

The Meaning of Bidah

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

1. A Bid'ah is that innovation which came into practice after the blessed age of the Prophet (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*) be it worldly or religious.
2. Some people say that to celebrate the Meelad, Esaale Sawaab for the deceased, making Fateha after the Janazah Salaah, etc. to be Bid'ah and in some cases as Haraam. They say these were not practised in the time of Rasoolullah (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*).
3. We will now list a few things, which were not during the blessed age of Rasoolullah (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*) 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'Im-e-Hadith and Fiqh,
 - f. To put down the Holy verses of the Quran in paper form, etc.
4. All the above-mentioned things are Bid'ahs, which were not in the blessed age of Rasoolullah (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*) but are considered religious. Those who say that Moulood and Fateha are Bid'ahs because those religious affairs which were innovated after the blessed age of the Holy Prophet (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*) 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?
5. The Hadith: "*Whosoever invents a new thing in our religion is rejected*" 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.
6. The books "*Shaami*" and "*Mirqaat*" say that *Bid'ah* is of five categories, viz. Ja'iz, Waajib, Mustahab, Makruh and Haraam.
7. 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 (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*) 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 if we accept a statement that all Bid'ahs are Haraam and there is nothing like *Bid'ah-e-Hasana*.
8. In fact, there is no act of Shari'ah or Tariqah, 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, therefore, all Bid'ahs are not Haraam but only those, which contradict with the Kitaab and Sunnah.

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

1. *Bid'ah-e-Hasana* (praiseworthy innovation) 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 (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*) 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 (Waajib).
2. *Bid'ah-e-Sai'iyya* (offensive innovation) is that action which was not in practice in the blessed age of the Holy Prophet (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*) and which contradicts with the Holy Quran and the Sunnah, for example to say the Khutba of Eid or Jum'a in a language other than Arabic, etc. *Bid'ah-e-Sai'iyya* can be Makruh Tanzhi or Makruh Tahrimi or even Haraam.

10. *Bid'ah-e-Hasana* is further divided into three categories:-

1. *Bid'ah Ja'iz* (Permissible): is that action which the Shari'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.
2. *Bid'ah Mustahab* (appreciable): is that act which is done with an anticipation for earning reward, for example to celebrate the Meelad-un-Nabi (*sallal laahu alaihi wasallam*) or to pray Fateha for the souls of deceased Muslims, etc. If it 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 it.
3. *Bid'ah Waajib* (essential): 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 (I'raab) in the Holy Quran such as Fatha, Kasra and Dhumma, 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 Waajib*.

11. Offensive *Bid'ah* is categorised in two:-

1. *Bid'ah Makruh* (abominable): is that innovation the performing of which will lead to the annihilation of a Sunnah. If a Ghayr 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*.
2. *Bid'ah Haraam* (prohibited): is that innovation which will lead to the annihilation of a Waajib. For example, the introductions of beliefs which are in contradiction with the Kitab and Sunnah, such as Qadriyya who believe, that man has got all the power to do whatever he wishes, etc.

12. The first volume of "*Ashi'atul Lam'aat*" (Babul I'tisaam) says about *Bid'ah Hasana* and *Sai'iyya* 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'iyya*.

13. A Hadith in "*Miskhat*" under Babul-I'Im 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.*"

14. 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.

15. In the preface of the book, "*Shaami*", under Faza'il Imam Abu Hanifa (*radi Allahu anhu*), it is written: "*The scholars say these Ahadith 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*".

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