them (i.e. make mention of them) in a gathering better than theirs. (This can include recitation of Quran, Durood (Salat-o-Salaam) and other Dhiker Allah)

In Bukhari and Muslim: The Prophet (Peace be upon him) said that Allah has angels roaming the roads to find the people of dhikr, i.e. those who say La Itaha Itiabah and similar expressions, and when they find a group of people (qawm) reciting dhikr, they call each other and encompass them in layers until the first heaven -- the location of which is in Allah's knowledge. (This is to say, an unlimited number of angels are going to be over that group)

Ibn 'Umar reported that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) said: "When you pass by the gardens of Paradise, avail yourselves of them." The Companions asked: "What are the gardens of Paradise, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied: "The circles of dhikr. There are roaming angels of Allah who go about looking for the circles of dhikr, and when they find them they surround them closely." Tirmidhi narrated it (hasan gharib) and Ahmad.

Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri and Abu Huraira reported that the Prophet (Peace be upon him) said, "When any group of men remember Allah, angels surround them and mercy covers them, tranquility descends upon them, and Allah mentions them to those who are with Him." Narrated by Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ahmad, Ibn Majah, and Bayhaqi.

Those who call upon Bida'h (innovations):

For those who insist on scrutinising Bida'h should rather pay more attention to Haram and major sins. The following are typical examples that majority of the Ummah is engaged in everyday and so routinely which are often overlooked and justified through obtaining Fatwa's for the purpose of legitimising their actions:

- | Buying houses on mortgages (interest);
- | Holding Credit on credit cards;
- | Eating non halal meat and foods (MacDonald, KFC, etc.)

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- | Disobedience to parents and ill-treatment of either wife or husband;
- | Sending of children to Islamic school but not practicing Islam themselves;
- | Calling other Muslim brothers Miskeen (poor) based upon nationality;
- | Undue extravagance: Luxuries (Castles, Rolls Royces, Cadillacs etc);
- | Engaging in fraud and corruption;
- | Celebrating own anniversaries and birthdays yet raise objection on Mawlid. Etc.

Islam cannot be customized to suit individual needs and lifestyles. This is a great hypocrisy. One can ask themselves how pious and strict follower of the Quran and Sunnah, am I in reality? Stay away from haram, shirk and Kufr and try to follow other Hadiths as well in order to fulfill the claim of being strict followers of Quran and Sunnah.

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